



NEWSLETTER EXTRA NOVEMBER 2020

Our website: readingu3a@org.uk

This is an edited version of our usual newsletter, produced to give prospective members an idea of our activities

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. We want to keep you all up to date with what we are doing, but the committee is aware that some of you have no means of communicating by the internet. To help these members we want to introduce a 'buddy' scheme, where they could visit a member living close by and join them in a Zoom session. Hopefully, we can get this going in the New Year.

A couple of our groups (photography and bird watching) had started meeting outdoors, under strict guidelines; they enjoyed meeting up in person again and will restart this when permitted.

Sadly, our Christmas Concert and Party cannot happen this year. Happily, Philip Cook is arranging a Zoom alternative for our December Members Meeting and some details of this are below. I am looking forward to this as, for me, our u3a Christmas Party normally means the start of the Christmas Season.

Monthly Speaker Meeting: Monday 23 November, 2.15, via Zoom

For our November Speaker Meeting we will hear about the charity **Hearing Dogs for Deaf People**. We will have a visit from Margo, one of their volunteer speakers – and her dog Linus! – and will find out about the charity, and the life changing impact it has personally made to the life of one of their recipients.

Members' Meeting: Thursday 10 December, 2 pm, via Zoom 'Christmas at Home'

We will be having a Christmas Entertainment and Tea – although you will have to make your own! – via Zoom, so look out for an email which will give you more information and the details for joining. Wear your paper hat, show off your decorations and/or your tree, and let's party!

Art Workshop, Tilehurst

At the start of our second lockdown, I set a topic (not a challenge!) for our group entitled 'Autumn Colours'. I thought that as the weather was changing, and perhaps we couldn't get out and about to be active, we could be creative instead.

Our next topic is 'Something which makes you Smile or makes you Happy'. Perhaps others might like to join in with their ideas – this could be poetry, writing, crafts or?

Books Group via Zoom

Thurs 3 December 2 pm

Reflecting on the past year, what has helped you through? A poem, an article, a book maybe or perhaps something else?

Thurs 7 January 2021 2 pm

'My Brother Michael' by Mary Stewart. A mystery set in Greece in the 1950s.

Thurs 2 February 2 pm

'The Color Purple' by Alice Walker. A book of enduring appeal first published 25 years ago.

Thurs 4 March 2 pm

'Those who are loved' by Victoria Hislop.

Set in Greece during the German occupation, it follows a family divided by the Civil War and the deep scars it caused.

.We welcome new members so do join is if you are curious, even if you haven't finished the book your views and comments are interesting and are valued.

Current Affairs via Zoom

Our group continues to hold monthly Zoom meetings to review and discuss current national and international news. In November, for our international news review we are taking a quick look at the outcome of the US elections then focusing on the implications of the terrorist attacks in France, Austria and Afghanistan. Nationally, we're looking at the report into antisemitism in the Labour Party and its repercussions.

Topics for our December meeting will depend entirely on what's in the news between now and then.

Meditation: Gratitude and More Than One Way to Skin a Cat!

Recently a member of our group told me we had been omitted from the Zoom Timetable enclosed with our recent Newsletter.

As the Meditation Group convenor I had felt from the beginning that Zoom was inappropriate for our meetings. However, I have enormous gratitude for the constant exchange of emails and photographs between our Meditation members which offer support, encouragement and new ideas for us to try. We also hold infrequent, informal, Zooms in case we forget what we look like! This contact has been invaluable during these uncertain times. Have other groups had this experience?

I would also like personally to express my gratitude to our u3a Committee for organising Zoom Members' Meetings and speakers as well as quizzes for us all to enjoy.

Photography via Zoom

Wednesday 25 November at 10.30: The latest shutdown has put an end to us having another walk to photograph the Autumn colours, but I hope some of you will be able to get out to do your own photographing which we will show during our November Zoom. We are now approaching the end of the alphabet, November being Q-T.

December: there won't be a meeting as it will be at Christmas time when, hopefully, we will be able to meet up with our families.

Wednesday 27 January at 10.30: between November and the New Year our mission is to complete the alphabet U-Z. Some of these letters will be quite challenging and, to make it even more so, try to take them with a 'festive' feel.

