



Photo by: Graham Trimming

Chairman's Message

Like most people I will be pleased to see the back of 2020 and fervently hope/ expect 2021 to be a much better year all round. With spring and our jobs arriving we will be able to meet family and friends again or even plan a holiday!! In particular for our U3A we want all 50 plus interest groups to start meeting again face to face. We are starting to think of how we can celebrate our new found freedoms, so please let us have your ideas. Our outings to theatre or concerts will seem far more thrilling than ever we imagined!

Until we regain our freedom we plan to continue with the monthly newsletter and talks, to have regular quizzes- the first one was held on 29th December and the dates for others have been circulated to all members, to have more Zoom based "get togethers" as well as new and re-formed groups getting going - creative writing and bridge. Many thanks to the many convenors who have kept in touch with their members as well as many holding regular remote meetings.

Not being able to see family and friends over Xmas in the normal way, will be hard. So please let anyone on the Committee know if you know someone who would appreciate a phone call or other practical support, we are here to help each other.

Have a safe Xmas and let's really look forward to next year being so much more enjoyable.

Mike Bellamy

Newsletter News

It's hard to believe that this is the 10th newsletter of lockdown and the dratted virus. Editing and assembling it is an absolute joy because of the wealth of contributions from convenors and members alike. But.... I have a request. Costs for the newsletter far outstrip any other expenditure that we incur (OK, not hard given how little we are allowed to do!) and postage costs will rise this month. Could you consider taking the newsletter in electronic form and printing it at home? If you would, please drop a quick email to me at news@bourneendu3a.org.uk Jane

AGM Report

Although we would normally have held this in late April, the Covid 19 lockdowns have prevented us from doing so this year. So despite the challenges we were able to hold this on Tuesday, 15th December 2020 virtually, immediately after the monthly Zoom talk. Forty-six members participated in this and we thank them all for their time and patience.

The AGM was short as we only needed to get approval for the accounts for the year 2019–2020 which were published in the June issue of the newsletter and which are still available on our website. These were approved unanimously. Additionally we needed to get approval for the members of the Executive Committee to continue in their roles until March 2021. Again these were approved unanimously.

The only other item was to thank Chris Moss and Brian Jackson who both retired as members of the Executive Committee at the end of the last financial year.

We now need to look forward to the world returning to some kind of normality and the hope that we will all be able to meet face to face again before too long!

Leah Thompson

Secretary – Bourne End and District U3A

January and February Meetings

Our first Zoom meeting of the year will be on **TUESDAY 12TH JANUARY 2021 for COFFEE/TEA & CHAT from 2pm to 3pm.**

Our next speaker meeting is on **TUESDAY 26th JANUARY 2021 at 2pm.** Our speaker, Tom Way is a well-known Wildlife photographer. His talk is entitled "Tooth, Claw & Mane" and he will talk about his love of Africa and show the photos he took on his last visit.

9th FEBRUARY for COFFEE/TEA & CHAT from 2pm to 3pm on ZOOM.

Our next Speaker meeting is on **TUESDAY 23rd FEBRUARY 2021 at 2pm.** Our Speaker is Roger Browne. His talk is entitled "The Great American Songbook". In this talk Roger traces the history and music of this genre and, as with all his talks, he illustrates it with live examples on the piano, and the hilarious stories about the people, places and events that fuelled the development of this unique milestone in Western popular music.

Group Updates

The good news is that we have seen the end of 2020 and there is a vaccine on the way.

However, it does seem as though we will continue to be living under a number of restrictions for some time to come. The committee are conscious that some of you are still finding it difficult to come to terms with technology and the marvellous ways that applications like Zoom are helping so many of us to keep in touch and prevent us from feeling isolated. If you are one of those people, please get in touch – many of the committee have surprised themselves with their new found skills and would be more than happy to try and help!

Many of our groups have continued to meet, and a number of those would be able and willing to take on new members. Book groups, poetry groups, discussion groups, and exercise groups are all meeting online, and the joy of doing it this way is that there is often virtually no limit on the numbers of people who can participate. Have a look through the newsletters you have received recently and think about which of these groups might interest you.

