

For many, our Membership Secretary, Janet Kennedy, is our first point of contact when joining Lewes u3a. Here, we learn a little more about Janet.

Janet and her husband Peter have been living in Lewes since 2012, when she returned to this country from the Philippines and ‘wanted to live in a town centre because I was no longer driving’.

Winding back, our Membership Secretary started her working life with 2 maths degrees under her belt when she embarked on her career in traffic research ‘mostly designing roads to be safe’ at the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL). ‘I suspect some of my software is still in use’, she thinks.

Expat life

Janet has had two periods of expat life when she was a trailing spouse, joining her husband in Paris in 1978, where their first child was born, and then the Philippines in 2008, where they lived for four years. By the time they went to the Philippines, Janet had been diagnosed with cranial dystonia, which she describes as ‘a neurological condition that for me affects opening and closing my eyes, swallowing and speech, and makes it difficult to keep my head

upright’. However, she continues, she spent the time in the Philippines ‘working for TRL remotely and learning about the history and culture of the country whilst enjoying the expat lifestyle including our private pool.’ She adds ‘it’s a great privilege to live in someone else’s country,’ and details her travelling from the Philippines: ‘Japan, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Vietnam, Cambodia, Sabah (Borneo), Bali and the islands to the east of there, including seeing Komodo dragons.’

Joining Lewes u3a

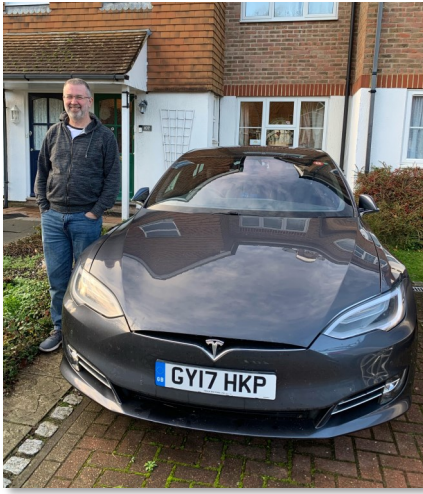
Of the u3a, Janet says, ‘I joined the u3a in Lewes at the end of 2012. I had investigated it whilst living near Windsor but to participate fully I would have needed to drive. Their organisation consisted of monthly meetings for all and groups meeting in people’s houses, usually on the other side of Windsor, which were generally full. ‘Start your own group’ is not a helpful message when you haven’t actually joined. Lewes u3a is so much better’!

Janet has been the Membership Secretary for Lewes u3a since 2017, and she is convenor for French 4, but what does she enjoy as a member? She says, ‘Fast Italian (from when it started as a beginners’ group), the science groups and some of the talks e.g. on travel’.

As for her recently adopted home town, she enthuses, ‘With its history, music and all the walking we can do so easily just starting from home, we love living in Lewes’.

Course News

Some new courses for the Spring Term



Electric Cars

I've owned an electric vehicle (EV) for a few years now, and have become involved with local groups that champion their use. Some of the U3A members might not know as much as they would like about EVs, or have been confused by the media coverage of them. One thing that particularly frustrates me is that both the mainstream media and the motoring press often use inaccurate or misleading information when covering them. In particular they focus on perceived problems, and don't discuss enough the benefits.

Given my own experience and research, I can give participants a good background understanding of the technology, options, usage and future of electric cars. In particular, I hope that by sharing some of the things that I wish I had known when I started my EV journey, I can make it easier for others to make the transition.

There are many good resources to find out more about EVs available, both on the internet, and also with local groups, and I will be sharing details of those that I have found most useful.

Nigel Baker is a retired IT consultant living in Lewes, and an administrator for the Sussex EVs group.

Introduction to Buddhism

Introduction to Buddhism has been a success, with six participants finishing the six weeks.

Keeping it to a small number on Zoom meant that we could respond to each other without the need for muting, waving, and chatbox. It felt more natural, like a live conversation. The only difficulty was this novice Zoom facilitator occasionally missing the arrival of a participant in the 'waiting room'.

Four of the course members are continuing to Zoom-meet weekly under the umbrella theme of Exploring Buddhism, and new people are enrolling on the Introduction on Thursday afternoons.

As facilitator I have found it extremely helpful to think afresh and clarify my ideas for the different course members.

Medhina

Everyday Alexander Technique

The Alexander Technique is often thought of as posture or movement training - but it is so much more. I came to it as a last resort to help me deal with a demanding job while coping with distressing emotional issues. I trained late and qualified as a teacher at 62, as I was retiring from my day job. I now find the Technique invaluable to help maintain physical and mental ease, dealing with getting old, and living with a debilitating chronic condition.

