

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

The Covid restrictions are making it ever more difficult for us to continue with our activities. In Tier 3 we were allowed to organise group walks with no limit on numbers, but Tier 4 has restricted that to two people from different households. The only way any of our groups can now operate is on Zoom. We have had some very successful monthly meetings on Zoom and many of our groups have been organising virtual meetings. As you will see in these pages, one of our wine groups has found a way to compare the merits of different wines on Zoom. As I have said before, Zoom is very easy once you know how. All you need is a computer with a built-in camera or a cheap plug-in webcam. One member of the group then sets up the meeting and the rest just click on a link that is sent to them in an email at the appointed time. Attendees can join a Zoom meeting without having the software, but must have the software and a Zoom account in order to host a meeting.

Nick White

NEWSLETTERS

We are still sending out more than 300 newsletters by post. The cost of postage alone accounts for more than half of the annual membership fee. Apart from the cost saved by going digital, you would receive the newsletter a week earlier and it is in colour. It can then be printed out at the click of a mouse. The number of paper copies despatched is decreasing steadily and if yours is sent by post I hope you will consider opting for the digital version.

Please contact David Taylor at communications@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.

SCIENCE OPEN GROUP MEETING

Our next Science Webinar will be on Monday, 8th February 2021 at 14:00hrs

The talk will be **"Cassini-Huygens: space mission to Saturn and Titan"** – by **Professor David Southwood**

Some 30 years ago, Europe and the USA agreed to explore the outer planets in a joint mission, Cassini-Huygens, to Saturn and its major moon, Titan. The mission finally ended with the Cassini mothership deliberately diving into the Saturn atmosphere.

Prof David Southwood was chairman of the Steering Board of the UK Space Agency and he will talk about the history of the programme and the findings of the mission.

If you have not already registered to join these webinars please contact the Science Committee via scienceday@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk, giving your name and email address so that we can then send out joining instructions.

Bob Ruffles



GROUP ORGANISERS

Please let us know about your group's activities during lockdown.

It is appreciated that some groups have had to suspend meetings, but others have been able to continue successfully, using Zoom and other means.

If you have been able to meet, please let us know and we will include that information both in this newsletter and on our website. Contact either webteam@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk or news@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.

When trying to attract new members to join our u3a, it is important to show that, in spite of the current difficulties, we are still able to adapt to the changed circumstances and continue to enjoy ourselves.

Also, for up-to-date information about the groups and for the latest advice about Covid-19, please go to our website at www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk and click on the **Coronavirus & Group Activity** tab.

FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING

This meeting will be on February 24th at 2 p.m — "A Sign of the Times", a talk by Chris Shaw.

Chris Shaw will explain the system used for the design of the different traffic signs and how they are used. Many of you will already have heard Chris speak on various different subjects at our Science Group Open meetings.

You will receive a Zoom link to access the presentation nearer the time of the meeting. If you would like to take part, but haven't yet registered, contact meetings@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.

A REMINDER

Just a quick reminder that we will be happy to accept your completed questionnaires for our **Membership Survey** until January 31st. So far we have received around 150 responses, either online or by post. If you haven't yet completed the survey, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

THE STORY OF WINE GROUP 4 IN 2020

Although only four of us could be present, Sheila Webb's brilliant idea was to acquire for each member mini bottles of Freixenet Prosecco, Malbec and a mini-can of white wine. She then prepared a Christmas bag for each member containing the three wines and a large packet veggie crisps. Ken collected the bags and dropped them off to members' homes. Although only 4 members could participate it was great fun and worked very well. We may still be locked down in January so this could well be repeated.



Pre-covid: the full membership, all looking very smart and comfortable in Nick's lovely dining room, Left to Right – Heather Brown, Sheila Webb, Nick White, Ken Brown, Brian Alleeson, and Liz Lucy.



During Covid Lockdown: Ken's photo of the Zoom "Gallery View". Who would have thought it possible - Wine Appreciation on Zoom!
Thanks to Ken Brown.