The poetry group is a new group that has only been meeting since the start of the pandemic, so it is possible to get new things up and running. Keen gardeners could arrange a socially distanced plant swap in preparation for next year's gardens. There are lots of free online courses through Future Learn and Open Learn, both parts of the Open University. They cover areas such as arts, history, science, the environment, languages – all sorts. Why not see if a group of people would be interested in studying a topic together? If you have an idea, we would be more than willing to put it in the newsletter or send a

message directly to all members. You could follow the lessons online, and then get together on Zoom to discuss your latest learning. It is also possible to play games such as Scrabble and cribbage online.

We have also been wondering about the possibility of setting up short-term groups. We may have a number of people who would be interested in doing research and then discussing it together. For example, how did your road get its name? What important national or international events happened on your birthday? How accurate were Shakespeare's history plays? I am sure you can come up with many more interesting ideas!

It is also worth signing up to receive the U3A national newsletter – you can do this at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter> This contains links to all sorts of U3A activities and talks, some offered in conjunction with organisations like the National Trust or the National Gallery. One of these might act as a spring board a short series of get togethers for some members.

In the meantime, have a safe, if quiet Christmas, and remember that this will end soon, but not before you have tried at least one more thing with your u3a! Vivienne

Aerobics for Seniors

Have you ever thought what it would be like to be able to walk without falling over, being able to do that garden tidy up without backache for weeks? Maybe you might want to consider joining the Aerobics for seniors group. We meet every Tuesday morning. At the moment we have to meet via Zoom so the session only last for 30 minutes but the aim is to improve your muscle strength and balance. We are a friendly group of both men and women!

We don't get hot or sweaty, we don't need any special equipment (a chair and a couple of cans of soup or baked beans is enough). We don't get down on the floor either! When we can get back together face to face we will be using the Community Centre every Tuesday from 11.00–12.00 hours.

Art Appreciation – Sue Weston

In November some members of the Art Appreciation Group met on a Zoom talk at the David Parr Trust in Cambridge. For those who are interested, these usually take place on Wednesdays and Fridays and anyone can go online to book for 'Life and Art in a Worker's Home. He began as an apprentice English artisan decorator, employed by the Cambridge company, F. R. Leach and worked on commissions for William Morris. He later applied the skills he had learnt to decorate his own home. Not with William Morris wallpaper, but by painting those designs throughout the small terraced house. Later he was employed on the decoration of All Saints' Church, and many others. Thankfully his Granddaughter, Elsie, retained most of the decoration throughout her life, and after her death the house was bought by the Trust. The virtual tours are set up each week, followed by the opportunity to wander throughout the house using their hot spots for the rest of the day davidparrhouse.org.uk . We are looking to make a fresh start with the group as we move into 2021 and are collecting ideas for the future from our members.

Bridge has been relaunched

Using a free on line app – Bridgebase – the group has started playing again. So far there are five tables with each four deciding when it suits them best to meet. There have been some issues with technology, mostly around setting up Whatsapp group(s) so each four can chat about the hands and see each other without raking up a phone bill.

We had a launch meeting recently in which 14 members participated. We are going to have a monthly get together on Zoom to will look at some interesting hands but also just to socialise. Many thanks to the captain of each table for sorting out how and when their group meets.

If you would like to play bridge either as a single or as a pair then please contact either Marc Bond:

Book Group

We had a varied and, sometimes, controversial selection of books to read in 2020 – long may it continue! In order to establish our reading list for 2021 members picked their top 3 titles from a list of 39, resulting in the following choices for the first 6 months of the new year:

- *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens
- *My name is Why* by Lemn Sissay
- *Something to Live For* by Richard Roper
- *Burnt Sugar* by Avni Doshi (Shortlisted for 2020 Booker prize)
- *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haigh (recently read on Radio 4)
- *The Accidental Apprentice* by Vikas Swarup

Further details of these books will be published on the website if you would like to read any of them. We are so looking forward to actually meeting again in person and to being able to have some proper discussions! Meanwhile, we will continue to review our books by email until it is safe to see each other face to face.

