

LEWES U3A FLOURISHES DESPITE LOCKDOWN

Members embrace technology where other u3as flounder

When the first lockdown was announced in March 2020, many conveners suspended their Groups for the foreseeable future. A few are still suspended.

Now, the majority have taken on the challenge of technology to continue the courses and today some 80% run practically as normal.

In the very beginning, the conveners had to stick to the 40 minutes allowed by the free Zoom licence. They then paid for their own licence, so the meetings could last longer and more members could take part. This monthly fee was reimbursed by the u3a Treasurer.

An application for funding was granted from Lewes Town Council in October to meet some of the cost of an enhanced Zoom licence so that conveners can apply to the Committee for a

'many members still struggle with joining Zoom meetings but refuse to be left out'.

licence with no need to pay for it themselves.

Derek Blayney, at the time our IT Co-ordinator, said that he and Gordon Bull, the Chair, 'started to "sell" it to as many group leaders as would listen, some keen to get stuck in, some "desperate" to keep their groups going, some approaching with great caution, a few wouldn't listen at all. The response was much stronger than I might have expected, some picked it up quickly, some are still struggling but will not be beaten.



'A few of the most reluctant have joined in for the first time'

'Gordon and Carolyn (Mrs B) led the way by example. A few of the most reluctant have joined in for the first time in the coming term.'

Eight new courses

It is testament to the energy of Lewes u3a, that despite lockdown, *eight new courses* were introduced for this Spring Term, seven of them relying on Zoom.

Michael Austin, early adopter and support for the technology recalls, 'In the early days of using Zoom, some members had problems logging in, due to unfamiliarity. I advise people to download the [free] Zoom app. This makes logging in to a meeting easier and encourages one to set up meetings with other people.'

Degree of intimacy

'Many of our existing group leaders are now using Zoom and, of course, all our new courses are Zoomed'. And to those who are missing face to face interaction? 'One can create a degree of intimacy using breakout rooms with only a small number of people in them or one can 'chat' (privately) with one's friends.'

As our IT Co-ordinator observed, 'the people who should be on the front page are the group leaders and the many members who still struggle with joining Zoom meetings, but refuse to be left out.'

For more information about using Zoom see the pages from u3a Office [here](#) .

Course News

Some courses with vacancies

The Federal Republic of Germany

1949-1990

Zoom Mondays 1930 - 2100 from 11th January (11th & 25th January, 8th & 22nd February, 8th March)

Please contact Convenor [Michael Austin](#) to join.

This period of European history with its ever-present threat of World War III defined our lives.

Among the many topics covered, will be the development of the strongest democracy in the world, the 'Economic Miracle' of industrial rebirth, scandal and spy stories, the unique status of West Berlin, post war literature and a renaissance in the film industry, all with a 'surprise' ending.

Each session is stand alone and largely presented by different people. Our next session will be on January 25 and is on the German 'Wirtschaftswunder' in English!

Online Practical Photography: a new Course and vacancies available

Thursdays: 1400-1600. Beginners welcome.

Please contact Brian Dandridge for details brian.dandridge@btinternet.com

Examples of Brian's work can be seen at:

SmugMug

<https://www.briandandridge-photo.co.uk>

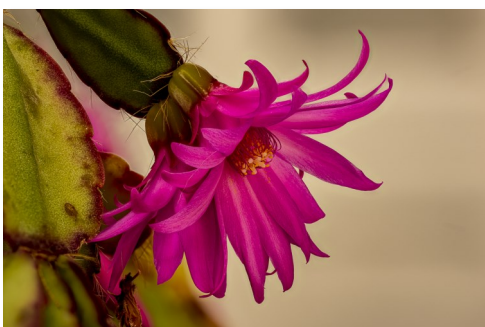


Photo: Brian Dandridge, Easter Cactus

Online Coffee Club: an informal chit chat

Third Tuesday of the month 1100-1200 **Places available.**

Please contact Eileen Bull ebull@btinternet.com

Online Bridge: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays; practically '**unlimited**' places; please contact:

Tuesdays: 1600-1800, Rosemary Carter ro_mackie@hotmail.com ,

Wednesdays: 1345-1600, Carolyn Blayney carolyn.blayney@btinternet.com

Carolyn says 'I run Practice Sessions for new members, so that they can get used to running the BBO (Bridge Base Online) website and Zoom together. These are for 3 players and are run at a time that is mutually convenient for all of them.'

Fridays: 1545-1800, Wendy Atkinson wendyatkinson.name@gmail.com

Soviet Music Group: a non-Zoom Group!

Fortnightly: on demand



Please contact Terry Metheringham terrymetheringham@btinternet.com

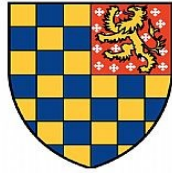
'The Soviet Music group will be exploring Shostakovich's spectacular opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*.

There is no limit to the size of this group – anyone can join.

The material for these sessions is a sort of self-paced travel guide to the opera, working through the nine scenes, surrounding them with biographical, historical, ideological and social excursions.

There will be links to on-line performances of the music. Alternatively. the material can be used with old-fashioned CDs.'