COMPUTER OPEN GROUP MEETING

The February meeting using Zoom will be on **Monday, 15th February** at **14.00**. **Barry Linton** of Thorpe Bay U3A will give a presentation on **Cyber Security Protection**. Barry has spent his working life in IT and is now helping Essex Police to raise awareness of the importance of security among older people. Members wishing to join the meeting will be very welcome but will need to inform us in advance by sending an email to computing@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk leaving an email address so that we can send you a link to join the meeting.
Mike Davies

CYCLING GROUP



Members of the Cycling Group enjoying a pre-tier 4 Christmas refreshment stop. Thanks to Patrick Pascall.

SCIENCE OPEN GROUP PROGRAMME 2021

Because of the current situation the programme of speakers has had to be slightly amended. The new programme is :

- January 11th** "The Big Cat Sanctuary – Preservation of Endangered Species" - Gemma Bailey
- February 8th** "Cassini-Huygens Space Mission to Saturn and Titan" – Prof David Southwood
- March 8th** "Artificial Intelligence in Video Surveillance Systems" - Bernard Jones
- April 12th** "From Dioscorides to Darwin" – Tim Betts (deferred from the 2020 programme)

All these presentations will be made using Zoom. The **May** talk—**Conservation of Artefacts held by English Heritage** - **David Thickett** (also deferred from the 2020 programme) is being checked to see if our speaker is prepared to use Zoom. Otherwise further changes may be necessary. If any of the topics interest you but you haven't yet registered to take part in these Science Open Group Webinars, please contact **Bob Ruffles** at scienceday@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

DIARY

- Jan 18th** **Computer Open Group Meeting** (via Zoom) 2 p.m A talk on "File Management" by Charles Hebert
- Jan 27th** **Monthly Meeting** (via Zoom) 2 p.m - "The Life and Times of Edith Cavell" by Melanie Gibson-Barton.
- Feb 8th** **Science Open Group** (via Zoom) 2 p.m —"Cassini-Huygens Space Mission to Saturn and Titan" – a talk by Professor David Southwood.
- Feb 15th** **Computer Group Open Meeting** (via Zoom) 2 p.m. A talk on "Cyber Security Protection" by Barry Linton.
- Feb 24th** **Monthly Meeting** (via Zoom) 2 p.m - "A Sign of the Times" - a talk by Chris Shaw (see page 4 for details).

NATIONAL U3A EVENTS



Cakes, bakes, mystery & murder ! Join a cast of talented u3a members for the annual bake-off event... but be wary, these shady characters have been known to go to extreme lengths to secure the top prize. Bear witness to the crimes, unpick the suspicious activity and see if you can work out whodunnit at the u3a's first virtual murder mystery event !

Book your place at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/murder-at-the-u3a-bake-off-tickets-133092147195> and join Chris Wright, subject advisor for Quizzes, and the amazing cast bringing the drama and mystery to life on your screens. It will take place on **Thursday, January 21, 2021 from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm.**

BATTLE OF BRITAIN AND THE BLITZ

Do you or your friends and family have a story to share?

In the Autumn 2020 edition of *Third Age Matters*, Trust Volunteer Carole Chapman (Portsmouth U3A) described her work with the Imperial War Museum to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain and to make interesting digital resources on the topic available to older people who might otherwise have limited access to them.

In response to this article, several U3A members wrote in with fascinating stories about their recollections – or those of relatives – of the events of 1940-1941. It quickly became clear that there was a wealth of information out there that deserved preservation and a wider audience.

We hope that U3A members from across the UK will be inspired to contribute experiences to this collection of material.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING:

- Do you have memories of the Battle of Britain and the Blitz?
- Is there a family history that has been preserved, perhaps in documents or photographs?

If so, and you would like to share this, please either fill out the online form at <https://u3auk.wufoo.com/forms/memories-of-the-battle-of-britain-and-the-blitz/> or get in touch with Trust Volunteer Carole Chapman via the contact form at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/component/contact/contact/182-research-network/130?Itemid=490>

ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS

National U3A are offering a number of workshops, webinars and interactive sessions delivered by members for members, which are free to join. These are in high demand and spaces are limited, particularly those events with an interactive element. At the time of booking please ensure that you are committed to attending to avoid other members missing out on places. If you are unable to attend please cancel your place through Eventbrite.

