

SHIPSTON ON STOUR U3A

UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2020

It is very sad that we, again, find ourselves in lockdown but, hopefully, this time only for a month. Despite this, those Groups operating via Zoom or similar can continue and we will still have the Monthly Speaker online. The recent talk on Gilbert and Sullivan was a success and there are further speakers lined up for future meetings. If this form of monthly meeting continues to meet your requirements, we will run on the system into the future months until we are safely able to meet up once again.

If you have any ideas or feedback on how we can use the internet more imaginatively to provide you with information, interest or entertainment, we would be pleased to hear. The Executive Committee continues to "meet" and we are very much open to new ideas - so, please get in touch.

In this issue of Update, we also provide: a short report of the initial virtual monthly meeting; advice on which Groups are active and updates from groups; a further request for volunteers to join the Executive Committee and in particular a request that someone will take up the role of Secretary; and details of the November Monthly Meeting.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

In the October UPDATE it was explained that we are looking for a few more volunteers to join our Committee and asked for expressions of interest. Unfortunately, no one came forward with offers to help. This is a really difficult problem. If we do not have a viable committee then **'YOUR U3A' will not be able to survive.**

We desperately need a replacement Secretary. This is a very important role which has been carried out to date by one person but it could probably also be performed as a 'job-share' if you would prefer that approach. The main duties are drafting Agendas, taking Minutes, circulating information across the Committee and maintaining contact with U3A HQ and remaining up to date on its advice. Currently your committee are sharing all these duties on top of the jobs they already had and this is **not sustainable.**

In addition to a secretary we also need volunteers to join the committee. Currently we are four short of normal strength. This puts an additional burden on committee members as obviously they have to undertake extra duties especially at this difficult time when efforts are being made to adapt our offerings to alternative delivery methods due to COVID-19 restrictions.

No particular skills or experience are needed, just a willingness to help out in a variety of ways to suit your preferences. If you might be interested, please contact cgreen.wth@gmail.com

WEBSITE UPDATE

Christine Russel is our new website manager (christineaarussel@outlook.com) and would welcome suggestions for improvements and specifically to receive updates from Group Leaders.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

October Monthly Meeting “The musical theatre of Gilbert and Sullivan” by Bernard Lockett

The Monthly meeting in October was a trial of an online talk using Zoom since Covid-19 restrictions will not allow our normal monthly meetings to proceed. The talk, by Bernard Lockett, was of general interest and provided an informative and entertaining presentation and he answered questions from the audience.

His talk began with the historical background and assessment of the works of G&S. He described the vast amount of social and political satire within the works which is perhaps overlooked when most discussions of G&S focus on the Musical Theatre aspects. He also discussed recent productions of many old favourites.

The talk was given using Zoom and, following the meeting, participants were sent a short survey to enable the committee to evaluate levels of satisfaction with the delivery method. The feedback was very positive but there were several suggestions for improvement.

It would also be interesting to hear from members, who didn't participate, to tell us why they didn't join us for such an interesting meeting. Was it because you were uncertain of how to use ZOOM; did you have other plans that meant you couldn't join us on that day but that you will on future occasions; was the topic not of interest to you; or anything else?

November Monthly Meeting

November's talk will be provided by Mithy, an online talks provider, and the talk will be free to members. It will be at 2pm pm Tuesday 24th November and last about 40 minutes.

The subject is “**Black Cats, New Moons & Ladders – The origins of Superstitions**” by Sandy Leong.

A belief in luck and fate are the key components of superstitions and that they can be controlled by various actions of human beings. Do you throw salt over your shoulder if you spill it? Know that it's good luck if you see two magpies together; wonder if things didn't go as planned because it was Friday 13th, and touch wood for good luck? But where did these beliefs originate? Sandy is an historian, passionate about bringing history to life and is a lively and entertaining speaker. She has a popular series of entertaining, light hearted talks on general historical subjects. However she specialises in the Tudors, an exciting time in the country as it was changing fast; and in the Viking period, who are much more than the stereotype of raiders in horned helmets. She is an international, professional speaker, and published author. Information on registration for the meeting will be sent out in due course.

All members with email will be sent an invitation to register for this event, later this week.

UPDATE ON INTEREST GROUPS

Whilst the Covid-19 restrictions still curtail some Groups, others are still active, as set out below.

- Ancient Greek for Beginners - via Zoom.
- Book Group - via Zoom with the current book being “Big Sky” by Kate Atkinson, a crime novel featuring former detective Jackson Brodie.
- Current Affairs - via Zoom.
- Jazz/Blues
- Latin - via Zoom.
- Mindfulness and Meditation - via Zoom.
- Spanish Conversation – via Zoom.

We would like to encourage members to consider forming new groups. Contact Lynne Richardson (richardsonlynnne@yahoo.co.uk) if you have any ideas. Also, if any members are interested in joining a group that is not currently provided get in touch with Lynne. You never know there may be several people with the same idea!

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Walking from Shipston Group

The walking from Shipston Group got off to a good start in the middle of October. Two group walks have taken place each week with a maximum of 6 walkers in each walk. Walkers met at the river bridge car park and, despite some very inclement weather at times, set off to walk approximately 4-5 miles with big smiles! Thankfully all were still smiling by the end!

Unfortunately lock-down 2 has arrived and walks are suspended for the time being. But we will be back as soon as possible.

Drawing and Painting Group

The Drawing and Painting Group have had a really good idea! The group leader, Jean Olsson, has asked her members to join in with painting a picture of a poppy/poppies and/or displaying poppies in windows for Armistice Day 11th November and joining in a clap at 11 am.

You may not be a member of the group but why not join them? [Here](#) is a link to pictures of poppies that may inspire you.

If any of you do paint a picture or make a display please send a photo to us.

Table Tennis

“The RESTART Programme has come to a temporary halt, but we are looking forward to RESTART 2 in December / January” but read on to find out what has been happening and what you have to look forward to!

Playing Table Tennis with the changing rules, regulations and laws over the past few months has indeed been a challenge. After the 1st lockdown, we started to play again in The Townsend Hall but with multiple sessions, singles only games and sanitation stations to follow the Table Tennis England guidelines. This worked well until the rules were cranked up again with the Rule of 6 dominating thinking. This, plus the Medical Centre wanting The Hall for Flu jabs on Thursdays, threatened to end the group activity – you can’t Zoom Table Tennis!

But, after some creative thinking and extra organisation, two sessions have been running on Fridays, in two separate bubbles of 6 people separated by screens and a sanitisation station between the two! We even had to resolve how to handle Table Tennis balls bouncing into the “other bubble”, but have now solved this and other niggling problems to the point where we have welcomed two new members this month!

So, with infections rising across the country we still felt we were offering a safe environment for play and it is really appreciated by our members as the quotes below show:

“A bit of normal in the chaos”

“Table Tennis keeps me sane!”

And of course: “Keep calm and carry on!”

Which is what we will do!

Now as lock down 2 is about to start everything has changed (again). A photo is attached to show how things have been organised for the last couple of months. We will be up and running again as soon as it is possible!

Dave Pettit would like to thank all who have been attending and helping over the past difficult months - especially Peter who has been a hero. The Group Co-ordinator, Lynne, would like to join Dave in offering thanks to all the members and add that Dave and Peter have worked exceptionally hard to bring the Table Tennis group back to life and wish them them good luck for Restart 2.

IDEAS FOR UPDATE

The Committee would welcome members ideas for items for the monthly **UPDATE** which is an important communication document to keep everyone in the picture.

Therese Woodward

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