



AUGUST 2020 Bulletin

COMING SOON ...

VIRTUAL MONTHLY MEETINGS

Via Zoom

Starting at 2pm

8th September 2020 Fools Gold

Carol and Steve Robson will launch our virtual meetings by playing and singing for us as well as telling the stories behind their songs. Their programme for our meeting is attached to this email. It promises to be a very entertaining meeting.

Coming soon

13th October 2020: Ellenor Hospice

14th November 2020 : The Foundling Museum

....and much, much more taking us into the spring

MU3A VIRTUAL COFFEE MORNING

Coming soon

All members and potential members are welcome

Details to follow.

3RS BY EMAIL

This year our **3Rs** meeting will be by email. This is your chance to change groups if you wish to.

Your group contacts and Heather have been busily preparing a downloadable booklet that will give you all the information about the groups at MU3A and how they are responding to the current restrictions. This information will also be available on our website.

Many groups are already meeting virtually and most of these are very happy to welcome new members for “the duration”. See the booklet for all the details and how to go about joining a new group or two. Now is a good time to start thinking about a new project or area of interest to keep you going through the autumn and winter when the weather may not be so conducive to walking or gardening.

GROUP CONTACTS ZOOM MEETING

Heather is planning to hold a Zoom Group Contact meeting on **Tuesday August 18th at 2pm**. Please can you let her know if you will be able to be there? She will send out the link later. This will be a good opportunity to ask questions and iron out misunderstandings. If you already have a question, you can email her beforehand so she can be a bit prepared!

Making the very best of itFrench Improvers 2

Since Lockdown began, our French Improvers group has been meeting weekly via Zoom each Tuesday for just an hour. We have continued to follow the “French Experience 1” book, in conjunction with the accompanying CD. At the start of each meeting we briefly share our news of what we have been up to in the last week, in French naturally! We also sometimes enjoy a quiz.



Last week the group met (social-distancing) in Kay’s garden in Cuxton before walking to Kitchen Field on the Ranscombe Farm Nature Reserve to see the amazing display of abundant poppies. We decided to try and replicate Monet’s masterpiece, using Kay’s straw hats and French lace parasol. Glyn, the only gentleman in the group photographed us four ladies! We then continued our walk but unfortunately by the time we had returned to Kay’s house, the Heavens opened and everyone had to take shelter under the garden parasol and a variety of large umbrellas, whilst Kay provided drinks and homemade cake for the drenched visitors! Très humide mais très amusant par tout!

OUR GROUPS

Despite our present circumstances, I am very happy to report that a large number of our groups are still meeting or keeping in contact with each other. Many thanks to all our wonderful Group Contacts who are making such a huge effort to keep their groups functioning. Without their input, our U3A could easily disappear.

At the moment with the present restrictions unlikely to change very soon, it would seem that groups will not be able to meet in homes / halls / libraries within the foreseeable future. Therefore, we must plan accordingly for the next few months. During the sunny, summer days it has been very pleasant to go out for a long walk or potter around the garden. With the advent of cold, dark days, many more you may welcome the chance to meet up with your group.

Several groups have been taking advantage of the opportunity to hold Zoom meetings which seem to have been working out well. It enables the group to continue with their activities - in a slightly different way of course - but more importantly, it keeps up the contact with other people. I know many of you may feel a bit concerned about coping with new technology but do not worry! There are many members of U3A who are very happy to help you get started. More details of that later. Other groups have used WhatsApp, newsletters or emails to keep in touch.

Obviously this year there will be no 3R's meeting where you are given the opportunity to re-join your group or join a new group for the following year. Within the next two weeks, you will receive an email listing all our groups. This list will tell you which groups are still meeting and how they meet and which groups are unable to meet but are still keeping in contact. Please could you inform your Group Contact if you wish to remain in the group. Remember - there will come a day sometime in the future, when we shall be able to meet up again.

It is also possible to become an 'honorary' member of certain groups. This means you are very welcome to join meetings while they are held online. I am an 'honorary' member of a group and thoroughly enjoy the meetings.

I know life is very strange for a lot of us at the moment, but belonging to Meopham U3A does keep up some sort of normality. It keeps us learning, discussing and communicating with friends.

Heather

Do you need some help with ZOOM or other technology?

Five months ago hardly anyone had heard of Zoom and now the Queen and the Cabinet are using it.....BUT DONT LET THAT PUT YOU OFF!

If you are keen to access the monthly meetings, coffee mornings or a group but concerned about using Zoom please, please get in touch and another member will only be too happy to talk you through setting it up and using it.

View from the Chair.

It certainly has been a 'Baptism of Fire' my first year as the Chair for your Meopham U3A.

The crisis has meant our meetings have been curtailed, but the Committee have kept in touch with one another and have been continuing to operate in a (virtual) medium, as indeed have many Interest Groups; some in ingenious and inventive ways!

I believe this shows how well our U3A has managed in adversity.

Our U3A is strong unit with 440 members making it very successful, now coming up to our fifth year of existence, with 75 Interest Groups currently operating; within the current confines.

This brings me to a timely reminder that if you haven't yet renewed your membership for this 20/21 period now is the time to do so.

The subscription is now only £15 per annum, per person, which has got to be the best value of any membership you can buy.

This includes your regular copy of TAM magazine and access to any current group or indeed to start a new one with your own interest. Ukulele group anyone?

To be proposed as a Committee Member or to vote for one, or to receive emails, Zoom meetings and information, you need to be a paid up member. Please don't hesitate to send your form and payment to Di Fenton our Membership Secretary now. If you have already subscribed, then thank you for your continued support, it means a lot.

The Committee is purchasing a licence for the Zoom Pro system, which will enable us to run an AGM (virtually) and also it will be available to groups to use for their meetings.

The details of how, when and what to do will be sent out to the Membership as soon as the licences are in place.

I recommend that you take a regular look at our web page and also that of the Central Office too. There are articles on a variety of subjects and regular updates on the Covid-19 current situation. There are ideas how groups can make the most of the situation, including Quizzes and other activities, the adaptability of the Human spirit is inspiring. Central Office.www.u3a.org.uk

Allison Hillman who brilliantly organises our Speaker programme for monthly meetings has researched Speakers who are able to give their presentations (virtually) on Zoom.

The first of which is a musical entertainment by a duo called Fools Gold and will be available on the 8th September at 14.00. You will need to download the Zoom app onto your device beforehand. A link to the presentation will be sent out in advance.

One thing that is causing me some concern is that many groups have formed Zoom or WhatsApp groups with those who are happy to join, however I must ask Group Contacts to remember to keep **all** of their group members contacted via Beacon as well, so that no one is left out of the loop.

I am sure that our U3A will continue with the success it has enjoyed and I look forward to the renewed monthly (actual not virtual) meetings; whenever that is and urge you to continue enjoying your membership and the friendships you have established within it.

Lionel