



**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
REGISTERED CHARITY NO 296975**

Issue No 76 Editor: Margaret Morgan email editor@guildfordu3a.org.uk



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2021- GUILDFORD AREA u3a

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear GU3A members,

I was hoping to be able to give you some concrete news about what we may do and when but I'm afraid there has been silence from national office since before Christmas. Nevertheless, we have Boris' roadmap, and according to that as from 29th March we may start getting out and about a bit more. Step by step we will gradually resume, by 21st June if all goes well, normal activities – if we can remember what they are! Any sort of normality seems a very long time ago.

This is a good opportunity to thank all Group Leaders and everybody else for their efforts in keeping in touch with members over the past year; learning, teaching and organising Zoom meetings so that we can all keep in touch and mitigate the effects of enforced isolation and inactivity. I personally appreciate enormously their work in keeping the Gu3a show on the road. We are nearly out of the woods now but I am sure that Zoom will continue to pay a large part in our offer. Members like not having to go out when it is cold and wet and many have said how much easier it is to hear in a Zoom meeting.

We hope to be open for business as usual in September. I am afraid there will not be an open Group Enrolment Day this year as all schools are working over the summer holiday trying to make up for all the time lost. We will be open for membership renewal for current and lapsed members from 1st June.

I want to thank you all for being so prudent and taking care of yourselves during the pandemic. As far as we know we have lost only 2 of our members to Covid-19. Although that is 2 too many it is statistically well below average. Most of you will have had at least one vaccination by now; please do make sure you get the second!

Have you been along to our Coffee, Cake and Chat mornings? Discussion there covers a wide range of topics, from THAT interview to switching energy providers, solar panels, Lidl's new supermarket opening soon in Guildford and the proliferation of local road works. Do come along and have your say!

Please stay safe during this last phase of the lockdown. We are nearly there; the weather is getting better by the day; I shall soon be writing the last of the interim newsletters. I think we can all say that the way you have handled this unprecedented crisis does you credit. Well done!

With very best wishes,

Julie Beattie

Guildford Area u3a Annual General Meeting

In January 2021 our U3A held its first ever on-line AGM using Zoom. Thank you to all those who attended - a larger audience than usual - and thank you to all those who voted beforehand and the few who voted on the day. Julie has already reported on the voting results. There was lively discussion at the meeting and all your comments were read out at the meeting. I wonder where we will be when planning our 2022 AGM? Normally at this time of year, we would be sending you details of our Annual General Meeting.

Sonia Ashworth MBE Secretary

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The next two monthly meetings will take place as follows:

29th March. The Age UK Advice Manager, Catherine Jezierski, will speak to us about benefits, care needs, etc, and answer questions

26th April - Warren Ashton: phrases, cliches & proverbs, Avoid them like the plague,

There is no need to register for these talks. All members who have given us email addresses will be sent the login details a few days before each talk.

Jennifer Margrave – Organiser

u3a DAY SAVE THE DATE – 2nd JUNE 2021

We are determined to join in with u3a organisations across the UK on 2nd June to celebrate 'u3a Day'. It also gives us an opportunity to celebrate Gu3a's 35th birthday, albeit a year late! u3a Day has been cancelled twice previously, so we are hoping this time round that everything goes according to plan.

The objective of this event is to celebrate the u3a movement and to reconnect once again with the local community. It is also an opportunity for us to celebrate just how far we have come in last year and to acknowledge how much we have achieved! Many of our members are now Zoom experts, some groups have met more frequently than before and some have even found new ways of doing things.

We appreciate that some of our members and groups have been unable to meet during the last year, so this is also a great opportunity to celebrate the next chapter of Gu3a and all it may bring us.

We anticipate that a large part of the event might need to be virtual due to any Government restrictions at the time, however we are looking to see how feasible it would be to include some out door visual

displays as well. Our challenge is to think outside the box to make this event fun, interesting and to find different ways of attracting new members.

If you or your u3a group would like to be involved in u3a Day 2021 either virtually or in person, then do please get in touch.

Contact Sandi Layton : publicity@guildfordu3a.org.uk

The Way Forward

It looks as if there's light at the end of the tunnel and hopefully many of the restrictions will be lifted over the next few months. We are waiting to hear from the National Office about when we can return to venues, as they hold our insurance cover, and we'll have to talk to venues about arrangements for using them. However, it's possible that some of our groups may decide to meet over the summer months, when we would normally have a break. It might be that some walking groups continue and some of the groups that have been using Zoom might continue with remote meetings. Contact the Group Leader to ask what they will be doing. Some will stop their programme as per the prospectus, but some may wish to carry on if their members are willing.