Poetry Group

This group started up during lockdown which shows that it can be done! If you have any ideas for a new group please let a member of the committee know.

We have a monthly theme and meet on zoom to read and discuss our poems. We always have such a wide choice of poems; from the 17th century through to modern day. All are equally enjoyable. We are looking forward to when we will be able to meet in person for the first time ever! If you would like to join us please contact Fritha Irwin

Art Group – Libby Evans

We look forward to using our indoor venue again next year when we get the all-clear and the Wisteria Cafe as soon as the sun warms our backs, mmmmm.

Perhaps a new formula?

I could give demos. How to draw people, shadows etc; how to look for colours instead of using flat areas of black, grey etc.



We could have a life drawing morning, no not nude.

We could have a gallery of our work to show. I can't wait to see you all and get going again. If we invited Boris along to pose it might happen quicker ?

2021 we know will be great.

Current Affairs – Marc Bond and Chris Moss

2020 has been an incredibly tough year in so many different ways for all of us. Yet, with creativity and ingenuity, U3A has flourished and adapted to help all of our members in great

and little ways to cope. We know this will continue, and help lead us out into a post-pandemic, vaccinated world. The current affairs group is back and flourishing.

Family History – Sue Weston

We are now meeting via Zoom, and will continue this monthly for the foreseeable future. Group discussion and support encourages us to continue work on our individual Trees and current projects. A challenge is set at the end of each meeting and for January we will have looked at some newspaper sites.

Play and Poetry Reading Group – Sue Roberts

We have continued every 2 weeks from April to meet on Zoom and continue with themed poetry. 3 of our members have actually written poems and this has been joyful. Our theme of Politics was rather difficult to find appropriate poems and of course for December the theme was Christmas.

In January our theme is New Year Resolutions!! Good luck with that.

Theatre Group... yes, that's everyone!

We have been unable to have any theatre trips since March for obvious reasons. For those of you who are missing seeing live performances, have a look at the links below and see if there is anything that appeals to you.

www.filmedonstage.com/news/76-free-musicals-and-plays-you-can-now-stream-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak-updating-dailyhttps://stream.roh.org.uk

www.glyndebourne.com/on-screen/

www.metopera.org

www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/stage-shows-musicals-opera-free-stream-online

www.shakespearesglobe.com/watch/

www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/nt-at-home

Some of the performances have to be paid for but for far less than we would normally pay if we were able to be at the actual venue. I also know that the atmosphere won't be the same but perhaps watching a streamed live performance is better than not seeing anything at all and of course we will be supporting the theatres producing these streamed performances.

If you are aware of any other performances that are being streamed online do please let me know and I will pass the information on to all our members.

Crochet and Knitting News – An update from Gill DeVille

These are the items collected together and photographed, from my group, when we were able to meet in the conservatory, socially distancing, for a private coffee, when the sun was out and quite warm. As I mentioned last time Gertie the doll and Gemima Puddleduck are the work of Pat Weston, who has won prizes for her work. All the other beautiful items are by Veronica Jackson, Elaine A'Court and myself. The doll was taken to the Ian Rennie charity shop to be sold but, as the manageress thought it would still not bring in as much as it was worth, she would have a raffle in the New Year to "Name the doll" which should bring in more money for the charity.

We are so lucky to have such a talented group and I, as a convenor, am so proud of all the wonderful things they have made and the patterns, magazines, and wool they have all been so willing to share. We may be in lock down but we do manage to keep in touch occasionally and

as the New Year comes we all have to think positively that this will eventually come to an end, we will get back to our meetings and how lucky we are to have such a talent at our fingertips.

Golf Group – Bob Woodmansee

So – just as the merry band of U3A golfers were getting back into the ‘swing’ of it (excuse the pun), our wings have been clipped a little bit – but for now at least, at a time when so many restrictions continue to be placed on our lives, playing golf is still permitted – albeit only nine holes and only in pairs, not in groups of three or four. Another ongoing restriction is the closure of the ‘19th hole’ (the bar/clubhouse) – so no pre or post golf gatherings – but we will happily learn to live with that.