Covid Hero Award



Mayor of Lewes, Councillor John Lamb has awarded Lewes u3a's **Derek Blayney** a medal for his 'positive contribution' during the Covid Crisis.

Derek deferred his 'retirement' from the u3a Committee because 'Covid came along'. Since then he has tirelessly lent his skills and knowledge to prevent many Lewes u3a groups from being suspended and as a result, we now have 80% of our courses up and running on Zoom despite, unbelievably, Derek having no previous knowledge of Zoom.

The nomination

Gordon Bull, who made the nomination, said that 'Derek's work in establishing and supporting the use of Zoom for both members and Group Leaders has been as important for the continuation of Lewes u3a during lockdown as it is for the wellbeing of our members.'

Thank you, Derek, for your work for our u3a, we couldn't be more proud.

Historic Lewes Guided Walks

Update from Mary Burke, Convenor of the new group

'I have taken a lot of bookings but these were set up when we were in Tier 2.

'In Tier 4 we are not able to meet more than one other person outside and so going round with 5 others is not allowed.

'I hope we can reschedule when these restrictions are lifted.'

Lewes Public Lectures

Rewilding in Britain: Can people and nature thrive together?

7.30pm, January 27th



Have you ever looked at the landscape around you and asked yourself: is this land providing everything people and nature need from it?

Rewilding is about giving nature the chance to recover itself, and I will explore some of the associated costs and benefits of more rewilding in Britain.

Chris Sandom: 'I've been interested in nature and biology for as long as I can remember. My interests led me to studying Environmental Biology and Geography at St Andrews and then did my PhD on how wolves and wild boar could help restore the Caledonian pine forest.

I'm now a Senior Lecturer at the University of Sussex, Chair of Rewilding Sussex, and a Director of Wild Business'



Reservations for the talk may be made at [Rewilding in Britain](#).

Also look out for

Kamran Matin's talk on

The Plight of the Iranian Kurds

7.30pm, February 17th

What makes families desperate enough to risk their lives crossing the English Channel in inflatable dinghies to seek asylum?

Booking details will be circulated to everyone in due course.



SAVE THE DATE!

U3a Day, Wednesday 2 June 2021

U3a day is an initiative from u3a Office, there will be national publicity supporting activities:

- To raise the profile of our u3a so, collectively, there is more awareness nationally as all u3as take part
- To help challenge negative perceptions of older adults
- To invite other Third Agers to learn how u3a supports the lives of retired people.

We are looking for volunteers to help with planning an activity to support the Day. Please get in touch with Jackie at publicity@lewesu3a.uk if you can help. No skills necessary, just enthusiasm!



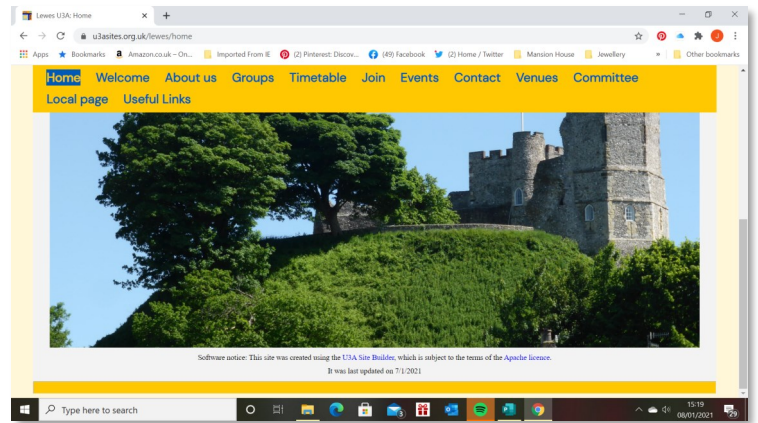
Look out for us on Facebook

We are joining the 21st century and creating a Facebook Page.

A Facebook Page differs from a Group in that there is not the emphasis on 'conversations' or exchanges of views, but more as a notice board, where the content can be changed quickly and easily. It will of course be linked to our website for more detailed information. If this is successful, we may explore setting up a Facebook Group for members only, or conveners of the bigger Groups may want to set up one of their own.

We hope that this Page can swiftly reflect current events with your Lewes u3a, and attract those newly retired, who may not be aware of u3a, but may be encouraged to investigate it further.

If you have experience of social media and would like to help with this, please get in touch!



WEBSITE WATCH

u3asites.org.uk/lewes/home

The **Local Page** or Local Community Page, includes local information of interest to members but not directly related to our courses.

There are items related to Covid-19, and news on vaccinations. There are also community notices covering requests from local voluntary organisations, unwanted items being offered by members and a request for assistance on an academic research project.

We are keen to expand the use of this page as a local community notice board including useful information which is not widely available.

The **Useful Links** page has links to various web sites which are relevant to the U3A activities of our members. One section is devoted to the Third Age Trust itself including on-line talks and courses. The other section provides links to local organisations, groups and societies whose activities complement our own courses.

If any members have any suggestions for either page please contact Tony Wheeler, our Web Editor at WebEditor@Lewesu3a.uk

Need more help using a computer and accessing websites? Click [here](#) for a selection of free online courses, or visit www.learnmyway.com

Comments, suggestions or enquiries always welcome. Email: Bulletin@lewesu3a.uk