Moira MacQuaide -Director of Studies

Coffee, Cake and Chat

Our virtual coffee mornings are being held every couple of weeks. Bring your own coffee and cake! They provide a good opportunity to meet new friends, chat about all sorts of different topics and catch up with what people are doing. The next ones will be at 11.00am on the following dates:

Wednesday 24th March

Thursday 8th April

Friday 23rd April

If you would like to join us then just email me (moira.macquaide@gmail.com) and I'll send you the Zoom link the day before.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Astronomy & Space Science Group

Heavy cloud and wet weather in the early months of the new year have restricted our members' observing opportunities somewhat, though there were some good sights of Mars, available and the grand conjunction between Jupiter and Saturn (the first since 1623) gave us something to look at.

Our monthly Zoom sessions have proved very popular and we frequently have over 40 at a session. The format comprises an on-line lecture, recently we've looked at dark matter, radio astronomy and black holes, a run through of the night sky for the coming month and then an update on current space news.

We have been very pleased to have be joined on our monthly session by members of the Science Forum and we have healthy links with both the Camberley and Woking U3a Astronomy and Space Science groups allowing us to offer more opportunities to the group's participants. The abundance of free on-line lectures by the RAS and various universities have also added to our 'offering'.

Shortly we will be beginning to prepare for next year's programme and hopefully a return to face to face meetings. To support these we are always in need of people able and willing to come and give us relevant lectures, so if anybody has any contacts in this area or is themselves suitably knowledgeable to contribute to our programmes we will be delighted to hear from you

(Jonathan_Long@btinternet.com).

Bridge – Intro to Duplicate (Groups A and B) and Top Duplicate

Bridge is a fascinating game, popular with the older generation, and we have 7 groups in Guildford. It is difficult to imagine an activity which is more friendly to a virus as four players are closely grouped sitting around a table, handling the same cards, and moving from table to table to change opponents. Live bridge is therefore out of the question and our last sessions were in the week ending 14 March 2020. However, playing on-line has come to the rescue. Thanks to technology all that is needed is a PC or a laptop/iPad, plus WiFi and you can then play from anywhere, including your yacht in the Med (as one member did successfully for a couple of weeks)..

The Tuesday groups above play duplicate on-line every week with sixty players registered and an external director to supervise play. It is interesting to note the geographical aspects of all this. We have two different directors regularly supervising our sessions. One of them is a resident of Sofia, Bulgaria and the other lives in Zagreb, Croatia. Furthermore, our players are sometimes scattered widely and last summer one member played a couple of times from aboard a yacht in The Adriatic. The computer takes all this in its stride. In addition to these Tuesday sessions the Top Duplicate group have been playing a different version on Wednesday mornings throughout the pandemic. All this bridge is played on a very clever website called BBO. It is not unusual to log on to find 45,000 people playing at that time, many of them in USA.

Whilst the general view is that playing online is not as enjoyable or sociable as playing together in Burpham Village Hall, it is nevertheless a very good substitute. It is certainly appreciated, especially by those living alone who look forward to their weekly sessions.

If you are interested in joining these groups, please contact either Keith Childs (keithchilds1@btinternet.com) or Martin Barker (martinbarker@ntlworld.com) for the Tuesday Intro to Duplicate groups and Des Brown (derekjamesbrown123@gmail.com) or Reg Wholey (r.o.wholey@ntlworld.com) for the Wednesday Top Duplicate group.

Calligraphy

We are sorry that Jane is retiring from the group at the end of this session. She has been an inspiration to us all. Fortunately we are continuing as a friendly group who meet to improve our skills, share ideas and offer encouragement. All levels are welcome. We keep a small library for information

and encouragement and Jane is providing us with some material and support to help any new members who wish to join. We will do our best to help them get started.

Janet Thorpe

Chigung

This group continues online via Zoom sessions with over 30 participants. Our weekly sessions are preceded by a chance to greet the other members of the group and catch up on news, with another few minutes at the end to comment or ask questions. As well as performing familiar exercises, we have been learning a new sequence, which although more challenging to follow on screen, has been going well. Chigung provides a very welcome opportunity to concentrate on healthy exercise and appreciation of what we can still do during lockdown - and keeps us cheerful.

Wendy

Cardmaking & Papercraft Groups

We've been meeting each month and trying out new techniques. Zoom has given us a new opportunity that we didn't have in our venue – we can all look at YouTube videos! They give us some great ideas and make it easier to watch demonstrations. In March we're making Easter cards, then in April we're going to look at ideas for cards for the men in our lives – never an easy task! Last month we did Iris Folding, a lovely technique that's easy to learn.

