

Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings at St Andrew's Church are suspended for the time being. Their resumption will depend on Government advice and the arrangements made at St Andrew's. The following meetings are on the Zoom platform.

Thursday 4th March 2021 at 2pm via Zoom. Our speaker will be **Jenny Mallin: A Grandmother's Legacy: the Early Days.**

She describes how Benjamin Hardy, a seventh-generation weaver ancestor from Mirfield in Yorkshire, sails to Madras in 1798 with his British Army unit, fights for the next 22 years in India and decides to settle his family there for the next five generations. Jenni has traced her ancestry back to the 17th century and she will talk about their connections with the British Army and their links to the British Raj.

Thursday 1st April: Russ Hedley (Wildlife photographer) will give an **illustrated wildlife talk.**

Future Monthly Meetings

6th May: James Ellson Former police officer, starting in London and finally a Detective Inspector in Moss Side, Manchester. Now an Author and running a small holding in the Peak District.

3rd June: Dr James Taylor - Understanding Nelson from his art and artifacts. Dr Taylor gave us an amusing and informative talk in December on The Forgotten Art of the Picture Postcard.

Committee News

Your Committee has continued to meet using Zoom virtual meeting technology.

It was agreed that groups hiring speakers should continue to have the fees paid from the main account until such time as the groups are able to resume face to face meetings.

Our AGM took place using Zoom technology on Thursday 4th February with a good number of members attending. Edited versions of the Officers' reports follow.

Chairman's Report

Neil Rackham began by saying that this year has been somewhat trying on so many levels. However our U3A has picked itself up, proverbially dusted itself off and got back to our activities where possible albeit now they are carried out remotely online.

As many of you will know I was proposed for the chairmanship earlier this year as our previous chairperson unexpectedly resigned at the beginning of the year. Then we were in lockdown, and I think I volunteered by not stepping back quickly enough.

On a different topic the Government tell us that we need to have one further push until the vaccines have been administered widely, and then we will be able to meet face to face again and go back to our previous activities.

This year, unfortunately, has seen a drop in our membership numbers. We hope to rectify this during the coming year. We have already updated our electronic offerings to potential new members to try and interest people who have retired recently, become semi-retired or unfortunately are currently unemployed due to the current situation. I intended to extend this offering during the forthcoming months.

We have a number of groups now meeting regularly online. Please have a look at the groups section on the website, which, hopefully, can be extended during the continuation of lockdown. If you would like to attend a group which isn't currently running, please feel free to contact me. Details are on the website under the heading Committee.

I understand that the use of computers is not everyone's cup of tea, but until we are able to socialise face to face it really is our only medium of communication. As soon as we are able to restart meeting on a face to face basis we will do so.

Looking forward to the rest of this year and to quote the 1980's song "The only way is up" then we going positively into the year ahead.

I would like to thank all the committee members for their hard work this year in trying circumstance and just a quick note to say if you would like to work either on the committee or help in other ways please let me know.

Treasurer's Report

Walt Denning said that following last year's AGM, he set himself the task of applying for online banking for the CHU3A account, mainly to save himself some work and to avoid the hassle of getting cheques countersigned. In the event this was well-timed since during the lockdowns all payments have been made by bank transfer. However, the process of setting up the system was far from straightforward and took an inordinate amount of time. He duly complained to the bank and was rewarded with £100 compensation

The accounts are a 'snapshot' of transactions between 1st January 2020 and 31st December 2020. I make no attempt to indulge in sophisticated accountancy practises. Last year many members renewed their annual fee at the beginning of the year and some have paid their membership fee for 2021 at the end of the year. Both are added together to give the membership fees for the year. There have also been some members who joined after 1st September who paid the reduced membership fee. The Committee has decided to reduce the annual fee for 2021 to £10 for existing members to reflect the reduced range of activities which has been possible in the past few months and in the foreseeable future. The £12 fee remains for new members.

The largest single payment is the "capitation fee" to the Third Age Trust. This is directly related to our annual membership return but tends to favour large U3As since the larger the membership the smaller the percentage of the total income the capitation fee becomes. This will encourage to increase our membership numbers.

I was rather slow in stopping the monthly standing order to St Andrew's Church largely because of the difficulty of contacting the bank and not, at that time, being on online banking. As a result, we have paid for the venue of a number of monthly meetings which we haven't used. However, I am assured that we will be credited with those meetings when normal service is resumed. A similar thing has happened with the Heald Green Village Hall although on a smaller scale.

A new payment is a monthly sum for the Zoom licence.

The accounts show a small loss for 2020. If normal service can be resumed by mid-2021 then we may have to review the membership fee for 2022.

The accounts have been verified by Alistair Gardner who, as some of you will know, is the Treasurer of Bramhall U3A. I am grateful to him for his input and he has said that he will be willing to carry out this duty again next year if required.

