

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

For many of our members the main purpose of joining u3a is for social contact during retirement. Sadly, we have been deprived of that vital element of human life for more than a year. This unprecedented period of isolation has been particularly difficult for those living alone. Seeing friends, family and other u3a members on screens has been no substitute for face-to-face meetings. Now that nearly all of us have received at least one job, and so long as there are no more adverse developments, the end is in sight. It is now permissible for organised walking groups to resume with up to 30 participants. Other groups of up to six can meet in public and private gardens, and up to 30 can meet at outdoor hospitality venues. From 12th May it is expected that up to 30 will be able to meet anywhere outdoors, and the government hopes to be in a position to remove all limits to social contact on 21st June. Once we are able to resume our meetings it will be especially important to help new members to join groups, and to support those who have suffered more than others from the effects of isolation.

Nick White
chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 27th **Annual General Meeting** of Sevenoaks U3A will be held at **2.00 pm on Wednesday 23rd June 2021**. Further details, including the agenda and papers, will be provided with the June Newsletter. The Meeting will be held virtually, using Zoom.

Nick White has completed his terms of engagement as Chairman. Ken Brown has indicated his willingness to stand for election to this role. David Taylor was co-opted as Vice-Chairman in January 2021 and has indicated his willingness to stand for election to this role.

The Treasurer (David Lowe), the Secretary (Chris Dance), the Group Organiser (Elaine Knight-Elston), the Communications Officer (David Taylor), and the Meetings Manager (Barbara Coleyshaw) have completed their two-year terms of engagement and are standing for re-election under the terms of the Constitution.

The Social Sub-committee representative (Pam Walshe) will have served the maximum permitted continuous six years as a Trustee. Joyce Allen has indicated her willingness to stand for election to this role.

Further nominations for all these posts may be submitted by Members to the Secretary by 8th May 2021. Role Descriptions for the posts for which nominations are invited are available on request to the Secretary, from whom nomination forms may also be obtained.

Any motion that a Member may wish to submit to the Annual General Meeting must also be lodged with the Secretary by 8th May 2021, and be duly proposed and seconded.

Chris Dance (Secretary) secretary@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

SEVENOAKS U3A CONNECT AND LEARN WEBSITE

At the March Executive Committee meeting it was agreed to set up a second website to complement our existing site. It is called **Connect and Learn** and can be found at www.sevenoaksu3aconnectandlearn.org. It is not intended to replace our main website (www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk), but to work alongside it as a repository of external sources of information which our members might find interesting or useful.

All members are invited to submit ideas for inclusion on this new website, and we will do our best to include all your ideas. If you are aware of any learning resources which you think would be valuable or of interest to other Sevenoaks u3a members, please let us know at webteam@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.

These resources can, for example, include websites, online courses, videos and virtual tours, podcasts and other audio, apps, blogs and articles, e-journals and e-books.

Many of the interest areas included on this new site are listed in the **Topics** section, which is sub-divided using the same format as in our annual handbook and on our main website.

The aim is to offer opportunities to all members to benefit from a very wide variety of online learning, to suit most interests and tastes. Hopefully this website will be of particular benefit to those members in poor health or with limited mobility. Many of the items included on this website will already have been mentioned in this monthly newsletter, and they will all now be accessible from one location.

Only free and easily accessible resources are normally included. **Please contact us with your ideas.**

David Taylor communications@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

LITERATURE GROUP

We meet in the afternoon of the fourth Tuesday of the month. A member chooses a book and then leads the discussion of it. Novels are selected with particular reference to life in our own and other societies and as vehicles for ideas. Recent choices have been Girl, Woman, Other, The Tin Drum and A Dry White Season.

John Clark literature@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

ITALIAN CONVERSATION

We are a small group of 8 who have been meeting for some twelve years or so in each other's homes every fortnight. We continue to have very lively meetings of an hour and a half on Zoom speaking in Italian throughout. For the first half hour we catch up with the fortnight's events - where we have been, things done, commenting on local or world affairs and so on, all in Italian. The following hour we usually focus on an Italian text which we read out loud and discuss any unfamiliar grammar structures or words. This year we have read and discussed the works of Alberto Moravia, Umberto Eco, Deledda and others, which we usually prepare in advance of the meeting. We managed to have our 2020 summer lunch al fresco and we are already booked for our Christmas lunch in December. Fingers crossed! Cin-Cin!

Catherine Denton-Clark

italconv@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

PHOTOGRAPHY 2

In the last year we have discussed Camera Settings, Camera Accessories and had a practical hands-on Portrait Session. We have also watched and discussed some instructive DVDs. Each month we have set ourselves a Challenge – Photo Exchange, with a specific theme, for example Colour, Abstract and Autumn. Members have been asked to go out and about with their cameras and submit two photos on that theme which are circulated to the Group. Each member then has the opportunity to choose a First Preference and a Second Preference.