Moira MacQuaide

Choir

Two of our U3A Singing groups have been meeting via Zoom most of the past year.

Of course it is not the same as meeting in the normal way but those that do join I believe have found it an enjoyable way of keeping in touch.

The following thoughts have been written by one of our most loyal, long standing and much loved member Rita Rowland.

'In spite of the 'lock down' these classes are continuing fortnightly and are enjoyed very much by the members and we are deeply grateful to the time that our Leader, John Varney gives putting together the excellent program of music together.

For the Monday morning class, this is a mixture of choral classics, folk songs, songs from musical theatre etc. The Wednesday afternoon Class is described as "Singing for Fun" i.e. Singing well known songs in unison (this has included a celebration of Vera Lynn songs) other well known melodies of all types. John accompanies the singing plying his piano at home and this is made possible by the technology now available on Zoom provided by Mike Hall (Monday) and Kim Shaw (Wednesday) bring us all visually together singing on mute in our own homes. The words are provided on the screen. In addition we have a tea break when the participants are divided up into "rooms" and we can "meet" up and have a chat.

It has been a wonderful way to keep the classes together and we are very grateful to John and the team who have made it possible for the members to keep in touch, have the pleasure of singing together during the “lock down” until the usual summer break, and hopefully we will all be back together again in September.” Rita Rowland

I must also add my deep appreciation to my colleagues Mike, Kim, Robert, Chris who do so much work behind the scenes in enabling these meetings to function.



We all look forward to returning to “normality” hopefully in September.

John Varney

MUSIC FACULTY

THE UPSIDE OF LOCK DOWN

The first lockdown was a shock to the system; the U3A was mostly dormant as even outdoor walking in groups was discouraged (and there was no pub lunch at the end of the hike). However as time went on many of us adjusted - well, tried to - and set about facing the challenges of the virtual world. It was not easy: the idea of “running” a Group without leaving home was itself a contradiction. A Group is, by definition, a number of people *meeting together*.

However, with Dunkirk spirit, many jumped in at the deep end and discovered just what was possible with Zoom! We could come together *virtually* and with a little bit of tuition on the *how, the clicks and the don'ts* (thank you, Justin!) we learned to re-create something close to what we used to enjoy within the U3A. In the Music Faculty the **Monday Singing Group** has continued to “meet” fortnightly on zoom with 20 - 25 people joining in – see John Varney's report above. *The Ukulele Group* is going strong - on zoom. The **Jazz Group**, which suffered the blow of having the whole year's worth of bookings cancelled, has been cheered by Piers drawing up play-lists of performances available on You Tube. Sadly Keith Nichols - a regular performer at Shalford - died with Covid in March 2020. Keith and his Ragamuffins last played for the **Jazz Group** in March 2019. Primarily a pianist, he was a versatile multi -talented musician and Piers is working on a programme to honour him in the 2021-22 season. Amongst the current jazz

listings, compiled and circulated to members, is Keith's remarkable performance of *Marigold* which he described as being *in reverse*. (Actually it is rather more *upside-down*.) And to please the purists, Ben Grosvenor - only 11 years old - is there too, playing *Marigold* properly, with extraordinary dexterity and a wonderful swing. In the same year, Ben was the keyboard winner in the BBC 2004 *Young Musician of the Year* competition, dazzling his adjudicators with Ravel's challenging Piano Concerto in G.

Concert Choice has taken to zoom in a big way and discovered the bonus that visuals add to the concert performance. Recent meetings have expanded the concert hall repertoire to include dance - with Renaissance dancers in costume performing the *pavane*, and the more joyful *galliard* played on viols and crumhorns, alongside the orchestral works of Ravel and Faure. A glass harp was featured in an arrangement of Johann Strauss II *Blue Danube*. Anyone who thought that playing "tuned wine glasses" was a 20th C gimmick was quickly disabused. None other than W.A.Mozart composed the famous *Adagio for Glass Armonica*. K356, and in 1791 he wrote a quintet for flute, oboe, viola, cello and the "glass harp". The *Chamber Music Group* has also enjoyed *seeing* the performers rather than just *listening* - in other words, having a more rewarding afternoon. Watching the pianists Emmanuel Ax and Anna Polonsky play Brahms' waltzes in duet - and clearly enjoying every minute - was itself a delight. Whilst "not the same" zoom meetings offer an upside to the deprivations of Covid -lockdown, and we look forward to a return to normal U3A meetings - perhaps in September 2021?