Three full Friday rounds were possible in between the end of Lockdown 2 and the move into Tier 4 – during the course of which Graham Trimming won twice with rounds of 85 and 86 and Tony Pasquale once with 84. The only new ‘personal best’ was set by Chairman Mike (Bellamy) with 96 – “Well done, Mike”. I’d also like to mention our two most senior members – Brian Jones and Mike Toms – who are both giving golf a miss for an extended period at the moment for health reasons – we send our best wishes to them and their families.

As we start to reflect on a very strange and difficult year, the U3A golfers can be grateful that we were fortunate enough to be able to play on 37 of the 52 weeks of the year and, even more gratifying, that we increased our membership from seven to twelve. And, in difficult times, the staff at Huntswood Golf Club always looked after us very well – we just hope to be able to continue to play there every Friday throughout 2021 – weather permitting, of course – we certainly don’t want too many days when the mist comes down over the course like it did recently in this photo!



Finally – I am sure we all have our individual hopes and wishes for the coming year – I hope you enjoy reading mine later in this Newsletter – and please let it be a ‘Happy New Year’ for one and all. Bob

Wine Group

For our December session we had decided to focus on the best wines to have with the Xmas day turkey meal. By the time we had our Zoom get together we were under various restrictions. So there were reports of turkeys having been ordered for 16 but now being for just 2 people and other people had decided to have a chicken or duck instead. All this upheaval did not stop us from running through a range of wines from heavy duty reds to light whites to go with the very varied meals we were planning. Various supermarkets were offering some big savings on 6 bottle mixed cases which some members had exploited; so it is worth remembering for next year – buy your wine in early December.

Smartphone Camera Group – Jan Parkinson

The group have continued Zooming on second and fourth Wednesdays at 2pm but only had one meeting in December as misguidedly we all expected to be busy with our Christmas plans. Our topic was 'Four of our best' so we could use any favourite photos we had taken. This produced a wide variety of subjects and showed a good eye for a photo amongst our members, especially using our newly learnt editing skills.

As photography is recording past events, inevitably our next topic for January is 'Christmas' but as we are all looking forward to brighter, warmer days ahead, 'Signs of Spring' should make a good topic. The stimulus of increasing freedom to go further afield will add a new dimension to our photos, we seem to have snapped every possible view and bush in the Bourne End area although it is interesting to see the different interpretations.

New members are always welcome, all you need is a smartphone, Android or Apple.

Socialising group (socially distancing group) – Kate Booth

For a group that was set up for people to meet and enjoy a chat over a cup of coffee/tea, 2020 has been an extraordinary year. However, the impact of Coronavirus has affected every one of our groups and we just have to get through it in the best way we can. It has been wonderful to see how readily people have adapted to meeting via Zoom (if someone a year ago had mentioned Zoom I probably would have thought they were referring to an ice lolly!) and we have continued to meet on a regular basis from our own homes. The summer was beautiful and we managed a couple of face to face meetings in Margaret's lovely garden and one meeting in the Flowerland cafe before the second lockdown.

I feel really optimistic that it won't be too long before we can revert to some sort of normality once the vaccines are well and truly happening and hopefully the last few months will fade from the memory. I look forward to meeting everyone again (especially those exiled overseas!) as the group are a non-complaining and positive bunch and deserve their patience to be rewarded.

The Solo Group – Sue Weston

The Solo Group had a challenge for an arrival on a Desert Island in December: one favourite piece of music, one outstanding book, a most delicious food, a favourite piece of furniture and a luxury item. We are making plans for 'happenings' in the new year, and will start by looking for evidence of new growth in the parks and gardens around us.

The Android Group – Roger Carter

There are 10 of us in the new Android Group, and we had our first meeting by Zoom just before Christmas. We have a big programme planned for 2021, designed for those with little knowledge of the subject but covering all aspects of using Android smartphones and tablets. We have two meetings a month, on the first and third Wednesdays at 2pm, and at each meeting there will be a talk and presentation followed by discussion and help with specific issues. At our next meeting, on January 6, we will be covering touchscreen interactions, including gestures, the on-screen keyboard, and icons. If you struggle with your Android smartphone or tablet and would like to join us, please email Roger at u3aroger@gmail.com.

