

Su3aN



u3a learn,
laugh,
live

Sudbury Newsletter



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Chairman's message



I am writing this just two weeks after Christmas yet it somehow feels more distant than that; all the lights and decorations have been put back into storage and here we are in lockdown again. It would be easy to bemoan that fact and get weighed down at the thought of more difficult times ahead, just when we were looking forward to 2021.

At Christmas a friend forwarded the following quotation to me: "If we winter this one out, we can summer anywhere". This really struck a chord with me, so much

so that I thought I would share it with you. I hope you find it as positive and hopeful as I have done.

Looking a little ahead, the new committee will be sworn in at the AGM on 23 February. As you will be aware, this year our AGM will be held by video conferencing and I would just like to remind you to make sure you submit your voting slips by 14th February please. You will see details in the Formal Notice which you have received. If, by any chance, you have not received all the relevant documentation relating to the AGM please contact our Secretary, Janet Cruttenden (contact details on your membership card).

A reminder also that you can keep abreast of u3a news nationwide at www.u3a.org.uk and that you can register to receive the u3a Newsletter by email if you do not already do so.

This is my last Su3aN message as Chairman as I am stepping down at the AGM. The past three years have been interesting, challenging but also fun and very rewarding. Going forward we have a great committee who have worked with me to keep our wonderful u3a alive and I know will continue to do so.

To be honest I am a little sad I am unable to see you in person at the AGM in St Peters as planned, but as we know some things are out of our control. I hope to see as many of you as possible at some point further down the line but in the meantime, thank you for all your support - and let's all look forward to the revival of u3a activities!

I wish you and yours all the very best for a happy and healthy 2021.

Anita Floodgate

Next Newsletter

For the March issue please send your contributions by **Thursday 4 March 2021**. If you miss the deadline we may not be able to include your copy. Please, wherever possible, send details by email as a **Word attachment to the email in Arial 12p font in plain text, 350 words maximum, to heavenly_white_one@yahoo.co.uk**

Alternatively handwritten contributions may be sent to:
Jean White, 64 Vicarage Lane, Acton, Sudbury CO10 0UQ. Tel: 01787 370654

Whilst every care has been taken in the compilation of this newsletter, errors and omissions are not the responsibility of the publisher or of the editor. Opinions, where expressed, are not necessarily those of the publisher or the editor. If a group isn't mentioned in Su3aN, please check your Membership Card or the Sudbury u3a website, for details of Leader and Telephone Number.

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Speaker's report for November

Lancashire Comedians

by Dr Tom Preston



Tom Preston came to our screens in a 1946 Zoot Suit from Man at C&A and a stand up routine full of venerable one liners. He could have filled the hour with quips from his comedian's repertoires.

Apparently there have been more top comedians from around Liverpool, Manchester, Warrington and Wigan than any other part of the kingdom: Arthur Askey, Stan Laurel, Ken Dodd, Ken Platt, Eric Sykes, Eric Morecombe, and so on. Wakes weeks in Blackpool, variety theatres, Free and Easy clubs, end of the pier shows and pantomimes all gave opportunities to funny men, yes, usually men, to try out their talent to amuse. Les Dawson with his mother-in-law jokes and Rob Wilton (The day war broke out ...) and Norman Evans, a dame comedian, dressed as the woman next door chatting 'over the garden fence', all struck a chord with their droll views of life. Many of these moved through radio appearances into television. Bernard Manning, Ted Lowe and Arthur Worsley (dead pan, only speaking through cheeky Charlie Brown) appeared in The Wheel Tappers and Shunters Social Club in the 70s. Others had their own shows.

Tom mentioned Hylda Baker, born in Bolton, who partnered her dad in his act until he had a serious accident, when she went on alone with a stooge called Cynthia, played by a young man who never spoke. Hylda had about 20 of them. Possibly their off stage "other duties" were responsible for the high turnover. She was 50 years old before she became an overnight sensation when she appeared on The Good Old Days with her catch phrase **She knows, y'know**. More recently Victoria Wood and Caroline Aherne moved from club stand ups to television.

Others who began their careers as variety performers went on to become straight actors such as Jimmy Jewel in **Nearest and Dearest** and Joe Gladwin as Wally Batty in **The Last of the Summer Wine** and in the **Hovis** advert. Still around are Peter Kay, Lee Mack and Jason Manford, who may have started in clubs and pubs but are now on panel shows on radio and television.

Win May

Future Speakers

Tuesday 23 February is the AGM which will be followed by a talk from our very own Anne Grimshaw who we all know is a delightful speaker. **Collision in the Clouds - who wore the goggles?** A journey from a French village to find the owner of a fascinating tale, and who can tell it better.

Tuesday 23 March: Our speaker will be Rob Spray (very apt) who is a SCUBA diver and joint co-ordinator for the Marine Conservation Society. His talk is entitled **Hidden Treasures of East Anglia's Secret Sea**. He will be speaking about the amazing variety of life off the coast of Suffolk and Norfolk, including Europe's longest chalk reef.