Margaret Westwood (Music Faculty Leader)

Exploring Local History 2

The group continues to meet on the last Friday afternoon of the month and we've had some really interesting talks. In March we have two – one about West Horsley Place and one about Painshill Park. In April we have local historian, David Rose, coming to talk to us, then in May we have a talk about the Petworth Emigration Project.

Moira MacQuaide

Intermediate Italian

Our small group of Italian enthusiasts resumed U3A sessions in the early summer, via zoom, and continued into the autumn. We not only had the challenge of adapting to online meetings but also to the loss of William, our generous and efficient teacher and leader, who had decided to retire from the post.

We now take turns to lead the meetings, usually combining a bit of translation, conversation and grammar work. It's been a chance to share our interests and to get to know each other better, for instance, by discussing our first jobs. Initially we missed having someone to correct our mistakes but we've gained confidence in sharing what we know, looking things up and checking meanings.

Speaking such a beautiful language, however imperfectly, with people you trust, has proved a powerful antidote to the grim months of 2020. These fortnightly Italian sessions have lifted our spirits as well as exercised our minds.

Diana Laffin

Memoir Groups 1 & 2

We all say we are going to get down our memories for future generations, but few go ahead. Having a monthly meeting and giving motivation and encouragement means people are doing it rather than thinking about it.

Here are some examples of finished work by members of the group :



We've lost at least half of our members over the five or six years we have been running, a success story, as they have left having finished writing their story. Memoirs can be about any aspect of our lives; a particular profession, childhood, travel memories. We do not limit material to personal memoirs, and members have also written about relatives and ancestors.

For the foreseeable future both groups have integrated and we hold just one meeting a month via Zoom.

Bronya Ralley, Judy Beck, Brenda Thain (Joint Group Leaders)

Photography Group

Our last 3 months of Zoom meetings have featured presentations from a number of the Group's members displaying a selection of their 'best pictures'. Accompanied by commentary from the photographer concerned as to why these photos are their favourites and a discussion on both technical challenges and composition attributes these sessions proved to be particularly popular.

The Group's normal 'photo shoot' sessions have sadly had to be cancelled due to the Covid restrictions limiting gatherings. In place of this we have set a number of interesting themes for group members to get 'stuck into', these included a photographic record of a 'lockdown Christmas' and a special 'assignment' on close up and macro photography.

Our Christmas social, 'fell foul' of the lockdown rules but was very successfully substituted with a Christmas quiz session, greatly enjoyed by all. After several months of silence, we have now managed to re-engage with the U3a Photography Group in Rotorua (New Zealand) and we are now working on the subjects for our annual Autumn 'photo exchange' with our fellow U3a photography enthusiasts on the other side of the World.

Work has progressed well on upgrading our website to a new 'platform' and we look forward to 'going live' with this in a few months. Examples of our 'work' are available for all to see on our existing website <https://u3aguildfordphoto.org.uk/main.pl?home> but we have included a few images below to whet your appetite.

The Group is always pleased to welcome new members of whatever level of experience, and we will do our best to help you take better photographs.

JonathanLong@btinternet.com



Social Anthropology Group

It is a bit hard to get around the fact that it is just over a year since we all last met. A whole year! I do hope I shall never have to use the phrase 'unprecedented times' again. I postponed, rather than cancelled, the two trips I had organised.

A year ago, we had no doubts about being back in September and when the vaccine gave us such optimism, I was sure that I would start my class with 'the upper age group' perhaps in March. I reckon I have 22 over eighties in my group. In case that causes any newcomers to have unreasonable doubt, two thirds are not. In any case, one of the golden rules of my approach is 'Tolerance of "The Other"' Quite a number of us visited each other in those far off summer and autumn months and that was so refreshing. However, I am afraid we are not a group which has zoomed. There is an element of procrastination about my enthusiasm to participate and I would say that very few of my group were interested. However, only about five members decided to drop out at renewal time, although two will return, and I have maintained a cohesive group with much communication.

Every two weeks I send out a somewhat cheery newsletter, although I do include some serious observations and reflections. I also attach a handout from an earlier class. I have a lot to choose from, having started the group in 2005. Occasionally, I have presented a new subject. For example, the 500 year celebration of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers managed to link up a number of anthropological elements. Recently, in that place called 'normal times' I explored the Island of Bermuda. Would you believe that I found a link with the Pilgrim Fathers?

That is what is so wonderful about Anthropology. In no time at all, there is something with which you can identify and form a link. It is a very holistic subject, from 'Attitudes towards Breast Feeding' to 'Slavery on the Eastern Routes' and 'The History of the Potato' to 'Who is English?' (there, is a connection). If anyone might be interested in past subjects, I can send the list of handouts for both Social Anthropology and Comparative Religion. There are 103 subjects.