Nature News

Lockdown has brought a few unexpected new activities, virtual ways of meeting and a respite for nature. Marion McGuire has acquired a new friend, aptly named Mr P, this friendly fellow has become a regular fixture outside Marion's lounge window. I suspect he may know how handsome he is!



Jo Davies contributed this lovely shot of the river by Cliveden at the start of December



Post Christmas healthy eating and exercise thoughts from Leah

With Covid 19 and tier 4 lockdowns many of us have been a lot less active over the Christmas period, sitting in front of the T.V with a glass of wine in one hand and fifth mince pie in the other! Christmas isn't Christmas without a little bit of over-indulgence. However, January is now upon us and yes, we need to get back to our normal routine. So what should we do? Exercise and watching our calorie intake should help us lose those few extra pounds and return or improve our fitness levels!

Here are some ideas to make those healthy changes:

- Have an open sandwich at lunch on one slice of bread instead of two.
- Trade a chocolate bar for a piece of fruit

- Use low fat spread instead of butter.
- Swap the glass of wine in the evening for a wine glass of water with some fresh fruit slices
- Use a smaller plate, you'll be less tempted to over fill it
- Reduce portion sizes

Exercising:

Returning to your exercise routine may be difficult and starting a new one even harder so PACE yourself back into things. If you usually go out for a brisk walk, that's great....get up and go, but start with a slightly reduced routine.

If you really want to take yourself in hand and you've just signed up for gym membership get on that bike, cross trainer or treadmill and gradually build the routine. Have a chat with a personal trainer to get some structure to your routine.

Exercise does not necessarily need a gym or any equipment. Instead of jumping on a bus to get to the shops walk some or all of the way. Working out at home is also a possibility. Try some of the exercises we have covered in previous newsletters – for any or all parts of your body. Have you tried the Twelve Days of Christmas exercises?

Most importantly have fun – exercise should make you feel good and you should enjoy it; sure, you might feel a little achy after your first few sessions, but that's natural – don't do any activity you don't enjoy. So, good luck with whichever way you decide to go....

Next month I'll be back with more exercises outdoors, assuming the weather and the government allow us to do that!

Poetry Corner

With thanks to Leah Thompson for this:

Fresh New Year

Another fresh new year is here
 Another year to live!
 To banish worry, doubt and fear
 To love, laugh and give.

This bright new year is given me
 To live each day with zest
 To daily grow and try to be
 My highest and my best

I have the opportunity
 Once more to right some wrongs
 To pray for peace, to plant a tree
 And sing some joyful songs

And.... Steve Woodward for this very topical piece:

With Apologies to Nellie the Elephant

Donald the president packed his trunk
And said goodbye to the White House
Off he went with a grumpety grump, grump
grump Trump
Donald the president couldn't admit
He was no longer head of the nation
Somebody else had the popular vote,
grump grump Trump
The seventeenth hole was calling, far far
away
He dreamed of taking an overnight flight
But wee Nicola turned him away..
Donald the president now has to pay
To fly down to Mar-a-Lago
Off he goes with a grumpety grump, grump
grump Trump.
Thank you Steve... 2021 just has to be better!

Donald the president thinks he's won
And several thousand believe him
They're all going "Grumpety Grump : We
love Trump"
Donald the president won't concede
That now it's he who's the loser
People have made a decision to dump,
dump dump Trump
A Twitter-less life is calling, far from D.C.
His dreams of staying another 4 years
Are shattered : the nation is free !
Oh, Donald the president, now's the time
To take stock of wherever you're going
Face the future : it's far from secure .
Grump. Grump. Trump

And last but by no means least, this from Sue Weston:

I won't arise and go now and go to Innisfree,
I'll sanitize the doorknob and make a cup of tea.
I won't go down to the sea again, I won't go out at all.
I'll wander lonely as a cloud from the kitchen to the hall.

There's a green-eyed yellow monster to the north of Katmandu,
But I shan't be seeing him just yet and nor, I think will you.
While the dawn comes up like thunder on the road to Mandalay,
I'll make my bit of supper and eat it off a tray.

