

u3a
NEWMARKET

E-News



Special Edition

ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2020-21

SUB-COMMITTEES

Activities Sub-Committee Report

Just before Christmas 2020 we had planned to advertise ourselves in a different way. This was to install Christmas trees dressed with baubles in blue and gold, the U3A colours, in two church festivals. This was Stetchworth and Ashley - Ashley the bigger affair.

Joanne had crafted during the months prior to this. Many thanks to her. Together with help from the Activities Sub-committee and leaflets from the Publicity Sub-committee and a few hiccups around COVID-19 difficulties, we displayed two colourful trees with all our groups represented.

The Thursford Concert was postponed until 2021. Something for us to look forward to.

Other events such as a BBQ have been shelved yet again, until we hope later this year.

The National U3A day on June 2nd was in full swing but was thought to be pushing our revenues too far, as we have had no income this last year.

I have now stood down from any committee work and can only hope that we can all meet again.

Niddy Walpole

Publicity Sub-Committee Report

The last 12 months has provided a big challenge for the Publicity Team: mainly what can we publicise? No face-to-face meetings, no get-togethers, no walking groups and of course what were we going to do about the Newsletter that we could not get printed. Our best laid plans for the 2020-21 publicity agenda disappeared into lockdown so a number of ideas got put onto the back burner (hopefully for resurrection very soon).

Since the last AGM the E-News has been coming out monthly with the objective of maintaining contact with and reaching out to our members with regular information about groups, the Newmarket U3A group as a whole and general updates on life in the somewhat uncertain times we all went through.

Our focus had of course to be based on communicating through the electronic media available to us. With that in mind the Publicity Team focused its attention on not only E-News but also the website and Facebook. Sending out invitations to Zoom events has become part of the fabric of Publicity. We appreciate that not all members have either the equipment or the technology to follow these but, where we have been asked, we have also printed and delivered (thanks to the generous help of other members) to these members.

Our Facebook membership has gradually increased with some great pictures and very useful information being shared. The use of the comprehensive and improved website has grown as members became aware that a well-stocked and detailed repository of information was available at their fingertips. Hopefully this will lead to members being encouraged to try other groups as well when the restrictions are fully lifted.

We are all looking forward to a sigh of relief as national lockdown comes to an end. But, as well as enjoying the additional freedoms, the Publicity Team put together a special hard copy Newmarket U3A publication called 'Moving Forward', to be delivered during July. It is magazine-style, not an E-News format, as we want to celebrate with all of you the success of Newmarket U3A in communicating with and helping its members throughout the past 12 months. There are contributions from our committees and co-ordinators, but most of all, we have enjoyed hearing what you, as non-committee members, have been doing to keep yourselves interested and involved. We hope 'Moving Forward' helps to celebrate the resilience of spirit and inventiveness of the membership.

As a Publicity Sub-Committee we were determined to ensure as much of our membership as possible was kept fully informed of the fact that Newmarket U3A, unlike many other national groups, just did not go into 'lockdown hibernation' but tried to keep business going as far as possible. We sincerely hope that we were able to fulfil this for all the members and my congratulations and thanks to all of the Publicity Sub-Committee members for rising to the challenge and, (I like to think anyway), helping to move Newmarket U3A forward and through the Coronavirus challenges and looking at new ways of interacting with the Group members.

Nigel Day

Resources Sub-Committee Report

This sub-committee like all the other sub-committees has continued to work throughout the lockdowns.

The original group of Grace Crump, Liz Langley, Joan Watkinson, Tim Young and I, were joined in the last few months by Cheryl Bampton and Di Angus-Smith.

We have been delving deep into the world of Gift Aid, reading and re-reading the great number of guidance notes and advice from the Third Age Trust, Charity Commission and HMRC.

A poll of members revealed many supported the idea of our U3A registering to claim Gift Aid on annual subscriptions. This encouraged us to pursue the idea and early this year an application was made to register with HMRC to allow us to do this. All the reading and extensive discussions, by email, Zoom and in person paid off as the application was swiftly granted without further queries being raised.

This means that in future the income of Newmarket U3A will be supplemented by claiming from HMRC a further 25% of the membership fee paid by eligible members, these claims can be backdated to the date we became a charity which will go some way to offset the loss of income incurred by the offering of free membership to all existing members for 2020/21.

Claiming Gift Aid also meant changes to future membership forms as signatures will be needed to confirm members are willing for us to claim Gift Aid on their subscription. We must express our thanks to Chris Timmins and Barry Coles who have been instrumental in creating the new form.

