



## GUILDFORD AREA u3a



### INTERIM NEWSLETTER 13 – 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020

We wish you all a Happy Christmas and a  
Healthy New Year



Dear gu3a members,

This has been some year! Never has the word “unprecedented” been used so often and not once has it been an exaggeration. Our groups started back in September as normal but by the end of March all meetings had stopped and we were devising ways of continuing safely, keeping in touch, learning ways of working online, getting the knack of Zoom, then opening venues and trying to re-establish face to face meetings – only to have everything locked down again. Some groups, such as Bridge, are continuing to develop their online offering and it is so heartening to see we are still attracting new members.

We thank all our loyal members for their continuing support. We know that the loss of our wide range of trips and outings has been a disappointment; it is a pity that so many groups have had to be curtailed. However we do thank all those GLs who have managed to work out clever ways of carrying on; we are lucky that they have worked so hard to keep 50% of our groups going this year. The monthly meetings have been well attended and our new online coffee mornings are proving popular – as has Melvyn Elphee’s new *Arts for All* and its offshoots.

I have mentioned the questionnaire and its results before. We have looked at new ways of doing things but we do feel that we have come up with the best formula and model for our u3a. But most importantly we stay open-minded for the future. We are obliged to be fluid and change with whatever life throws at us. All ideas are always gratefully received!

We have looked very carefully at our finances which are obviously in a very different position from the one we anticipated at our last AGM. Things are better because we have not had to pay for the hire of venues. Conversely our income has fallen sharply, too, as far fewer members than usual have renewed their subscription. We had envisaged an increase to £35 next September but we have decided instead to recommend it remains at £30 for another year.

We will be holding our AGM virtually on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Around the New Year you will be receiving your AGM papers which will include the ballot paper for your votes. It will not be possible to vote on the day itself. For those online, please look out for the papers which will be delivered by email with an additional email which is Google Form enabling you to vote on the proceedings beforehand. For those who receive their correspondence by post a paper voting form will accompany the other documents. Please do get involved and vote.

Already the committee and in particular Margaret Clements, Jackie Deyong, Moira MacQuaide and the GLs are planning the prospectus for Summer 2021. We are working with other u3as in the area to see if we can offer more content in a different way in future. Some u3as have closed down completely this year and we are so proud that we have managed to keep in touch and run so many of our groups despite so many difficulties.

I said in the last newsletter how happy I was to see a full house of 100 members at the last monthly meeting when our speaker talked about RHS Wisley. Our licence is for a maximum of 100 people and in fact we had so many more that we had to ask all the members of both committees to withdraw. Unfortunately, on the day only 76 gu3a members joined the talk. If you realise that you have double booked yourself do please let us know so that someone else can have your place.

Next time on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021 David Williams will talk to us about *Lawrence of Arabia*. Please note that this is not the last Monday in the month. To join this talk please register your interest at [monthly@guildfordu3a.org.uk](mailto:monthly@guildfordu3a.org.uk). On 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the last Monday in the month, we will be holding our online AGM.

May I take this opportunity to remind you of our Facebook page. You need to have a Facebook account. In Facebook type in Guildford Area u3a into the search box in the top left hand corner. When the Guildford u3a page comes up click on **join** and you will be asked for your membership number. When that has been recognised you will be accepted as a member of the group. Updates can appear there much more quickly and frequently than in these newsletters if we need to get in touch.

May I also remind you about the Winter Learning Programme <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programmes> organised by National Office. Events which require members to book are at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>. There is a huge range of activities to keep us busy and happy through the long dark winter days.

Those of you who have not yet discovered the Mirthy talks on Thursday afternoons at 4pm can find them at [mirthy.co.uk/talks/](http://mirthy.co.uk/talks/) They cover a huge range of topics and the speakers are happy to take questions afterwards.

I have a blind friend with a birthday in the run-up to Christmas. Have you ever been hunting in a card shop only to be told that it's "not the season for birthday cards"? Ordinary cards are of no use to her. Have you ever tried to find an audio birthday card in the run-up to Christmas? Well I can tell you that I have always been able to find a CHOICE of audio cards at this time of the year in Paperchase. There is hope yet for your blind friends!