Secretary's Report

Bernadette Murray Robb reported that last year was an extraordinary one. There were no conferences, no one-day workshops, and the AGM was virtual. Head office has been in constant communication with us, clarifying the government guidelines and their impact on our activities. They also provided suggestions and examples from other groups as to how we can continue to learn and keep connected. They encouraged us to implement Zoom sessions and to offer training to members to implement these. In their New Year letter they state that they encourage everyone to work together and to keep in touch with each other. That their aim is to ensure that every member has the opportunity to be involved in their u3a activities in 2021 and make it the best year yet. And they urged members to remember that we are good at caring, and laughing and learning.

Speaker Secretary's Report

Bernadette Murray Robb said that we have experienced an extraordinary year. My first task was to contact the speakers already booked from March 2020. This was difficult as I knew that in some cases this would mean a loss of income that some of them relied on. Eventually it became obvious that we would not be able to meet in our large monthly group for many months and so Zoom meetings were discussed, and although there are some members who are not on line, it was decided that this was the option we would adopt. Another difficulty with Zoom speakers is that they are from all parts of the country, and I was not able to check with other local U3A groups to get information about them, or follow up on recommendations from our members which have been so valuable. And in general, their fees are higher than our usual experience as they tend to be professionals who lecture extensively on their area of expertise.

However, after a slightly bumpy start, we have enjoyed a number of interesting and informative presentations. James Taylor entertained us with the Forgotten Art of the Picture Post card, and Alan Haines took us on a nostalgic visit to the old-time theatre world, and Steve and Carol Robson soothed us with their music and songs and stories.

Zoom presentations of course require a great deal of co-ordination and Walt Denning, John Broadbent and Roger Law have been pivotal in this. They arrange a zoom meeting with the presenter so that the format of the final meeting can be agreed. This has been very much appreciated by our guest speakers. Aware that some of our members have had very little experience with zooming they regularly offer detailed instructions on how to become involved and this has proved very helpful.

Due to the continuing uncertainty as when we will be able to meet again as normal speakers have been booked up to June and we encourage as many of you as possible to join in these. Until we meet again in person, keep well and safe.

Group Co-ordinator's Report

It has been a year that has challenged the very foundation of the U3A and, sadly, our ability to meet, share and learn was curtailed. However, the use of Zoom has meant that many groups were still able to connect after the first lockdown in March.

The following groups are meeting virtually: Art Appreciation; Technology; Practical Art; Shakespeare on Toast; Weekly Quiz Group; Photography; Music Quiz; Computing; Book Club 2; German.

If you would like to be involved in any of these groups in the future please visit the CHU3A website for details of group leaders. If you would like some support in accessing Zoom then Neil Rackham, John Broadbent and Roger Law are happy to help you get set up. It really is very easy if you have a smartphone, tablet or computer. In total about 60 members are using the Zoom facilities but we would like to see this increase if possible.

As always, there is always the possibility of setting up new groups and if you have any ideas or skills that you would be happy to share please get in touch with me. The existing Poetry Group has not been meeting but David Greenfield is happy to establish a new one if there is interest as he recognises the comfort and inspiration that poetry can bring in times like this. Please contact David via the details on the website if you wish to discuss further.

The Greater Manchester U3A Network have also been in touch with the following message:

"We (two authors who love play reading) have developed 10 plays especially for reading on Zoom. These are available for downloading as word documents using large enough text to go on shared screens." They are offering help on using Zoom and a free dummy run. If anyone would like to explore this further for the CHU3A please contact jeremy@jeremynorth.com and get back to me if any help is needed.

Even where groups are not meeting virtually, many group leaders are keeping in touch with members via phone calls, texts and emails. I know that this is very much appreciated.

I would like to thank all group leaders on behalf of the members, Committee and myself for your commitment, inspiration and precious time. Without you we couldn't exist.

If anyone has any ideas for new groups please get in touch with me, Sue Cuffe, and we can work out a way to make it happen.

Membership Secretary's Report

Walter FitzPatrick noted that we ended 2020 with 180 paid up members. On 3rd February 2021 our membership was follows: paid up members 120; resigned or deceased 16; said they would renew 6; undecided 10; no response 28.

The 'no response' group has been contacted by email, post and telephone.

A special "Thank You" to members who paid early since this simplifies the administration.

The effects of covid and 'lockdown' have adversely affected retention and recruitment.

Membership fell steadily in the 2 years before 'lockdown'.

Monthly meeting numbers have risen from mid-twenties to mid-thirties since meetings went on Zoom.