I shall not speed my bonnie boat across the sea to Skye
Or take the rolling English road from Birmingham to Rye.

About the woodland, just right now, I am not free to go
To see the Keep Out posters or the cherry hung with snow,
And no, I won't be travelling much, within the realms of gold,
Or get me to Milford Haven. That's all been put on hold.

Give me your hands I shan't request, albeit we are friends
Nor come within a mile of you until this trial ends.

Anon 2020

An (optimistic) Wish-List For Bourne End and beyond – For 2021

By Bob Woodmansee

Dear Santa

Sorry this letter is a bit late but I thought I'd wait as you've probably been rather busy of late. And although I was going to send my letter before Christmas, Mr Johnson told me that Christmas had been cancelled and so I needn't bother – which made me sad enough to shed a few tears – but I did what I was told and stopped on Tier 4. Although I am really surprised that Mr J has closed all the barbers because if anyone is in need of a haircut.....

So is it OK if I send you my list now, please? I've tried to help you by putting it in alphabetical order because Chief Elves Gove and Hancock do seem to have difficulty with their memory and keeping things in order. And most things on my list won't cost too much money because I know that nice Mr Sunak has almost run out of it.

So, in 2021, please could you.....

A – allow everything in our Allotment to grow properly – and without being eaten (and now that Pegg's Allotment has a big, new fence to keep the muntjac deer out, you really have no excuse!)

B – end Brexit – surely it's got to be 'done' by now

C – reinstate Christmas

D – tell that heavily-tanned Donald chap that, although he might be a celebrity, he really does need to get out of here, there – and, in fact, everywhere!

E – tell all the Santas in Europe that we still love them in case I want to order a present from there later this year

F – open up Football grounds so I can watch a match – just one match – any match – this year

G – tell our Grandchildren that we still love them even if we didn't see them on their birthdays and at Christmas in 2020

H – get my golf Handicap below 28. Oh come on, Santa – surely you expected a difficult one!

I – no, I'm far too modest to make any of these about 'I' !!

J – help that nice old chap called Joe to unite America – OK, that's two difficult ones!

K – put a KFC in Bourne End (or, if not, I guess a Wimpy will do!)

L – give that lovely, local lady called Lorraine (sorry – that's 4 L's – but still only one wish!!) her own prime time evening show – I hear she's very good but I don't watch daytime TV!

M – please give me a year's running without pulling any of my Muscles – it's such a pain in the a..... – sorry, in the calf, hamstring, back.....

N – give everyone next-door Neighbours as nice as ours (enough said)

O – ask the leader of the Opposition not to 'oppose' quite so much – but be careful how you approach him as he's a 'Sir'!! After all, we should all be working together in these unprecedented times

P – get me on (Ken Bruce's) 'PopMaster' quiz – but, when you do, not too many questions post-1990 please!

Q – get a studio audience back on 'Question Time' – it's just not the same with a studio full of TV screens – plus there's less chance of another 'eviction'!!

R – excuse me from making any New Year's Resolutions this year – I always break them anyway!

S – get all your elves to vote for the celeb who is actually the best dancer in the 'Strictly' Final – it's all very well having a member of our generation win – but.....

T – make sure Tottenham don't win the Premier League (sorry – but I am a West Ham fan!)

U – not make me too Unhealthy – as I do admit to eating far too much chocolate in 2020 – but be fair, Santa – it was a tough year!

V – give everyone a Vaccine – and, if it's a choice between a present and a vaccine this year, I'll just have the latter – if that's OK?

W – give my Wife a better year (sorry – this one's a bit personal to me – but 'W' had to be either her or West Ham again!)

X – end Xenophobia – it's really not nice, is it (and, yes, I needed an X!!)

Y – as I don't want to be accused of being too greedy, Santa – you can have one wish just for You!

Z – open up all Zoos as quickly as possible – my grandson just loves animals so much and misses his days out. His favourite animal? A Zebra, of course!

Thankyou – I promise to be a good boy this year and eat all my greens – and just the occasional KFC!

From Bob (aged 64 and a quarter)

Whatever you do this month.... Stay Safe! And hope for the 'it's your turn' call for vaccination.