Latterly we have been attempting to enter the world of online banking in order to make it easier to pay subscriptions by bank transfer and also to make payment of any bills by the Treasurer more straightforward. This has entailed Di spending many hours on the telephone chasing up the applications as well as visiting the bank in person. Thankfully this now seems to be being resolved.

We have also been keeping a close watch on the balance in the Bank Accounts, because although there has been no income in the past year there have been unavoidable outgoings, for example the capitation we have to pay to the Third Age Trust for each member, renewal of all the necessary licences and other incidental expenses including printing and Speaker fees. We are happy to say that the Executive Committee have shown their full support for any recommendations we have put to them.

Kath Gifkins

ACTIVITY GROUP REPORTS

Antiques

Due to COVID we have not met at all since last March but David has done two Zoom links for us and another in June. He is now living in Peterborough but has agreed to continue our Tesco meetings whenever we are allowed to.

I am looking to stand down from this group and we are looking for two of you to step in please. Let Stephanie Ellington know if you can help.

Niddy Walpole

2nd Tuesday and Modelmaking

These groups were developed specifically to allow members to meet while engaging in a variety of activities. Modelmaking started first and became a select group of six who devoted two hours to working on individual models and supporting each other on questions related to their models.

2nd Tuesday was designed as an opportunity for members to meet as and when, and to participate in various activities, or indeed, none if they simply wished to meet others. In the two hour session there was an opportunity to seek help with IT issues, to watch an hour-long documentary, to read a selection of books and magazines, to talk to committee members, or just to engage with other members over a cup of coffee. This, of course, could not happen during the lockdown and the Executive Committee sought other ways to retain contact.

Tim Young

Camera Group

When the government announced the first lockdown there was a short period of head scratching about what the group could do now our congenial meetings were prohibited but we found a way to migrate our monthly photo challenges on-line using a system called Padlet. This allows members to upload their entries to a special invitation-only website and then to vote for the winning photo each month. The co-ordinators also had to re-think the monthly subjects to still allow as many members as possible to join in, whatever lockdown restrictions they needed to live under.

Group members have responded positively to the online competition each month submitting their creative interpretations of the monthly theme with a healthy number of high quality photos. However, we recognise this arrangement is no substitute for actually meeting up for a coffee and a chat but we will continue online until our regular venue (or another) can be opened up safely for our meeting. We will carry on with the online competition in the meantime and think about our next exhibition which will probably be in the newly refurbished Newmarket Library. We do not yet know when this will be but it will provide a great opportunity for us to share our enjoyment of photography and publicise our U3A, hoping to entice new members!

Finally, we also send our thanks to Barry Coles who we were sorry to hear had decided in March to stand down, after 5 years of service as Lead Coordinator, for health reasons. John Herring stepped in to take over the role and will endeavour to carry on Barry's excellent work.

John Herring, Chris Timmins and Kath Gifkins.

Carpet Bowls Group

The group meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 10.30 in the Exning Road Club.

Unfortunately due to the nature of this activity we have not been able to meet since March 2019. All being well we hope to be able to resume as soon as restrictions allow and the Exning Road Club becomes available.

Alan and Kath Gifkins

Cook Off Friday

Cook Off Friday was created for Zoom meetings just before Christmas 2020. We cook the chosen (by me) winner's choice of recipe and have a natter over any problems that might have occurred or give each other quick tips. We regularly have 12-13 link in. However in September we hope to meet at the Ashley Pavilion with our cooked goods. This means we can all sample them and decide the winner over a coffee. Do come along .

Niddy Walpole

Discussion Group

When the Government announced the first lockdown and that our meetings would be prohibited we reluctantly took the decision to suspend the Discussion group.

A significant proportion of our regular attendees did not have on-line access so the 'Zoom option' was not felt appropriate. We await news of when our former venue at Newmarket Day Centre may be able to welcome the group back and look forward to resuming our meetings when that time comes.

Ann Lay and John Herring

Drama Group

The Drama Group has had rather an up-and-down existence over the past year. However, it settled at a regular, enthusiastic attendance of eight members.

After the lockdown the group took to the internet, recording various pieces to be put on our website and coming to terms with using Zoom for a regular, creative session. This was difficult: the ways of electronics and the set-up of Zoom make dramatic conversation difficult but we persevered.