2021 Committee

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Neil Rackham | Chairman |
| Shirley Cawthra | Vice-Chairman |
| Bernadette Murray-Robb | Secretary and Speaker Secretary |
| Walt Denning | Treasurer |
| Walter FitzPatrick | Membership Secretary |
| Sue Cuffe | Groups Co-ordinator |
| John Broadbent | Audio-Visual |
| Pat Vermes | |
| Elisabeth Jefferies | Minutes Secretary |

Joining our u3a meetings on Zoom

So far, over 60 members of Cheadle Hulme u3a have joined one or more of our on-line activities, whether that is a group meeting, a general meeting, a quiz or one of the other events over the Christmas period. Whilst we are all keen to meet up again in person, it is clear that we will need to continue on Zoom for some months yet. So, we are encouraging all our members to join us on-line - it is a good (and easy) way to keep up some form of contact with your u3a friends. If 60 members have made it, we are sure you could.

For those who have not joined us yet, it would be useful to know why – is it that you don't have the equipment, not sure what you need to do, are concerned about the on-line world or some other reason. Do let us know so that we can see what can be done. Just 'phone or email:

Neil Rackham neil.rackham@me.com
or John Broadbent john.broadbent@stcatz.oxon.org
or Roger Law roger@lawfamily.com

Whether you are yet to give it a go or you want to gain more confidence, the following link to information from BT would be worth exploring. There are short introductions for beginners covering areas such as using the internet, watching and listening online, using email, using a touchscreen. Just put your cursor on this link [Basics for Absolute Beginners](#) then press Control (CTRL) and Click (or tap if you are on a touch-sensitive device), then scroll down the web page to choose what interests you.

Groups.

Group Calendars

We have been operating a group calendar for all groups on Google calendars with all the events and dates incorporated. You never have to miss a group again.

If you would like a further copy of the calendar, copy this link to the Cheadle Hulme U3A events calendar:- <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?>

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Photographic Group

We are currently meeting online monthly a Monday afternoon at 2.00pm, please see group calendar for dates. Apart from trying to resolve members photographic problems we also spend an amount of time on photo editing and its techniques, with on screen demonstrations

The means of communication is using Zoom via the internet. If you wish to join or need help in setting up Zoom, please contact Neil Rackham by email on neil.rackham@me.com.

Shakespeare on Toast

This new group, Shakespeare on Toast, was created in the hope of knocking the stuffing out of the staid old myth of Shakespeare, revealing the man and his plays for what they really are: modern, thrilling and uplifting drama.

Our aim is to sweep the cobwebs from the Bard - from his life, his language, his time - revealing both the man and his work as relevant and accessible.

It shouldn't mean just reading the plays and poems - although we probably will - but looking at their genesis, their backgrounds, what it is that makes William Shakespeare as powerful now as he was five hundred years ago.

This group is for everyone, whether you're coming to Shakespeare for the first time, find him troublesome, think you know him backwards (you can help the rest of us), or have never set foot anywhere near one of his plays but have always wanted to.

This group aims to be easy and good for you. Just like beans on toast.

The group started only in September 2020, so has been meeting only online up to now, on the afternoon of the third Wednesday of each month, using Zoom. The next meeting is on Wednesday March 17th, at 2pm, when we'll start by having a look at Measure For Measure, a play not as well known as some of the others. Where we go from there will be anyone's guess.

Please contact Barry Richards for details: barryrichards@mac.com

Practical Art

There is going to be a virtual Practical Art Group set up jointly between Cheadle Hulme and Bramhall U3As running fortnightly. If you would like to join please contact Sue Cuffe: sue.cuffe@ntlworld.com

Book Group 2

The group has been active now for nearly three years, and was set up to address the certain knowledge that, although we are (nearly) all avid readers, we were all ignorant of many, many books that we would probably enjoy, but would never hear about. This group aims to fill that gap, and gives everyone an opportunity to fill it by recommending books they have read to all the members for their delight as well. To date, we have recommended a total of 313 books to our members.

But don't think we read all those! it's up to us to pick and choose those we think we might like - if any.

Thankfully, we've been able to meet on Zoom right through the current unpleasantness, and have been grateful, not only for the distraction, but also for our introduction to books of which we weren't previously aware.

There are now fourteen registered members of the group, and we've been meeting on Zoom for almost year now. We usually meet at 2pm on the first Wednesday of every month, and our next meeting is on March 3rd. The agenda is never decided beforehand; it all depends on what each member brings to the table, so there is always the potential to surprise and delight.

Contact: Barry Richards: barryrichards@mac.com

Art Appreciation

Our meetings will remain on Zoom for the foreseeable future and as usual will be on the third Thursday of the month at 2pm.

18th March Ian Keable – The History of Cartoons, From William Hogarth to Private Eye.

15th April Dr Javad Hashemi - Leonardo da Vinci Inventions

May 2021 onwards. We usually arrange a visit in May to round off our season. As it is unlikely that face to face activities will have resumed by then, the Art Appreciation Group is planning to continue online meetings at least for May and June.

