



UP2DATE



NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2022

**A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF STOCKPORT U3A
FROM ALL THE COMMITTEE.**

And the year 2022 looks as if it will be yet again a year of changes. As you will all know we are looking for a new home for our monthly main meeting, one that is big enough for us to sit and listen to a speaker, hopefully with a kitchen so that we can enjoy a cup of tea and a chat, and car parking space as many more of us become more reliant on our cars as the means of getting around. The Committee are actively searching for a suitable home, if you have any bright ideas, please let us know.

On the administration side of the u3a we have recently decided as a committee to subscribe to the Beacon System linked with the u3a. This will help greatly with the running of our u3a and take away what could be counted as grunt work and give the committee more time to do the fun things. For example, at this point in the year I would be producing the membership cards for 2022-2023, editing, altering the renewal date, printing, and laminating. From now on the Beacon system will edit the list and as the cards will be printed on card there will be no need to laminate. So, when you pay your subscriptions this year you will receive a new type of membership card. Eventually all administrative areas of our u3a will be covered by the Beacon system.

New groups have started, Line Dancing is proving to be very popular and interest in the Rummikub is high with the first meeting to happen on 1st February. Don't forget if you have an idea for a new group do not hesitate to contact a member of the committee.

So, here's to an enjoyable and successful 2022.

SYDNEY NEW YEAR'S EVE 2021-2022



How do I describe one of the most exciting nights of my life? I thought at 81 I had seen all I was to see in my life but “No” experiences still happen to me that make me stand back and say, “Wow! Did that happen to me. I am so lucky.” This all relates to another adventure to Australia I have done and am still here December/January 21/22.

Getting here was fraught with a special Parental Visa awarded to me, Covid tests, verify who I am and more, but I did it. I left England on Boxing Day and arrived on 27th December to visit my son and family. I had not seen them for over two years as you can imagine. On arrival, still Covid aware I had to have a Covid test and isolate until the result was back. Usually in 48 hours but the Australian Health Units are so overstretched I thought it would be longer, but I was surprised when a negative test came back in 24 hours. I was FREE.

The exciting, wonderful experience came about on New Year's Eve. We were fortunate to apply and be granted tickets to watch the New Year's Eve Fireworks from the forecourt at the Opera House. Only 3000 people allowed in a gated area whereas other years many more 1000's would have been allowed in.

Lee organised a picnic, so off we went. Kelly (Lee's wife), Ryan (grandson) and Sabine (his girlfriend). We took cushions as we knew there was no seating, all concrete flooring. After checks who we were and signing in as everyone has to do proving vaccinated, we settled on the warm floor. It had been a hot day, so the concrete had retained the heat. So, there we were overlooking the best view in the world opposite Sydney Harbour Bridge. So lucky. Out came the picnic table, low, so that we could enjoy our food. There was

certainly picnic envy with other people as they had not thought of bringing our prawns, dips, pate, bread etc. There was a bar on site to provide plastic glasses and drinks. No glass allowed of course. And so there we all sat.

We sat for two hours enjoying the sights- people watching – then a huge sign lit up the minutes- 59-58-57 etc. Then as 8 appeared the whole crowd chanted down 8-7-6 etc. then Happy New Year lit up and the biggest bang from behind us as we stood facing the Bridge. This came from the Botanical Gardens and continued for the whole 15 minutes with non-stop fireworks.



This as well as the Bridge erupting into action, filled the whole area with noise; booms, bangs, whistles, cheers, clapping. Every noise imaginable happened. The bridge fireworks got bigger and bigger, more colourful- galaxies of stars, beautiful flowers, sky high rockets, profuse changes of colour- even gold fireworks showering the whole length of the underside of the Bridge. My descriptions are not worthy of the sights, sounds, smells and

the “just being there” emotions. Over 12 minutes of wonderment that I never thought in my life I would experience and being there “for real”. Seeing each year, the Sydney fireworks on my TV were always the first I watched from around the world and here I was in the middle of it all. The screams, the whistling, the shouts, the clapping not heard on the TV and had to there to be in the “thick of it” to experience. As I write I can still hear and remember. It certainly took the lethargy out of the Sydneysiders for a short while due to Covid worries.



A night to remember. For me. Thrilling. Never to be forgotten. Dynamic. Magnificent. Wonderful.

(Wonder where my next adventure will take me?)

Barbara Marriott Article and photographs. (Sent 2nd January 2022.)

(I think we should name Barbara as our roving reporter as we have had items about her experiences in Australia, New Zealand, and India.)

