

CHAIRMAN’S COLUMN

The Platinum Jubilee, the first celebrated by a British Monarch, marks the Queen’s 70 years of service. Our u3a contributed to national celebrations on the June 2-5 weekend (see below). Anniversaries mark the date of special events, birthdays, weddings, the first time we met. Sadly the recurring date when a loved one died is a harder one to bear.

The Summer Solstice on June 21st, will mark the longest day of the year and the start of summer, which lasts until the Autumn Equinox on September 23rd when daylight and night hours are equal. This is remarkably contem-

poraneous with the summer rest most of us take from our labours in the University of the Third Age! Conversely and pre-Covid, the annual Open Day on the 4th Wednesday in September would start the “academic year”, while the AGM on the 4th Wednesday in the following June would effectively end it.

Covid has not entirely disappeared, though you would not know it going to the cinema, travelling on trains and even on the underground. Hardly anyone is wearing masks. However, in the first week in June 54,171 people had positive test results, an increase of 53.2% compared

to the previous week, and there were 4,602 patients in hospital with coronavirus on 13 June, but only 128 required mechanical ventilation. Also long Covid, with persisting symptoms of tiredness and fatigue, is increasingly recognised. The pandemic in the UK appears to be entering an endemic phase. The virus is still contagious, but a combination of vaccination, possible loss of viral virulence, and the availability of treatments, means that most of the population will eventually be infected but the great majority will have a relatively mild illness.

Dr. Ken Brown
chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

LIGHTING THE JUBILEE BEACON ON THE VINE

At 9:45 p.m on Thursday 2nd June, the first day of the Jubilee Celebrations weekend, Sevenoaks Town Council organised a Beacon Lighting Ceremony near the War Memorial on The Vine. Our u3a “Singing for Fun” group performed a new song specially written for such ceremonies across the nation, using an appropriate version chosen by group organiser



Laurence Hickey. Pianist Janet Sharp rehearsed the group, and on the night conducted an excellent rendition, the singers using mobile phone lights to see their scores! Singing for Fun has been going for 10 years, currently has 33 members and there are a few vacancies. Contact details are in the handbook and on our website.

DIARY FOR JULY

June 22nd	Bridge For Pleasure	July 13th	Nordic Walking
July 13th	Bridge for Pleasure	July 20th	Ambling
July 27th	Bridge for Pleasure		

The deadline for inclusion of items in the August Newsletter is July 15th.

COMPUTER GROUP OPEN MEETINGS

In 2014-16 the average attendance at Sevenoaks U3A Computer Group Open Meetings, held in the Otford Village Memorial Hall (OVMH), was 39. In 2019-20 (the last pre-Covid year) average attendance was 25. Covid caused us to run these meetings using Zoom; attendance was variable but declined, despite enabling people from further afield (e.g. Westerham, Hawkhurst) to join. The average attendance at the two most recent meetings, one in OVMH, the other on Zoom, was eight.

Attendance at the open meetings has declined to a level which does not cover the cost of hiring the OVMH or warrant the effort that goes into arranging presentations at these meetings. No-one has so far been prepared to take on the Apple Group, following the death of Dave Simmons, and the committee running the Computer Group meetings is too small.

The upshot of this is that computer meetings cannot continue, at least in their present form, with present resources. If you are *interested* in attending meetings related to the use of computers and/or smartphones, please send an email to computing@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk, detailing your areas of interest and how you want future meetings to be run. These emails will be discussed at the next meeting of the Computer Committee to form the future programme.

CONNECT & LEARN WEBSITE

This website has been updated in recent weeks and there are now hundreds of individual items or courses for members to view. We have attempted to ensure that all the courses included on the website are both short and free.

Just a few examples :

- **Gardens**— there now around 15 guided video tours of gardens around the world, including all 5 RHS Gardens in the UK, together with items full of gardening tips.
- **Visits in the UK**— there are now 24 guided video tours of major locations of historical interest around Britain. There is a similar section for **Visits Overseas**.
- **Things To Do In Sevenoaks**— if you need to keep your grandchildren or great-grandchildren amused and entertained during the summer, there is a list of 40 things to do or places to visit.

Please visit the site at <https://www.sevenoaksu3aconnectandlearn.org>.

BRIDGE FOR PLEASURE

22nd June, 13th July and 27th July

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.

The winner on 25th May was Celia Rudd and on 8th June was Pat Lowe .

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 01732 – 463 911** or email bridge@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.

TRIP TO FROGMORE HOUSE

There are still one or two places available for this trip, taking place on Tuesday, August 2nd. If you are interested in visiting Frogmore, please contact **Joyce Allen** at social@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk or by phone on **01959 522915**.

NORDIC WALKING – JULY 13TH

Meet in the lane opposite the Chaser at Shipbourne, TN11 9PE, for a 10.30 start. The walk is 3 miles with a moderate hill passing through Ightham Mote. The walk will be followed by lunch at the Chaser.

nordicwalking@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

AMBLING— JULY 20TH

Meet on the green at Leigh, TN11 8QL, for a 10.30 start. The corner of the green with a large oak tree adjoining Powder Mills Lane. The walk is 4 miles with no hills. It will be followed by lunch at the Fleur de Lis. Leader Chris Rowley.

ambling@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.