Celia Smith photo2@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

FRENCH - NOT QUITE BEGINNERS

Our group of French speakers have now been meeting on Zoom ever since the pandemic started. We take it in turns to lead the session and normally each prepare something to talk about for a few minutes at the start of the session. We then use a passage from a magazine or a book which we read and translate. Other times we use a passage that we can listen to and then we take it in turns to read and translate. We have managed to keep things interesting by covering quite a variety of subjects, from how the French like to take their holidays to annual French traditions, food and drink.

Sharon Fishwick french@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

EUROPE TODAY GROUP

Monthly meetings by Zoom have continued for almost a year and we have enjoyed a range of informative presentations and friendly discussions on topics related to Europe and the EU. Some of the meetings focused on Brexit, but we have also looked at the related issue of devolution in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The topic of the relationship between the EU and the US with regard to the American election was very timely. Other recent meetings had a Far Eastern flavour when we discussed the investment agreement between the EU and China and the parallels between the EU and the ASEAN trading block. In the next few months, we will be looking at the twin issues of the impact of the Brexit deal on trade between the UK and the European countries, and that of Covid on these countries. Finally, we are hopeful for our annual summer lunch get together!

John Harris europe@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

STOCK MARKET DISCUSSION GROUP

We normally meet at 2.00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month between September and June. During the period of Covid-19 restrictions we have successfully held our meetings on Zoom.

The format of our meetings is for each member to choose 2 FTSE quoted stocks, one of which is retained until the following June, and the other to be notionally traded at least every two months. The person whose notional stocks have achieved the most profit is declared the winner. Each member also predicts what the FTSE index will be the following June. As well as the principal area of the Stock Market our discussions range over a wide spectrum, mostly finance related.

Lesley Leeding stockmarket@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

GERMAN CONVERSATION

The group goes back to the very beginning of Sevenoaks U3A. It was started by the remarkable Hannah Eady, a survivor of Nazi Germany, who believed herself capable of just about anything and took up windsurfing in her 80s. The group normally meets around the lunch table, a simple meal which group members take it in turn to host. A glass of wine and general chatter rather than anything planned and prepared. With Covid and Zoom we meet from home every week for one session of 40 minutes rather than twice a month for much longer. It isn't the same but it keeps us in touch with each other - and German. There are eight members which we find to be the ideal number for the way we work so there are no vacancies.

Nigel Britten german@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

MONTHLY OPEN MEETING — MAY 26th

KNOLE REVEALED : ARCHAEOLOGY AND DISCOVERY AT A GREAT COUNTRY HOUSE

2.00 pm Wednesday 26th May on Zoom

Our speaker on 26th May is **Nathalie Cohen**, who was the lead archaeologist in the 5-year Knole Conservation Project. The £20 million 'Inspired by Knole' project was the largest conservation project undertaken by the National Trust to date. The building archaeological investigations that preceded conservation interventions revealed much about the history of the building and the lives of those who lived and worked at Knole. In her talk, Nathalie will outline the background to the project, and will talk about some of the archaeological discoveries made during the project and from ongoing research.



SCIENCE OPEN MEETING — MAY 10th

Our next Science Zoom Webinar will be on Monday, 10th May, 2021 at 2.00 pm

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL - a presentation by David Wells

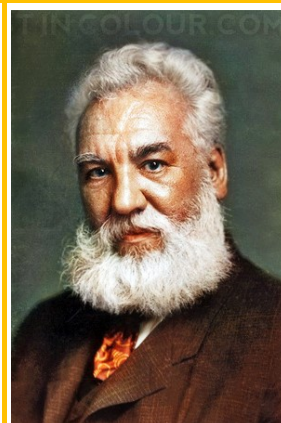
Alexander Graham Bell was a Scottish-born inventor, scientist and engineer who is probably best known for inventing and patenting the first practical telephone. However, he also pioneered many other inventions including work in optical telecommunications, hydrofoils and aeronautics.

David Wells, who is one of our u3a Members, will be discussing his work.

If you have not already registered to join these webinars we do ask that you do so via the following link : scienceday@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

This will be the last Science Webinar this season but we will be resuming our talks in October, hopefully in the Otford Village Memorial Hall. This will depend on the circumstances and Government guidelines at the time.

Bob Ruffles science@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk



COMPUTER GROUP OPEN MEETING — May 17th

17th May 2021 at 2 pm.

ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICES—a presentation by **Adam Chell** from **Sevenoaks Hearing**.