EATING IN THE FIFTIES

1. Pasta was not eaten.
2. Curry was surname.
3. A takeaway was a mathematical problem.
4. A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.
5. Crisps were plain. The only choice we had, to put the salt on or not.
6. Rice was only eaten as milk pudding.
7. A “Big Mac” was what we wore when it was raining.
8. Brown bread was what only poor people ate.
9. Oil was for lubricating. Fat was for cooking.
10. Tea was made in a teapot using leaves and was never green.



11. Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days and was regarded as white gold.
Cubed sugar was regarded as “Posh!”.

12. Fish didn’t have fingers.
13. Eating raw fish was called poverty not Sushi.
14. None of us had ever heard of yogurt.
15. Healthy food consisted of anything edible.
16. People who didn’t peel potatoes were lazy.
17. Indian restaurants were only found in India.
18. Seaweed was not a recognised food.
19. Cooking outside was called camping.
20. “Kebab” was not even a word, never mind a food.
- 21 Prunes were medicinal.
22. Surprisingly muesli was readily available. It was called cattle food.



Eileen Stoney



STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

If you studied Shakespeare at school and enjoyed it and perhaps still quote a few lines from his plays then you'll love Stratford upon Avon. If however you were bored by the Bard then you might have the same opinion of Stratford upon Avon. Visitors who look at the town just as a town can be disappointed. Everything seems to revolve around Will.

I've seen a couple of the golden boy's plays at the old Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford and found the experience deadly dull. How could I fail to like someone with such a towering reputation, the man who single-handedly changed the course of English literature? Well quite simply this: a lot of it is tedious, turgid and downright risible. I'm not on my own though. Pepys, Ben Johnson, Voltaire, Tolstoy, Shaw and Tolkien didn't think much of him either. Charles Darwin said:

"I have tried lately to read Shakespeare and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me."

And so when I booked an Airbnb cottage just a couple of miles outside Stratford for my son, granddaughter and myself, I thought I'd give the Upstart Crow one last chance. It might just be me, not him. I must try harder to understand him, learn about his early years in the town and the later years when he returned to his family from London, rich and famous. Perhaps only then would things fall into place.

On our first morning we used Park and Ride, a fast convenient way to visit a busy town centre. It seemed only right to begin at the beginning, a very good place to start and so to Shakespeare's Birthplace on Henley St, a half-timbered house, part museum, part shrine. Fascinating to see high-class graffiti on the upstairs windows (Scott, Carlyle, Ellen Terry and Henry Irving). A mile or so from the centre is Anne Hathaway's Cottage at Shottery, more a substantial Tudor farmhouse than a cottage, where young William went



courting his future wife. Upstairs is the Hathaway bed and outside a picturesque herb-scented garden, orchard and Shakespeare tree garden.

My granddaughter badly needed a Bard break(7 letters c-e-u-a-), And so one beautiful afternoon we took in a magic balloon show. The lady magician did some amazing twisting and shaping with her balloons which delighted a young spellbound audience who were then invited to actively participate in the show. Whilst this was eagerly welcomed by the children, some parents and grandparents visibly squirmed in their seats and prayed they would not be inveigled into joining in the fun and games.

The Schoolroom and Guildhall in Stratford is where Shakespeare sat in the 1570s and also witnessed performances by the country's greatest actors of the day, There one wet afternoon we were invited to participate in a Tudor schoolroom lesson. The irascible Master Thomas Jenkins asked questions in Latin and wanted to know the meaning of "amor". The Prince of Wales might have found this one tricky.

A boat trip on the river Avon one sunny morning afforded views of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and the Holy Trinity Church It was a slow boat ride with a friendly crew and a recorded commentary full of information about the river and town, albeit unintentionally amusing, delivered as it was in an exaggerated and overblown manner.

Holy Trinity alongside the Avon is where Shakespeare and some of his family are buried: "Blessed be the man who spares these stones /And cursed be he that moves my bones." Strangely the church is only open a few hours each day and it took three attempts to gain entry. The volunteers were lovely,

enthusiastic and very helpful. We even got into a conversation about Maggie O'Farrell's "Hamnet".

Having gained some insight into Shakespeare's life in Stratford does this help me to better understand his plays? No not really, but now I have a grudging respect for the man. I suspect that a good many U3A members share my views but would never dare say so for fear of being thought semi-illiterate. To paraphrase Eric Morecambe: He's written the right words but not necessarily in the right order.

I'll get my coat.

