

## CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

**Covid has ceased to be a major concern**, but there continues to be news from around the world of flare-ups. It is sobering to learn that in England alone there have been over 20 million cases and 180,000 deaths. There are now no government restrictions but you can help to stop the spread of coronavirus by getting vaccinated, and if you have even mild cold-like symptoms, taking care when meeting other people. A number of treatments are available and only the most vulnerable people are at risk of becoming seriously ill.

**The November General Meeting (GM) was on "The Race to the South Pole"**. A total of 111 attended, 94 in the Bat & Ball Centre and 17 on Zoom. These were the highest figures recorded since live meetings were restarted in November 2021. Possible reasons for this high turn-out are that the subject was particularly interesting and attractive to a wide audience, but also that this meeting was better advertised.

Our Meetings Secretary Barbara Coleyshaw will continue to insert an item on each up-coming talk in the appropriate Newsletter. In addition, she will from now on be sending email reminders to all members a week before the GM, then again 2 days before the GM in the email containing the Zoom link. For the time being Zoom transmissions will continue, but will stop if/when numbers using Zoom fall much further.

**New members need to feel welcome in their first few General Meetings.** New Members Meetings (NMMs) take place twice yearly and are specifically designed to welcome new members, tell them about all the wonderful options available to them in Interest Groups and the open Science and Computer Groups, and give them an opportunity to ask questions and discuss their interests and hopes with the EC and more experienced members. All new members are invited but roughly half do not attend an NMM, and

the GM may be their first face-to-face contact with Sevenoaks u3a. In a 2021 survey and in occasional letters we have been called "unfriendly" based on the absence of any organised welcome in the GM. To address this, those of you who attended the November meeting will have noted that I opened the meeting with my usual general welcome, and I also gave a special welcome to anyone attending a GM for the first time and asked them to put their hands up (5 did). At the end of the talk and questions, I then invited first timers and anyone else who would like to, to get their cup of tea and a biscuit, and meet me (and other EC members) at a "Chairman's Welcome" table. It would in addition be great if longer standing members, seeing anyone on their own, could make a friendly approach.

**ON THAT NOTE, MAY I WISH YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

*Dr. Ken Brown*

**Chairman**

[chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk](mailto:chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk)

## JANUARY GENERAL MEETING—JANUARY 25TH

Our speaker this month is **Andy Thomas** who is one of Britain's most prolific authors and lecturers on 'Mysteries and Histories'. Andy will be giving us a presentation entitled "**The Story of English Freedom**". From rebellions against Roman invaders to the Peasants' Revolt, from revolutionary ideas put forward in Cromwellian times to the Poll Tax Riots, Andy shines a light on England's most significant fights for freedom and the movers and shakers behind them, including Thomas Paine, pictured to the right.

**The meeting starts at 2p.m. at the Bat & Ball Centre.** Tea and biscuits will be served afterwards. For those of you who are unable to join us at the Hall and prefer to watch from the comfort of your own home, the talk will also be relayed via Zoom. I do hope you will join us. The Zoom link will be sent out to all members by email a couple of days before the event.

**Barbara Coleyshaw** [speakers@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk](mailto:speakers@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk)



## EXEC COMMITTEE—CHANGE OF ROLE

**Sue Christy** has changed roles within the Executive Committee to become Group Development Co-ordinator, a role that has not been filled for some time.

She will be focussing firstly on groups for new members, and filling spaces in existing groups. She also plans to establish some new groups to reflect our members' current interests.

Sue is looking to put together a new Group Development Team to help to inspire you all to join new and different interest groups, as we strive to make our u3a relevant, interesting and fun for all our members.

If you fancy a new challenge in the New Year, and would like to join the new team, please contact Sue at [groupdev@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk](mailto:groupdev@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk).

**Helen Wood** has joined the Executive Committee to take over as Secretary from Sue. We are pleased to welcome Helen, a relatively recent member of Sevenoaks u3a, who brings her talent for organisation and experience of dealing with the Charities Commission to the role. It will also be useful to hear the opinions of a new member on the EC as we move forward in the new world, post -Covid.

We wish them both every success in their new roles.

## ASTRONOMY STUDY DAY

**Malling District u3a** is organising an **Astronomy Study Day** on **Thursday, 23rd February**, from **10.00a.m – 15.15p.m** at **Ryarsh Village Hall**.

Topics include :

- Explore the galaxies from inside an Astrodome
- Watch excerpts from the International Space Station
- Our Night Sky - a talk by Arthur Fentaman FRAS
- Exploding stars and black holes - a talk by Ian Hargraves FRAS

**Bring a packed lunch.** Tea and coffee provided.

**Cost £10.**

There are a limited number of places available so apply soon if you are interested.

Contact **David Salvage** on **01622 672985** or email [treasurer@mallingu3a.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@mallingu3a.org.uk)

## SCIENCE OPEN GROUP MEETING

Our next Science talk will be on **January 16th at 14:00 PM.**

Venue: **Otford Village Memorial Hall** — entry £2.00

Our Talk will be **“Climate Change - What We Can Do”** by **Chris Shaw**

Climate change is already making its effects felt. There are more extremes of temperature, wind, and rainfall, and they are occurring more frequently. What can we do?