I get lots of responses, partly because I often include a subject which provokes nostalgic thoughts. It has been quite a time for nostalgia; not safe to look forward, so we look backwards.

I cannot wait to get back to see all those smiling faces and hear the chatter level rising. There is always room for new people, and, in anticipation of a celebration, I bought a special biscuit selection box at Christmas. We must hurry before the date expires.

Sheila Darzi

All-Day Walking

The groups have re-started their schedule, though we were restricting our numbers to the extent that the individual leaders felt comfortable taking responsibility. September went very well with outings based on The White Horse at Hascombe and the October walk centred on The Cyder House at Shackleford.

As a 'designated outdoor activity' we hoped to start to walk with larger numbers, in two smaller groups, properly distanced. However, the more recent stringent restrictions have curtailed us even more. It is important that we keep active and enjoying the countryside, but having regard to safe practice, for all our sakes. Each walk usually brings a new delight, something we haven't seen before and, unlike the signpost, we rely confidently on our walk leaders to guide us.

We look forward to welcoming back our existing members and any new ones who have become more interested in walking since the confinement of the Big Lockdown.

Elisabeth Markwell and Janis Payne

UPDATE ON OUTINGS AND TRIPS *organised by Ann Elms and Jackie Ring*

We know how much members have been missing our outings and trips, so we have been keeping a keen eye on developments to see when we are able to organise these again. We need to ensure that these are safe, as well as legal! So when we are able to 'get going' again we will make sure that all the elements of the outing, such as the transport and venues will comply with whatever is required to ensure that is the case, which of course will depend on the type of activity. This may also mean that we will initially operate with reduced numbers, or that we will need to 'streamline' an outing to keep it simple or the visit will be to an outdoor venue such as a garden.

We are starting to look ahead to June and beyond, and will first be concentrating on reinstating the Great Stink, the Huguenot Walk, and the final outstanding tour of the Houses of Parliament as these are trips that members have already paid for. After that we will look at arranging new trips, and we think it would be good to arrange something for the finer weather. As we are not in a position to arrange these just yet, let alone advertise them in this newsletter, we will have to notify members of new trips by email, so please watch out for an alert. If you are interested in coming on a trip during the summer or early autumn and do not have email, please send an sae to Jackie Ring, 14 Manston Road, Guildford, GU4 7YE or phone Ann Elms on 07710746236 and we will let you have details when available.

We look forward very much to seeing you all again before too long. In the meantime, here are memories of some past trips: Ann and Jackie



Trip to Sezincote



Visit to Brick Lane



With Angela Richardson at the Houses of Parliament

SITUATIONS VACANT

We have a number of Situations Vacant just now which might interest you. Our Assistant Treasurer or Venues Cost Controller, Des Brown, is stepping down. Anyone offering to help with this needs spreadsheet skills and a good eye for detail. If you would like to know more please get in touch with Des on 01372 459200 or at derekjamesbrown123@gmail.com or our Treasurer on 07711 132224 or at treasurer@guildfordu3a.org.uk.

We also think it could be useful to have a co-ordinator for our new members. This would involve offering them a contact who could answer any queries they might have and generally make sure they have settled in happily. This is particularly important just now when there are so few opportunities for personal interaction. If you would like to help out in this area, please get in touch with our Membership Secretary on 07759 021326 or at membership@guildfordu3a.org.uk.

Several u3as in the area have been putting their heads together recently in an attempt to devise a programme of shared resources. This involves enabling other u3as to access, for example, monthly meetings and any other group meetings which might be of general interest. It would be very helpful if we could have one of our members happy to take on the co-ordination of these offers. More information is available on the resources page of the Surrey u3a Network website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/surreyu3anetwork/home>. If you would like to know more about what would be involved please get in touch with our Director of Studies, Moira, on 01483 452376 or at moira.macquaide@gmail.com.

ASK A FRIEND!

We have, inevitably, fewer members since the start of the pandemic; we would all be happy to see our numbers back to pre-Covid levels. To this end, we thought it would be a good idea if you asked any of your non-u3a friends if they might like to join Gu3a. We are offering a free trip or outing or a year's free membership to whoever recruits the most new members. Just ask your friends to write "recommended by" and your name on their enrolment form. Closing date is 1st September 2021.

Good luck!

THE DEADLINE for the **SUMMER 2021** newsletter is **28 JUNE**: please send your contributions to the editor at any time before then. **However, anything sent after the deadline will be held over until the next newsletter** – if it is still relevant then.

Preferably please submit your contribution by email as a **Word.doc or compatible** in Calibri font, single spacing. **Photos as individual jpg files** please.