Alexander Technique is an immensely portable tool that you can apply to your everyday activities, be they physical or mental. Enhanced posture, balance and ease of movement, pain management including prevention of pain, better conditions for recovery from injuries, improved sense of well being are just a few of the possible benefits to be had.

Magdalena Portmann

Lewes Public Lectures

'Organising Lewes Public Lectures online is the easiest job in the world and the one that gives me the greatest pleasure. The two things might be connected'



Michael Austin, Lewes Public Lecture organiser tells us about his role.

Finding speakers is fairly effortless, as anyone that has written a book, or is an academic or is promoting a cause potentially wants to talk about their new book, field of research or particular cause, and for *gratis*. Often it is merely a question of politely asking one's target when they would like to speak to us, together with a tiny bit of ego massaging. An engaged audience of up to 300 highly educated people is not to be sniffed at for publicity purposes.

Useful suggestions

I get many useful suggestions for speakers from U3A members based on their general reading or TV watching. I sometimes contact an 'expert on x' after first seeing them on a news programme on my phone, or on a course I have attended. Obviously, speakers from our own U3A are equally welcome to present but, unfortunately, it is not possible to accommodate every proposal, however good.

The happenstance that I have a similar role of talks' organiser with another smaller charity means that sometimes I can test and try a speaker with a small audience before asking them to speak again to a bigger one. That is if they are prepared to present twice; there must be a limit to a speaker's generosity.

As those that have logged in to our online talks will know, we use Eventbrite as our free digital booking platform. This enables anybody to join

Eventbrite

us from anywhere in the world. Eventbrite saves one's preferences and will let you know if anything you may be interested in is coming up. Should we ever need to charge for Lewes Public Lectures in the future, Eventbrite would very simply collect the money for us. An evening slot for the public lectures enables anyone that has a daytime job to join us and also fits in nicely with most USA and Canadian time zones. Our present online format enables other less technologically enabled U3A's to join with us. Our theoretical maximum of 300 participants is three times our capacity in the Council Chamber of Lewes Town Hall.

'improving'

Thanks to the skills of our Video Conferencing Coordinator, Derek Blayney, we record where copyright allows, edit and upload to YouTube where we have an archive of three recordings so far. This enables us to reach an even bigger audience. Our digital technical capabilities are improving the whole time.

Finally, our mission statement for Lewes Public Lectures is 'to provide interesting, topical or controversial speakers as our organisation's particular contribution to our wider community'. I hope you will agree with me that this is a very worthwhile aim.

Will we meet live again for Lewes Public Lectures?



As we approach Christmas I hope the relaxation in the rules will allow you to share Christmas with your loved ones.

Let us hope that the vaccination programme gets under way and lets us return to face-to-face meetings. In the mean time keep safe, keep in contact and keep smiling.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Gordon Bull, Chair.

NEWS FROM THE AGM

27 November, via Zoom



The Lewes u3a AGM was held for the first time via Zoom this year, and as such had its largest attendance for some years. Members who attended voted to approve the annual report, the financial accounts, the election of the Executive Committee and the appointment of the independent examiner for the accounts via the 'poll' facility in Zoom, where we would previously have had a show of hands. There were also 13 postal votes and 58 email votes.

Reminder...

u3a Trust is continuing its online offerings. Courses are now open for enrolment at the Winter School, and include: Philosophy, Law, Latin, Poetry and Cryptic Crosswords, to name but a few.

Visit u3a—online events [here](#) and be prepared to be amazed at what's on offer—

FOR FREE!

The Membership Secretary's report

Back in August when we started the renewal process, we had no idea how many members would renew. Our usual printers were not available, so we decided to use email for renewals for all those with an email address.

The responses came flooding in. It was heartening to read the many comments of support. "Yes of course I'm renewing". "I treasure my U3A Membership!" Only a handful of people said they would wait until meetings were held face-to-face again. We had the usual dropouts of course - people who had moved away or lost interest. Most of the people without email addresses also renewed, an expression of hope in the future. The main difference this year is that we have had far fewer new members than usual.

In total, we **currently have 848 members**, down from 986 at the end of July. All in all, it's a very positive picture.

The vast majority of members (95%) have an email address, although, that does not automatically mean they have the technical know-how or the facilities (such as a camera) to use Zoom or even open attachments.

If you have any comments or questions please email Bulletin@Lewesu3a.uk