



Happy New Year to you all,

How glad are you to kick 2020 into touch? It is an understatement to say that last year was challenging, so many have lost loved ones to the pandemic, and we all have felt the restrictions to our liberty that this virus has caused. I know that the fight against Covid is not yet won, and dare I say it, Brexit is going to present us with new challenges. Yet, there is light at the end of this very dark tunnel, the vaccine is on its way to somewhere near you!



**JANUARY 2021**

There is something very alluring about using the new year as a marker for change. It is not only an opportunity for a fresh start but also a time for reflection and yes, thanksgiving. I don't want to be one of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's 'doomsters', in fact, I have given Sandra permission to make sure that I don't turn into a grumpy old man – a Victor Meldrew, sound -alike!! So, let's be thankful for all our National Health and Ancillary health workers for their sacrificial service. I was very proud to stand outside of our home to clap them, weren't you? Let's be thankful for family, neighbours and friends who have willingly sought to do shopping for us. Thanks for Zoom, and to David Poulton, our Membership Secretary, who has taken on the lion share, in setting up these meetings. Now I know some members dislike Zoom; other can't access it, but it has enabled us to run some of our groups. Thanks, for members who have been willing to help keep our spirits up by making their humorous contributions to our WhatsApp Group. One final thanks, for the Science Community that have produced a vaccine, giving us protection against the virus. I must confess, I felt a real sense of pride at the accomplishment of our own Scientists in Oxford, at the speed at which they were able to produce the vaccine. Soon, we will be able to say goodbye to the mantra of 2020 – hands – face – space!

Now that 2020 is behind us, it is fitting that we remember those of our members who passed away during last year, Connie Evans, Kathleen Flint, Meiriona Bateman and I have just learnt that Maria Noot's husband passed away, so we pass on our condolences to Maria. Some of our Members have been unwell, such as Michael Williams, and we wish him a speedy recovery and any other members who I am not aware of who have been unwell.

Even during this disruptive year, new members have been added, and we warmly welcome them. I trust our programme will return to 'normality' post-vaccination, whatever the 'new normal' will be. Over the Christmas period, I heard from Nigel Perrins (a former member,

who moved from the area). He asked me to extend his best wishes to all his friends in Llanelli U3A.

Now, I must say a word of thanks to you all. As members you have been particularly patient during this past year. Even though our usual U3A activities have been severely restricted due to the pandemic, you have sought to engage as well as you can. Michael Morris has sought to organise the Boules Group, yes, I know that the restrictions can seem rather tiresome after a while. However, we do have a duty of care to all our members and a responsibility to honour the Governments guidelines. Some members have shown a great stoical spirit, playing in the rain!!

Sandra Ivinson, has sought to maintain the **Book Group on the 3rd Monday of the month at 10.30am**, Zoom has provided the opportunity for this to continue. David Poulton, has hosted the **Zoom Discussion Group held on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 2.00pm** and the **Monthly Lecture held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 2.00pm** and I have hosted the **WhyPay Discussion Group on the 2nd Tuesday of the Month at 2.00pm**. Because of the latest lockdown situation, your Committee has agreed to have two lectures in the month, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month. So, here is the Lecture programme for the next three months:

January 13: Dr Sandra Ivinson, subject: "The Depiction of Women in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century novel".

January 27: Michael Morris: "Life as a Farmer".

February 10: "The Pestilence in Wales" (A presentation by Historical Drama group).

February 24: "Poetry Please" (Members to read their favourite poems).

March 10: John Ivinson: "Life in Tudor times".

March 24: Romero's El Salvador: David Poulton.

If you are not on Zoom, you can listen by using your landline. For more information about this please contact me.

Why does the start of a new year carry such symbolism? Why is it's celebration so common around the world? Is it that it presents us with a new start and a chance to commit to making essential improvement in our life? The philosophy that undergirds the U3A is one that is committed to `lifelong learning`. So, let me encourage you to join us on Zoom, or via your landline. If you wish to set up a group on Zoom, let me know and if you would like to take one of our Lecture spots, please let me know and I will see how we can facilitate it.

That's enough from me. Let me wish you all, on behalf of your Committee a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

John

(Chairman)