Assistive Listening Devices involve connecting your hearing aid to other technology. Bluetooth connectivity will be discussed as well as other wireless protocols that enable this to take place.

Any member of either Sevenoaks u3a or Knole u3a who wishes to join the meeting will be very welcome. Anyone who has already given us an email address will be invited automatically, but others should send an email to computing@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk and leave an email address so that we can send a link to join the meeting.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

During the past year we have been able to hold our General Meeting electronically (using Zoom) and to offer postal voting because of a Charity Commission concession which expired at the end of March 2021. At the **Special General Meeting held on 24th March**, members agreed to amendments to the Constitution to enable future Executive Committee and General Meetings to be held electronically and to enable proxy (postal) voting. 121 members attended the meeting and, together with 47 members voting by post, a total of 140 members voted in favour of the motion. Thus, the Motion, which required approval by two thirds of those in attendance or voting by post or email, was passed.

Chris Dance

DIARY

Apr 28	Monthly Meeting "The Queen's Policeman", 2.00 pm on Zoom.
May 10	Science Group "Alexander Graham Bell", 2.00 pm on Zoom
May 12	Nordic Walking 10.30 am
May 17	Computer Group "Assistive Listening Devices", 2.00 pm on Zoom
May 19	Ambling 10.30 am
May 26	Monthly Meeting "Restoration of Knole", 2.00 pm on Zoom

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

We have been prevented from organising events due to the Government restrictions because of Covid. We intend to re-organise the outings which had to be cancelled in 2020.

The ones proposed are :

- A visit to Stonor House and a possible river trip
- Visits to London churches
- A visit to Duxford

These will be arranged as soon as regulations permit. We will keep you informed.

Pam Walshe socialsec@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

NORDIC WALKING

Wednesday 12 May at 10.30 am

Meet in the main car park at the end of the approach road in Dryhill Nature Park, Dryhill Lane, Sundridge. Up the lane from TN14 6ED. A gentle walk through bluebell woods with some exercises.

nordicwalking@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

WEST KENT MIND—CONNECTING MINDS

Loneliness, a lack of contact with others and social isolation have been key contributors to poor mental health throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

We know that staying connected and social relationships are crucial for promoting wellbeing and protecting our mental health and resilience, so West Kent Mind have introduced **Connecting Minds**, a new programme of social activity groups for the over 55s.

The 8 sessions, each lasting 1 hour per week, will be run online via Zoom (though it is hoped that when restrictions allow some groups may be able to meet face-to-face) and will provide many opportunities to meet and connect with others and to participate in meaningful discussions and enjoyable activities. These will include tips on maintaining good mental and physical health, reminiscence, and fun, creative ideas to stimulate and develop a range of interests.

The groups are free to join, and open to anyone over the age of 55 living in Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling Districts. Connecting Minds is a rolling programme so new dates will be added throughout the year.

Everyone is welcome! If you or anyone you know is interested in joining one of the groups or would like further information, visit www.westkentmind.org.uk/connect-minds or call 01732 744950

AMBLING

Wednesday 19 May at 10.30 am

Meet in the car park at Teston Bridge Country Park, ME18 5BX. Turn right off the A26 to cross the railway. Parking costs £1.30. The walk is 3½ miles with no big hills.

ambling@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

LATEST COVID ADVICE FROM NATIONAL U3A

Step 1

From **29th March** when most schools start to break up for the Easter holidays, outdoor gatherings (including in private gardens) of either **6 people or 2 households** will be allowed.

Outdoor sports facilities, (such as tennis, open-air swimming pools and netball courts) will be allowed to re-open and people will be able to take part in formally organised outdoor sports.

The UK government roadmap for lifting lockdown also means people in England can walk outside in groups of **no more than six** from Monday 29th March. (<https://www.u3a.org.uk/covid-19-advice-on-u3a-activities/897-covid-19-advice-on-u3a-activities-in-england-u3a-kms-doc-074>)

Step 2

No earlier than **12th April**, will see the opening of non-essential retail outlets; personal care premises such as hairdressers; and public buildings, including libraries and community centres.

Step 3

No earlier than **17th May**, the government will look to continue easing limits on seeing friends and family wherever possible, allowing people to decide on the appropriate level of risk for their circumstances.

• **Outdoors**

This means that most legal restrictions on meeting others will be lifted - although gatherings of over 30 people will remain illegal.

• **Indoors**

The Rule of 6 or 2 households will still apply - we will keep under review whether it is safe to increase this.

A full explanation of Government proposals can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary>

Chris Dance secretary@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

The deadline for any items to be included in the June newsletter will be Monday, May 10th