Colette Bentley

Speaker's report for December

Walking into grandmother's kitchen at Christmas - A British Raj lifestyle

by Jenny Mallin



Jenny, who last came in October, telling us about the five generations of her family who lived in India, returned to show us the contents of her grandmother's hand-written cookery books.

Muslims, Hindus and Christians lived peacefully together under the Raj. 50% of the population still celebrate Christmas in a way we would recognise as British (with added spice). Jenny's family had visible connections to the United Kingdom on the walls and shelves of their dining room and in their diet. However, all the servants were local and her

grandmother's cook was a Hindu. The family's menus were eclectic.

The housekeeping book contained accounts and hints on managing the servants with regard to their religions and castes, as well as recipes. Menus were not just standard British fare and curries – often named after victories of the East India company. There were recipes for bread from Armenia, Chinese dressings for noodles with sesame oil and chilli, Italian Plum Cake as sold in Nahoums in 1902, shepherd's pie with cumin and chilli to enliven the taste and the roast beef or duck for Christmas dinner had stuffing with more chillies and spices.

The preparations for Christmas entertaining began in November. Grandmother's Christmas cake recipe needed 40 fresh eggs and hours of kneading before being put in tins, labelled and taken to the local baker for cooking in his round-the-clock hot oven. The Galette des Rois fruit cake (pictured right) held metal charms and the lucky winner would be "roi," (king) for the day. Home made ginger wine and eggnog would be served during the whole Christmas, open house, season. After Midnight Mass attended by people of every religion, extended families would return home to the Christmas celebration feast.



Today, Father Christmas is recognised and welcomed by children throughout India in his red and white uniform as the spirit of Christmas – the season for giving and sharing in any language. Happy Christmas.

Win May

Photography Facebook group



Thank you to all new members of our Sudbury u3a **Photography Facebook group**. We have really enjoyed your photographs and hope that when things finally get back to some sort of normal we can look again at the group and how we want to operate in the future. However, you are very welcome to join, even if you don't want to post any photographs. You just need to be a member of Sudbury u3a.

The Facebook group is at **Sudbury (UK) u3a Photography**

Bruce Clegg

Editor's note: There are other photos in this issue taken by members of this group (front cover and p6).

Thursday Amblers

As we are currently in lockdown there are no scheduled Thursday walks for February and March.

We all value the benefits of walking, not only for physical health but also for the benefits of the social interaction it provides. Rest assured, as soon as we have the go-ahead our walks will be reinstated.

Please keep an eye on the website for updates. I will also email those on my current mailing list as soon as I have further information. In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like to be included in future mailings please contact me on: 01787 312904 or afloodgate@talktalk.net

I look forward to walking with you soon. Here's to a healthy and hopeful 2021!

Roger Floodgate

News from Jennie Leech

Sadly, since we are now in Lockdown 3, all face-to-face group activities have been called to a halt. However, rest assured that I am still working hard behind the scenes!

When we were in tier 2 towards the end of last year several groups unable to be active were meeting on Zoom or Skype and some still continue through these media. We are getting more confident in the use of video conferencing, indeed two groups at least, now prefer to meet in this way.

Once restrictions are eased I will be 'swinging into action' again, to do all I can to help groups reconvene .. so 'nil desperandum' as my Latin scholars would say!



Angela Galer has now decided to step down having led this group with great enthusiasm for some years. Once we are able to plan theatre trips again I will be looking for someone (or maybe two people - friends or a couple) to take over the leadership. I would be very pleased to hear from you if you might consider this role.

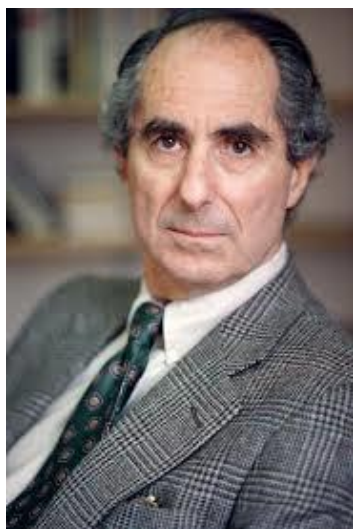
Other 'leaderless' groups

We have a few groups which, once we reconvene, for various reasons, will be without leaders. Please give some consideration as to whether you might be willing and able to offer your skills to allow these groups to continue.

The groups to which I refer are .. Book Group 4, Craft, Knitting, Money Matters, Musicians, Pub Lunch (general) and Pub Lunch 3 (Sunday Singles).

I wish you all a 'hopeful' New Year.

A new course : 'The short story: glimpses of who we are'



The great American writer, the infuriating Phillip Roth (left), once argued that "getting people right is not what living is all about. It's getting them wrong that is living, getting them wrong and wrong and then, on careful reconsideration, getting them wrong again".

In this course we'll read stories together in which great writers tell a tale, perhaps then untell the tale told, hide the teller from us, or strip the teller bare. A few may seem absolutely right to some of us, and as wrong about human nature and events to others.

Some stories may make us laugh, others make us cry, some leave us impatient, others bored but within its shell, each story harbours lives and events of all the world - the past we can never get right, the mystifying present we always get wrong but always a small, maybe private, glimpse of ourselves.