I'm finishing with a little joke. My son sent me this so blame him if you don't giggle. A priest, an imam and a rabbit walk into a blood clinic. The rabbit said: I think I'm a type o.

I wish you all a warm, safe and peaceful Christmas. It will be difficult for those of us who are alone or shielding but it will be worthwhile because if we put up with one very substandard (but in its own way quite unforgettable) Christmas we will definitely be able to enjoy others with those we love.

*With very best wishes,  
Julie Beattie  
Chairman, Guildford Area u3a*

## U3A in the Time of Corona

This book is based on the Diary Project and has been created using contributions from U3A members all over the country.

It chronicles our reactions to coronavirus and isolation, as well as how to get a supermarket delivery, how to cut your own hair and what to do with all that free time. Some people sent drawings, photographs and poems, which have been included.

The book is A4, 120 pages, colour printed and costs £10 including postage.

If you would like to order a copy, please go to the national website <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/shop/>

Contents:

In the Beginning How it all started, in Wuhan and elsewhere

Don't Panic! Panic buying, food, loo rolls, home deliveries

Vulnerable? Me? Health of individual and household, physical and mental

Family and Friends Concerns about adult children, elderly parents and friends

Missing Granny Grandchildren, missing them, help with home schooling

Filling Those Empty Hours Occupations– art, cooking, music, exercise, books, gardening etc etc ....

Learn, Laugh, Live U3A – how it was, how we're keeping it going, technology

In Tune with Nature? Natural world - for mental and physical health, including environmental aspects

Not on the Bright Side - Loss of friends and family, knock on effects

Such a Thing as Society? Community support, key workers, Clap for Carers

What the Future Holds . . . ? What is the 'new normal' is likely to be?

---

## Coffee, Cake and Chat



Our first virtual coffee morning went very well this month. All of us are missing the social interaction of U3A meetings, and this gave some of our members a chance to meet new people, talk about what's going on in our lives, and share a bit of seasonal goodwill. The general consensus was that it was a good idea and others should be organised whilst we still have Covid-19 restrictions. With this in mind I will run another virtual coffee morning with Zoom, on **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January**

**2021 at 11.00am** and I would love you to come to join us. If you would like to then please email me at [moira.macquaide@gmail.com](mailto:moira.macquaide@gmail.com) and I'll put you on the list to receive an invitation nearer the time.

*Moira MacQuaide*  
*Director of Studies*

Here is a seasonal poem from one of our members:

**CHRISTMAS CARD 2020**     *by Belinda Singleton*

At this, the strangest ending to a year,  
a seeming rough-shod time for love and hope,  
accept my wish for all that you hold dear.

Outside and inside still, we sense the fear,  
can watch the graphs, their falling, rising slope.  
This is the strangest ending to a year.

As padlocks rust on stores, on lives, we peer  
through windows at our narrowing scope.  
Soon, one brief break for all that we hold dear.

And then, new dawn? Meanwhile we cheer  
on loved ones, friends, green space – whatever trope  
our own good angels bring to end the year.

And Memoirs help us smile, help clouds to clear,  
dig deep to plant ahead, pluck words that cope.  
Accept my wish for all that you hold dear.

As Christmas comes, loved voices still we hear.  
Accept this card – without an envelope –  
at this the strangest ending to a year.  
Accept my wish for all that you hold dear.

Belinda Singleton comes from a business background in strategic management, primarily linked to written and oral communication. This included such hands-on experience as setting up and assessing courses at Wormwood Scrubs and Eton.

She took up poetry again as a core passion in 2008. She has been published in poetry magazines and anthologies, mostly in the UK, and has been placed or commended in various national poetry competitions. She won the John Clare Open Poetry Competition Prize in 2011.

She reads at several venues in London and has been Chairman of the long-standing Wey Poets group, based in Guildford, for the past five years. She is editor of their anthology *Ripples* (publication, Autumn 2016).

Her latest personal anthology is called “Foxes Don’t Wear Watches”.