This talk describes many of the actions that we can take to make our homes more resilient to the effects of climate change, save energy and water, and reduce our bills. Each home is different and there are a range of options available for insulation, energy generation, and water saving, depending on the design and construction of the building. These are described in the talk.

Our 13th Feb 2023 talk will be the History of Computing by Sheridan Williams.

**Bob Ruffles**

for the Science Committee

[science@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk](mailto:science@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk)



Any items for the February 2023 edition of the newsletter should be sent in by **January 20th, 2023**, to [communications@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk](mailto:communications@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk)

## COMPUTER OPEN GROUP

**Monday, January 23rd at 2 p.m.**

The first meeting of 2023 will be a discussion on **The Merits and Demerits of Windows 11** and hopefully will give some food for thought for those people trying to decide whether to upgrade or stick with Windows 10.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE VENUE HAS CHANGED.**

For a trial period we will be using **The Otford Methodist Church Hall**, which is 200 yards west of the old hall and adjacent to the library and Otford Builders Merchants. The car parking at this new hall is not generous and it would be preferable for members to continue to park in the main village car park, where possible. The committee feels that the new hall has better facilities. We have booked for a trial period of 3 months only and the decision can be revoked if members wish.



## BRIDGE FOR PLEASURE

**Next sessions 11th January and 25th January**

The Group plays at **Otford Village Memorial Hall** on the **2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings** of each month from October to the end of July, from **9.45 a.m. until 12 noon**.

We had a good turnout on 23rd November with 5 full tables. Congratulations to our winner Diana Pearsall.

We held our last session of 2022 on 14th December and 14 intrepid souls took on the snow and ice to get there – maybe a free session and mince pies were the attraction? Scoring was low but well done to George Thompson who was the eventual winner.

New members are always welcome. We are an “open” group so new players can just come along on the day. We play ACOL in a ‘Chicago’ format so you do not need a partner.

For more information, please ring **John and Sue Christy** on 01732 463911 or email [bridge@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk](mailto:bridge@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk).



## CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT GROUP

A **new group** will be starting in January for people interested in and concerned about **man-made climate change** and its impact on the environment. Together we can learn more about the process of global warming and its effect on both wildlife and human communities. We can also explore new technologies and initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases, the role of government and how we can live more sustainable lives.

If you are interested in taking part, please contact **John Harris**: email [harris\\_jw@btinternet.com](mailto:harris_jw@btinternet.com) for more information.



## NATIONAL u3a ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS IN JANUARY

Time	Event	Link
Monday, <b>January 9th</b> , at 14:00 PM – 15:00 PM	<b>Sleep and Dreams</b>	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sleep-and-dreams-tickets-415213323227">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sleep-and-dreams-tickets-415213323227</a>
Tuesday, <b>January 10th</b> , 14:00 PM through to Tuesday, <b>January 31st</b> , 15:30 PM	<b>The Story of Motown Records: A Four Week Course</b>	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-story-of-motown-records-a-four-week-course-tickets-479859351237">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-story-of-motown-records-a-four-week-course-tickets-479859351237</a>
Wednesday, <b>January 11th</b> at 10.00 AM.	<b>Laughter Yoga Workshop</b>	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/laughter-yoga-workshop-tickets-166489270891">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/laughter-yoga-workshop-tickets-166489270891</a>
Wednesday, <b>January 11th</b> , 14:00 PM – 16:00 PM	<b>Getting Started With Your Family History</b>	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/getting-started-with-your-family-history-tickets-465851984827">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/getting-started-with-your-family-history-tickets-465851984827</a>
Wednesday, <b>January 18th</b> , 10:00 AM – 11:00AM	<b>Relativity - Numerical Illustrations</b>	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/relativity-numerical-illustrations-tickets-466363655247">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/relativity-numerical-illustrations-tickets-466363655247</a>
Friday, <b>January 27th</b> , 14:00PM – 15:30PM	<b>Holocaust Memorial Day - The Stories of George and Renee Morton</b>	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/holocaust-memorial-day-the-stories-of-george-and-renee-morton-tickets-466254679297">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/holocaust-memorial-day-the-stories-of-george-and-renee-morton-tickets-466254679297</a>

To find out more information about any of the events listed above, follow the appropriate link. You can also register for the event using the same link.

## JANUARY DIARY

Date & Time	Meeting	Date & Time	Meeting
<b>Wednesday, January 11th at 09.45 a.m</b>	Bridge For Pleasure	<b>Monday, January 16th at 2 p.m</b>	Science Open Group— <b>Climate Change - What We Can Do by Chris Shaw</b>
<b>Monday, January 23rd at 2p.m</b>	Computer Open Group— <b>The Merits/Demerits of Windows 11</b>	<b>Wednesday, January 25th at 09.45 a.m</b>	Bridge For Pleasure
<b>Wednesday, January 25th at 2 p.m</b>	Monthly General Meeting— <b>The Story of English Freedom by Andy Thomas</b>		