There will be one anthology we'll all be asked to buy or order from the library. So it will be chosen by co-ordinator, Linda Blandford, as much for its being in print and available at a reasonable price as for the sense of selection. All anthologies are subjective anyway so there's no right or wrong, just, hopefully, excitement and honesty.

We'll read aloud from one story a week and our discussions will focus on glimpses of truth in what it tells us about our world as it once was and how it is, or is not, or should be and, finally, our own place in it. We'll start off on Zoom and, perhaps, move out when Covid moves on. Good luck to that!

Please get in touch if you (and friend or friends) are interested in joining at lindablandforduk@gmail.com or 07929 650233.

Jennie Leech

Walking



Best wishes for the new year to all walkers. Regrettably there can be no walking currently due to being locked up in Lockdown. As soon as we can we will be in touch with walking arrangements for 2021. In the meantime keep safe and well and enjoy some (no doubt muddy) walks in your twosomes.

Brian and Moira Orton

moira.orton1@gmail.com 07928 092402

brian.orton2@gmail.com 07508 093631



Architecture - what we have (not) been up to...



We were very pleased to have fitted in one indoor season talk in November but have had to postpone the December and January talks and walks.

The notes for the New Year Walk have been sent out to members and we hope that many will use them to explore the Edward VIII post box and Acton Lane. If you see fellow u3a members standing on the brick pavement between Girling Street and its car park, staring at the houses opposite, now you know...

Two London walks are now planned and waiting for restrictions to ease: Liverpool Street to Bow Church and Shadwell to Blackwall. An excellent yurt café and a pub on the river opposite the Dome have been identified for the latter - we hope we can get there before the (in)famous Robin Hood Gardens is demolished. None of the prepared talks will be wasted - looking forward to ***Favourite Sudbury Buildings*** and ***In Search of Back to Backs!***

Jane Crumpton-Taylor

Garden Visits Group



A happy new year to all Garden Visits group members.

I hope we will be able to meet at some beautiful gardens again this year and as soon as visits seem possible I will be contacting the owners of the gardens arranged for last year's visits.

Also, the NGS have announced many gardens which will be open by appointment this year, so fingers crossed.

But for the moment it is difficult to plan anything. I'll be in touch as soon as there's news. Keep safe and well .

Leader Moira Orton 07928 092402



The telephone numbers advised in the MIAB article in the November 2020 issue of Su3aN were incorrect.

To contact the Lions for the free MIAB service ring:
0345 833 1425 or 01787 464972.

An AGM Notice and List of Nominations are attached as separate files with the email version and as a separate 2-page document with the print version

Editor's note: Thank you to members of the Writers' group who responded to my request for a story for this issue. I have enjoyed reading them, and this one from Lorna Hoey perfectly filled the space available. I will include the others as and when there is space.

The Valentine Card



There was nothing. Nothing on the doormat, nothing stuck in the letterbox. I checked twice. Of course, I'd tell them at school on Monday that I'd received so many Valentine cards that the letter-box was entirely stuffed. And that I'd even had a couple of those fancy padded ones that come in boxes.

I alone would know the truth. None.

It was 1969 and I was a first-year teacher, living in a first-floor bedsit in a tenement building in West Belfast. Saturday mornings meant freedom, but also chores. I stood by my window as usual, hands deep in the suds of my weekly washing. I longed for there to be a launderette, but they hadn't yet reached our neck of the woods.

The view was always the same: a square of grey concrete, a line of metal dustbins, and at the far end a pair of ancient wooden stable doors. The scene was enlivened only by a group of young teenage boys who played football there every Saturday. I studiously ignored them while they did their utmost to gain my attention, thudding the ball against the doors, crashing it into the dustbins, deliberately kicking it close to my window. And endlessly jeering and laughing as I ducked.

That morning, as I rubbed and scrubbed, the ball went over the wall into the tiny courtyard just below my window, a place we called 'the cassie'. The boys vanished from view. I heard low voices, plans for how to scale the high brick wall. I waited and waited, but no heads appeared. I dried my hands and ran downstairs. I picked up the ball, a bright blue sphere on the dull concrete flagstones of the cassie. I turned it over in my hands, feeling the slippery plastic, examining the scuff-marks of hundreds of boot-whacks. The ball was mine. Power surged through my hand and up my arm.

They had seen me leave the window, heard the door open. They knew I was there. I heard voices calling, pleading. I bounced the ball gently and the voices grew louder. I kicked it a few times against the cassie wall. Then the voices stopped. I could hear only the quiet shuffling of their boots.

I threw the ball back over the wall. There was silence.

That evening, opening the front door to go out to the pub, I noticed something stuck in the letterbox and pulled out a crumpled envelope. It was addressed to '1st floor flat lady' and I tore it open. Inside was a valentine card. A smiling owl said 'Whooo loves yooo?' and inside: 'Guess whooo?' but there was a pencilled message underneath.

'Sorry for anoying you,' it read. I put it in my bag.

I didn't see the boys again. A week later there were even louder thuds and bangs to contend with, as a platoon of English soldiers had taken over the concrete yard. But by that time, I had moved away to another part of town, taking my valentine card with me.

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