In the summer there was a brief relief from the total lockdown and we met twice in a small group of six. This was thoroughly enjoyable and refreshed everyone. However, as autumn progressed, lockdown was reimposed, we went back to Zoom and looked for ways that we might celebrate Christmas. The eight members created an hour-long programme of poetry and prose which was performed to an enthusiastic Zoom audience. In the new year we began work on a programme of animal-orientated items with every intention of performing this, one way or another on National U3A Day. Unfortunately, this U3A decided not to participate on that day and to wait for opportunities later in the year.

At present we have suspended our Zoom sessions and are investigating the possibilities of short, complete plays which might be performed live in the future.

For various reasons, the group numbers fell from a high of 12 regular members to just eight so we hope very much to be able to recruit more members for the next year.

Tim Young

French Conversation Group

During the pandemic we have done our best to continue by email, but we are now a very small and select group and Alison's working hours are changing so we have decided to close the group. Many thanks to all those who have come along and conversed or contributed online over the last couple of years!

Alison Giles

Garden Group

During lockdown members have been encouraged to take a wander around their own garden at the beginning of each month, note plants in flower, take pictures and post them on Facebook. We have had some meetings via Zoom including one from an outside speaker which was much enjoyed. We held a poll of our members asking what they hated and loved in their garden, followed by a Zoom meeting to discuss the results. Two plant sales have been held - one on a very cold, blustery, wet afternoon in October and another on a rather brighter day this May. These managed to raise a total of £110 which we will use to pay speakers in the coming

year. Many thanks to all who donated planted plants and to those who bought them. We hope to meet as usual and arrange much missed garden visits once allowed to do so.

Kath Gifkins and Rosemary Foreman

History Group

Last Summer the group studied the village of Burwell which we all enjoyed and ended with a lovely printed booklet of our work. All members can access this to read by a link on the History webpage.

I have become more used to doing my talks by Zoom. Maybe in September we can meet face to face at Exning again. I have taken the plunge and am attempting PowerPoint presentations in the near future and again attempting to come to terms with having every picture copyright accredited, which has not been easy for me.

During this Lockdown 2021 some of the Group have researched museums of their choice which are within an hour's drive from Newmarket. It's a bit early for small group visits, which had been the aim, but we have, with Chris Timmins' help, a map with the museums flagged on it. You click on this and you can read information about it. You might fancy small trips out on your own or with your partner ? So I hope this will help you to decide where to go.

My talks are on a wide variety of topics from shoes to architecture so I hope that you can find, over the year, something that appeals. Please come and join us. Email me and I can send you the Zoom link.

Niddy Walpole

History of Science

Since the group began earlier this year we have discussed earthquake monitoring, sunshine detection, Darwin's microscope and globes of Mars and other planets. We hope to continue the group as a Zoom group, with the occasional visit to the museum itself. The next session will be on weather prediction. We have an enthusiastic and knowledgeable set of people joining sessions and more are always welcome.

Alison Giles

Lunch Group

Unfortunately the group has not been able to meet this year due to lockdown restrictions and it is with regret that we have to announce that due to health reasons we are no longer able to continue as co-ordinators for the Lunch Group. To enable the group to carry on we do of course need a willing member, or members to take over as soon as possible in order for the group to continue. Please contact Stephanie Ellington (skle2@cam.ac.uk) if you are prepared to be the co-ordinator. If required we are ready to assist anyone who is willing to take up the post of Lunch Group coordinator, or please give us a call if you are considering this position but would like more information. We thank you all for the support you have given us in making this such a successful group and we hope to join you on as many occasions as we can in the future

Brenda and Mike Hastings

Mah Jong

Unfortunately the group has not been able to meet this year due to lockdown restrictions.

I am sorry to say I am now stepping down as Mah Jong coordinator, owing to my husband Phil's ill health. I would like to thank all my good friends who supported me over many years, it's been a real pleasure to know you all, and wish you all the very best for the future.

Iris Boggie

Music Appreciation

During the past year of non-meetings we have tried to hold our members' interest by releasing a number of YouTube '5 minute' videos. Many were released via the monthly E-news with others being sent direct to our members' email inboxes.

Richard, Judy and Mike were involved in the creation of the videos, all of which are available via the U3A website under the Group page for Music Appreciation. Apologies for the somewhat random method of labelling but just click on a link and see what appears.

We look forward to welcoming existing and (hopefully) new members when we re-start proper meetings with sound and vision (plus tea or coffee ?) .

Mike Jocelyn

M3A Music

This group, which met at Gracewell Care Home, had only held two meetings before the lockdown was imposed. As we met at a care home, there was no question of any continuation. The membership was scarcely confirmed, although in those two meetings seven members had attended one or both sessions and the group was showing promise. There remain many decisions to be made as to where, when and how the group might continue, post pandemic.