Zoom joining information will be sent out to those on the Group's email list a couple of days before each meeting.

Philosophy Group

After much discussion by phone the philosophy group decided - not everyone agreed - to hold a zoom meeting. In retrospect the meeting was deemed to be a success.

The subject matter for discussion was to be the current pandemic and all its ramifications, vaccine share out, restriction on individual liberties for the common good, etc.. A lively discussion ensued which was enjoyed by all. No firm conclusions were arrived at... But then, that's philosophy.

Paddy MacDonnell

Technology for Everyone

If you know of someone in CHU3A who might be interested in joining the group and attending future meetings, please ask them to contact Roger Law on 07870 497 930 or via email roger@lawfamily.com

2nd March. Peter Webb - Earthquakes: why they happen and how they are measured.

6th April. Diana Leitch - The Story of Pyrex; 100 Years of a Borosilicate Glass that revolutionised both Domestic Life and Scientific Work.

Quiz Group

We meet online once a week on Tuesday mornings at 11:00am.

The subjects covered are varied from General Knowledge to Food & Drink and many others. If you join, you also get a 'table round' the day before the quiz to ponder over and complete whilst having a cup of tea or coffee, in the comfort of your armchair.

The group are very welcoming, if not a little mad, and we would welcome new participants.

The means of communication is using Zoom via the internet.

If you would like to join but do not have any equipment suitable for viewing the internet we also provide a facility for carrying out the quiz by email, and some of our number use this on a regular basis.

If you wish to join or need help in setting up Zoom please contact Neil Rackham by email on neil.rackham@me.com.

Computer Group

We are currently meeting online every other Monday afternoon at 2:00pm please see group calendar for dates.

We try to resolve members computer problems both hardware and software between us at the meeting and also have a presentation on a particular topic each meeting.

The means of communication is using Google Meet via the internet.

If you wish to join or need help in setting up Google Meet, please contact Neil Rackham by email on neil.rackham@me.com.

Looking back

Technology for Everyone; 2nd February 2021

Professor Pamela Vallely and Professor Paul Klapper talked about their research and progress in the battle to protect us from the covid-19 virus.

We were reminded that the corona virus was first reported on 21st December 2019 in Wuhan, China. Since then over 103 million confirmed cases and 2 million deaths have been reported worldwide. It is thought that the virus has spread from infected bats and passed on to pangolins found in the live food market in Wuhan from where humans became infected.

We have, however, made great progress, in one year, in understanding the virus. The coronavirus is spherical with protein spikes protruding from its surface. The spikes latch on to human cells and fuse with the cell membrane causing severe respiratory problems.

Vaccines help us to develop immunity to the virus. The spike protein is recognised as 'foreign' by the immune system, activating antibodies and producing an immune memory. This means that the immune system has learnt how to defeat another new infection. The production of new vaccines has been very impressive.

The rate of transmission is the R number and it describes the average number of people that one infected person can infect. It therefore measures the spread of the virus in the population. We were reminded of the symptoms of covid-19 – fever, cough, loss of taste and smell, headache, diarrhoea etc.

Speed to conquer the virus was essential and 10th January 2020 saw the first covid-19 test become available and in early March commercial tests became available. Alderley Park, now a Biotech site, was used to test specimens. Artificial intelligence helped to assess a positive or negative result. Between April 12th and July 13th Alderley Park tested 1 million specimens and the capacity now runs at 80,000 samples per day and the new Kent variant was first spotted there. Mutation changes the shape of the protein spike and, as a result, more cells are infected, making it very contagious.

It is encouraging to see that the number of covid-19 case is falling and very important not to come out of 'lock down' too early.

The professors reminded us that this is not the first pandemic and it is important for governments to maintain funding for research.

Report by Anne Denning.

THE DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MAY NEWS SHEET IS SUNDAY 25th APRIL

Picture Quiz

All Called George

1



2



3



4



5



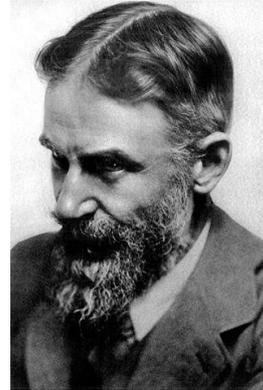
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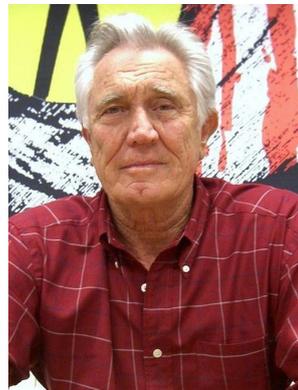
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Answers on the CHU3A website in March.