Article and photographs Andy Dugdale.



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS



We would like to welcome these people who have joined our u3a since the last Newsletter which was published in October 2021.

Barbara De Jesus

Josey Ridgeway

Robert Dexter

Alan Sawyer

Beverley Fox

Sue Sawyer

Hazel Meakin

Wendy Shaw

Elizabeth Nicol

Susan Stacey

Brenda Parnell

Frances Traynor

Roger Parnell

Susan Ann Warnock

Edith Pratt

Margaret Wyatt

Janet Proctor

Roger Wyatt

Elizabeth Ribbeck

Another advantage of the beacon System is that it can generate the list of new members who have joined between two given dates and produces that list in alphabetical order. Just one less job for me to do.

www.u3asites.org.uk/stockport

Don't forget you can always check out activities and keep up to date if you use our website. The monthly diary is a compilation of the monthly dates and is intended to be used as guide.

THE PENSIONER'S PRAYER

Blessed are those who understand
My faltering steps and shaking hand.
Blessed are those who know my ears today
Must strain to hear the things they say.

Blessed are those who seem to know
My eyes are dim and my mind is slow.
Blessed are they who looked away
When tea was spilt on the cloth that day.

Blessed are they with a cheery smile
Who stop to chat for a little while,
Blessed are they who never say
“You’ve told me that story twice today.!”

Blessed are those who make it known
That I’m loved, respected and not alone.
And blessed are those who ease the days
Of my journey home, in loving ways.

Sent by Ann Jones. (Taken from Ebchester Church Magazine,
County Durham)

NEXT EDITION : JUNE 2022

Thank you very much to everyone who has contributed to this magazine especially as life is only slowly getting back to normal.

I am now collecting articles for the next edition of "UPTODATE". As you can see from this edition the topics can be varied. Holidays in England or from abroad are especially interesting after long periods of time when we have been encouraged to stay ay at home. Poems you have written or ones you have found and saved in a drawer because they interested or amused you. Articles in local newspapers or church magazine which may inspire you to write your own piece or share with the rest of us can be used as long as we credit the source. So please start thinking and looking to see if there is anything you can contribute.

June may seem to be a long time away but believe you me the time will soon pass as we get out more and more.

I am now collecting for the next edition due out in June, please send contributions at the latest by 11th June to:-

Ruth Faulkner, 14 Silverdale Road, Stockport, Sk4 2RN

belahu465@outlook.com

0161-442-437

Again, "Thank you" very much and keep up the good work.

STAMPS

Don't forget we are collecting all used stamps. We collect them at our main meetings, and they are taken by Pauline Hadfield to Cancer Research.



ROSE VALLAND

During the many lockdowns we have experienced I have read much more than I usually do. One of the books I have read was “The Night Gate” by Peter May, a favourite author of mine. Part of the book is set in WWII and whilst Googling facts to see if they were true, I included Rose Valland’s name. It would be quite understandable when reading the book to believe that she was a product of the author’s imagination. But no, Rose did exist and her full story is more interesting than the small part mentioned in the book.

Rose Antonia Maria Valland was born in Saint-Etienne-de-Saint-Geoirs, Isere, France on 1st November 1898. She was the daughter of a blacksmith, a gifted pupil with a passion for art, her studies over a long period of time at various colleges and universities resulted in degrees in fine arts and art history. From 1932 she volunteered at the Jeu de Paume Museum. This was a small museum situated across from the Louvre in the northwest corner of the Tuileries Garden and was used to house various temporary exhibitions along with a permanent collection of modern foreign art. Rose became the museum’s administrator in 1939.



In 1940 the Germans attacked France from the north, France quickly capitulated and in June, France and Germany signed an armistice, the northern part of France was occupied by the Germans, the south was ruled from Vichy with Petain as leader. In early October the Germans needed space to store art, furniture and other items seized from Jewish collectors, and after the space they used at the Louvre proved to be too small they took over the Jeu de Paume Museum. The arrangement with the French was that any items taken there would be catalogued by both the French and the Germans.

Jacques Jaujard was a senior Civil servant of the French fine art administration instrumental in the evacuation and protection of French arts collections during WWII. He elected Rose, amongst others, to list the items for the French. It soon became clear that the Germans had no intention of listing the collections, indeed the French were told to leave and not to come back. Rose refused to leave, listing the jobs she had undertaken before the Occupation at the museum, pointing out that these jobs still need to be done and that they were her responsibility. Baron Kurt von Behr made the mistake of allowing her to stay.