Many of these online events are being delivered via the Zoom video conferencing/webinar platform.

They include :

- The Role and History of the National Trust (various dates);
- A Live Cookery Demonstration on Burns Night (Mon, Jan 25);
- A Taste of Japan (on Wed, Jan 27, Wed, Feb 24 and Wed, March 24);

Go to <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events> to see the full list and to book for an individual session.

NATIONAL U3A WINTER SCHOOL

Following on from the success of the online National Summer School in 2020, the Winter School is a digital programme of courses to support members' learning in the winter months.

These courses are proving to be very popular, so book now on the National U3A Online Events page at <https://u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>. Scroll down to the bottom of that page to see full details.

There are nine available courses, from Law to Records, and there are still some places available. These courses are run in smaller groups to enable an interactive experience.

Attendees will be able to meet other u3a members from across the movement, learning together. It is a great opportunity for peer-to-peer learning throughout the winter months.

SEVENOAKS U3A WEBSITE

Our website has a new look on the Home page. The graphic on the right shows the style of the new layout which gives links to our 13 sets of groups, using the same format as in our current Handbook.

There are also links to the last newsletter, and to the newsletter archive back to 2011.

Our aim is to try and provide easier access to information about how individual groups are operating during lockdown, plus the usual details of when and where the groups meet and contact details for each group organiser.

+ Coronavirus and Group Activity

Additionally, all current information about coronavirus is now shown under one tab in the News column on the right hand side of the Homepage. Click on that tab—**Coronavirus and Group Activity**—and the latest information should appear.

Go to www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.

FIRST AIDERS

We would be very interested to hear from members who are registered First Aiders, or who have general First Aid knowledge.

When life returns to normal and we are once again able to resume our usual meetings, trips and visits, knowing who are the First Aiders amongst us could be very useful.

If you are willing to offer your services, should they be required, please contact David Taylor at communications@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

MEMBERS ON THEIR OWN

Several U3As have active *Members On Their Own* Groups which are run by and for members who live on their own. Activities range from trips and visits to social and Zoom meetings. At this time of lockdown having such a group could be even more important.

If you would like to help organise such a group in Sevenoaks u3a please contact Elaine Elston at groupdev@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk or Rob White at external@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

WALKING GROUPS

Our open groups for Ambling and Nordic Walking have been very successful over the past few months. Unfortunately, neither group is allowed to operate at present, but they will resume as soon as regulations permit.

[Arts & Crafts](#)



[Computing](#)



[Culture & Society](#)



[Games & Physical Activities](#)



[Gardens](#)



[History](#)



[Languages](#)



[Literature & Writing](#)



u3a learn
laugh
live

POSTERS

A big thank you to the more than 30 members who have volunteered to place our new Membership Poster on their local noticeboards. As a result we will be seen on at least 50 noticeboards throughout the Sevenoaks area. If you know of a noticeboard near you which could take one of the A4 or A5 laminated posters please contact Rob White at external@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

ZOOM ADVICE & TIPS

This is available from a link on the website home page or <https://www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk/Study-Groups/Computing/computing.html>. Click on the **Zoom Help** tab, and then you can read or download the file **Zooming Advice & Tips**.

Alternatively contact the Tech Support Team at techsupport@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk



SCAMS

Some people have been receiving emails which read - **NHS: We have identified that you are eligible to apply for a vaccine. For more information and to apply follow here.** If you open the link that follows you will be asked for bank account details etc. It is a scam. Genuine notification about vaccination will only come from your GP practice.

Another recent scam read: **Dear Consignee, Additional information is needed before we can deliver your package to you. Your parcel arrived 11:52 am Tue, 15 December 2020. Delivery stopped due to the wrong address. Please click highlighted below and make necessary corrections to receive your parcel.** That is another scam and should not be opened.