Tim Young

Realm of Books

The Realm of Books group used to meet on the 4th Friday of each month at All Saints Church in Newmarket. Since the pandemic we have been meeting on Zoom, still on the 4th Friday of the month. There are usually about nine of us and those who are unable to join us on Zoom send in their reviews of the books via email. These reviews are also sent to the group members and posted on the website under "Covid-19 Book Group" and we have been continuing successfully with this each month. We have learned a good deal during the past year and the reviews sent in by our members have been much appreciated and therefore we intend to continue with this once we are able to meet face to face again.

In December we had compiled a list of the books to read for the next months. Already we have read and discussed:

Claire Tomalin, *Charles Dickens: a Life*
Barbara Kingsolver, *Unsheltered*
Atul Gawande, *Being Mortal*
Richard Osman, *The Thursday Murder Club*
Delia Owens, *Where the Crawdads Sing*

The full list of our current authors and our reviews can be found on our website or you can get details by contacting Margaret on 01638 615252.

Margaret Jocelyn

Scrabble

As soon as is permissible, we cannot wait to be back in action playing the game we love with plentiful help from the dictionary to resolve any queries!!! We hope that you have remained safe and well during the recent very testing times, and we look forward to seeing you all in person as soon as possible.

Janet Neville & Liz Langley

Speaker Meetings

Taking over the as Speaker secretary in the middle of a pandemic has meant the role has been very different from my initial expectations. Niddy, organised as ever, had booked several speakers to entertain us well in to the following year and I anticipated leisurely selecting suitable speakers to talk later in 2021. However I had been warned that not all speakers would be willing or able to present on Zoom. So I duly contacted each speaker to discover that not many wanted to talk to us on Zoom usually because their talks didn't translate so well using this medium. I envisaged having to trawl through websites to find suitable alternatives. To my surprise I have found that speakers were contacting us to offer their talks and what a vast and interesting range of talks are on offer. One of the benefits of Zoom talks is that we have been able to host speakers from all over the country as there are no travel expenses. I have also been able to take advantage of recommendations from a network of u3a groups in the region.

It has been a delight to be introduced to the world of professional speakers and getting the chance to select who we engage has been a bonus. We have had a steady 20 to 25 members linking in each month to Zoom. I look forward to meeting you all in person when we are able to resume meetings at Exning Social Club. I hope we will also welcome back members who have not wanted or not been able to join Zoom. To members who have not yet attended a speaker meeting at all I would say please come along. I think you would be surprised at the range of talks available from the worlds of comedy, music, travel and places of interest to name a few.

Trish Newell

Walking

Like most things, the Walking Group's activities during the past year have been somewhat curtailed, but members did enjoy two walks last summer. In August 2020, Kath and Alan led a walk at West Stow Country Park – a very hot day and the refreshments afterwards at the open-air café were very welcome. They also led a walk in and around Ely in September.

With the easing of restrictions and some warmer weather, Kath and Alan also led a walk in the Ashley/Cheveley area on the 9th June 2021. This proved very popular and most of the walkers then met for lunch at the New Wellington afterwards.

Rosemary Foreman

Wings, Wheels & Water

The group has carried on throughout the pandemic, moving from live meetings to articles on our website page and then to Zoom meetings. The attendance has remained steady, slightly below the normal and this can be accounted for by members not on the internet. These members were provided with hard copies of the articles put on the website.

This Interest Group reflects absolutely the tenets of the U3A and the principles set out when it was established 40 years ago. Founded by one individual, the group built up a regular attendance of between 20 and 30 members for each monthly meeting. From time to time they were set, voluntary, 'homework tasks' and from this another member became a regular contributor. Through his contacts he built up connections with a U3A group in Scotland. Shortly afterwards another member volunteered to lead a session and created a contact with a U3A group in Wales. As of this year, we now have a trio of presenters, providing the Wings, Wheels & Water group with a varied set of topics and of styles of presentation. This has kept the group enthusiastic and lively during the dark days of lockdown.

Tim Young

Other Groups

Arts Appreciation

Unfortunately the group has not been able to meet this year due to lockdown restrictions.

Rhythm & Rhyme

Is an online-only group for those who enjoy reading poetry and perhaps looking at the stories behind the poems, as well as those who enjoy writing – expressing and sharing their thoughts and feelings in verse form.

Rummikub

Unfortunately the group has not been able to meet this year due to lockdown restrictions.