Jaujard had also asked her to stay, if she could, at Jeu de Paume in order to keep a track of what the Germans were doing. It was apparent to everyone that the aim was to remove these seized assets to Germany and the French were powerless to stop them. But Jaujard realised that if some record could be kept of the items which came in and possibly identifying where they were sent then there might be a possibility of recovering them after the war. Jaujard had planted a spy in the Germans' midst, and if she was discovered she could be imprisoned or possibly executed. What the Germans did not know was that Rose spoke German. She had never formally studied the language but had made many trips to Germany in the 1920's and 1930's which had helped her to get a good grasp of the language. She was to keep her secret for the whole time she worked with the Germans at the museum.

Goring made many visits from Germany to the museum where he selected items specifically for Hitler, other items for himself and any others of interest were to be sent for storage in Germany. Hitler planned an art museum, the Fuhrermuseum, to be built at the end of the war in the Austrian city of Linz near to his birthplace of Braunau, and these confiscated works were destined to be shown there.

Meanwhile Rose was watching. She had plenty of reasons to be moving around the building, checking on the French art works housed there and on the electric and fire protection systems. Nobody paid her much attention as she moved quietly around, but all the time she was making mental notes of



everything she saw. She collected documents from wastebaskets. She listened to conversations; people spoke freely in front of her not realising she spoke German. The locations of the German depots were left in an open book on a table, and above the table a list giving the day's shipping orders and destinations. No records were locked up and with care Rose could access them. By making friends with the drivers and the guards she gleaned other information. When she returned home at night, she wrote down all the information she had collected during the day. Sometimes she even managed to sneak out archival photographs, had them copied and then returned them the next morning.

Rose met regularly with Jaujard to discuss her "regular" job but also managed to convey some information about shipments and storage depots. This information was passed onto Louvre's resistance network and through them to the Allies. This helped, towards the end of the war, to stop the Allies bombing locations where looted artworks were thought to be still stored. However not all artwork was safe. Modern art, generally work from Impressionism forward plus works by any Jewish artist belonged to the group described by Hitler as "degenerate" art. Amongst the artists producing work described as "degenerate" were Klee, Picasso, Modigliani, Kandinsky and Chagall but also Vincent van Gogh. Paintings falling into this category were stored together in the Louvre, they were sorted to be traded or to be sold

but some were described as “dangerous” and listed to be destroyed. Some 500 pictures were slashed with knives, taken to the Tuileries Garden, and set ablaze. The smoke from the fire could be seen all over Paris.

TRANSLATION (Of a note written at the time by Rose.)

23RD JULY 1943

“The paintings massacred in the sequester of the Louvre were taken to the Jeu de Paume (a truckload, about five or six hundred) and burned under German Surveillance in the garden of the museum from 11a.m. to 3p.m. Impossible to save anything.”

Rose continued to work to protect artworks until the liberation of Paris in 1944. Indeed, just before the liberation, based on information she had collected, the Resistance managed to prevent a train including five boxcars of art including many modern paintings from leaving Paris. Following the liberation of Paris Rose was initially arrested as a collaborationist because she was employed at Jeu de Paume. She was soon released once her conduct was accounted for.

The information supplied by Rose to the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Program led to the discovery of multiple repositories of looted art in southern Germany. She became a captain in the French First Army and served in Germany for eight years where it is estimated that due to her information approximately 60,000 works of art were found of which 75 % were returned before 1950. She was to become one of the most decorated women in French history, honours including the Legion d’honneur and also from other countries including Germany. In 1954 she was named the Chair of the “Commission of the Protection of Works of Art”. She retired in 1968 and died in 1980 and is buried in her hometown of Saint-Etienne-de-Saint-Geoirs.

Ruth Faulkner Pictures Google





VALENTINE BLUES

I didn't get a Valentine
No one wrote "Will you be mine?"
The postman didn't even call,
There were no letters in the hall,
No sign of any cards at all.

I waited for the second post,
I thought of all my friends who boast
Of piles of cards upon their mat.
Perhaps I can convince them that
Mine were eaten by the cat.

I won't tell them there weren't any,
I'll just say there were so many
My letterbox had overflowed
And loads of cards lay in the road.
(Oh Dear, I'm such a lying toad.)

OK, I'll admit I'm jealous
Of my friends with lots of fellas,
But I don't want sympathy.
I'm off to make a pot of tea.
A small one cos' there's only me.



Poem sent by Bernadette Wiltshire (collected and stored for further use.)