Science & Technology

Tuesday 24 November – In the November meeting short talks will be given by our own members on topics that interest them, including plastics, a climate repair project, a new mineral, Hepatitis C virus, conservation efforts, Stonehenge stones.

We are continuing to share successful virtual meetings with other, local Science groups. There will be no meeting in December but the January meeting will be a talk on the 'origin of life'.

Town Study: Wednesday 9 December – NO MEETING

At our November Zoom meeting we looked back at the one visit we were able to make this year – to Romsey – and reminisced with the aid of a compilation of photographs from our members. We also made plans for our studies and (we hope!) our visits for 2021. We will begin the year with Amersham, and continue with Guildford and Burford/Northleach. Along the way we will be looking at ancient and modern history, transport, architecture, among other topics – and, of course, strange tales from Fiona, our resident story-teller!.

Writing for Pleasure via Zoom

Following a successful trial last month we will now meet via Zoom for the foreseeable future.

Our next piece is called 'Support Groups'. A piece of prose or poetry up to a maximum of around 1,500 words (3-4 sides of A4 paper) on this subject. There is no minimum, brevity is always welcome. We are a non-critical group, we discuss the themes each person has highlighted in the piece, but not the style and certainly not the English.

Join us for a fun afternoon, listening to how we all interpret the piece. Can't make December? Well there's always the New Year when our January 2021 piece is entitled 'The End of the World'. A weird but possibly prescient title pulled randomly from The Envelope Of Wonder, held by myself.

Woodley, Shinfield & Earley Lunch

Nine of us booked for The George at Loddon Bridge but, owing to coronavirus restrictions, only a table of six was permitted. Our November lunch was intended to be a Christmas one at The Beefeater, Imperial Way, but won't now take place because of lockdown. Hopefully we can transfer it to December.

Reminders for you

As well as everything in this edition, don't forget these other events which were advertised in our last (October) newsletter.

- Fourth Friday Film Fun: Friday 27 November
- Photography: Wednesday 25 November
- Science & Technology Topics: Tuesday 24 November

Thames Valley Network

At the end of October I attended a lively and interesting TVN reps meeting via Zoom. Members of TVN Committee continue to be very busy, working on our behalf to plan and book a very interesting range of Study Days via Zoom, which hopefully (eventually) will be face-to-face. All the Zoom Study Days run so far have been very well received by everyone who attended them.

Interested in local history? If so, have a look at the results of the shared learning project undertaken by Reading u3a, Wokingham u3a and more latterly Woodley u3a about the History of Woodley on the Woodley Town Council Website -

<https://www.woodley.gov.uk/about-woodley/history-local-walks>

TVN Zoom Study Days for December include:

Thursday 3 December - Ukulele Day (2) *Now Full*

Wednesday 16 December - Art versus Photography.

Friday 18 December - Christmas Quiz.

2021 Study Days

Thursday 7 January - The charge of The Light Brigade.

Tuesday 23 February - Musicals.

Wednesday 17 March - The Thames and its Boats.

May 2021 - South East Region Spring Gathering.

Wednesday 23 June - Visit to RHS Wisley (postponed from June 2020).

Wednesday 30 June - Repeat of The Thames and its Boats.

Possibly September - Virtual Kelmscott study day.

Date to be confirmed - Engineering and Architecture.

Keep an eye on our website for more information, applications forms, and updates -

<http://u3atvnetwork.org.uk/>

A different kind of Christmas

A different kind of Christmas might be had by us this year.
No hot dog stands or mulled wine. No stalls with festive cheer.
No constant 'Rudolf' playing in stores from morn to night.
But then again they'll do their best - of that I think I'm right!

But concerts held by candlelight - attendance sparse this year -
Remind us times are different. So we must persevere
To bring goodwill to everyone through emails, cards and calls
Where visits are not possible. 'Tis time to deck the halls.

To welcome celebration in with music's joyful sound,
Display the decorations (or those which can be found
Intact from last year's packing), lighting rooms with festive cheer.
Perhaps it's not so different after all for us this year.

READING u3a GROUPS TIMETABLE (ZOOM MEETINGS)

		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
ONE	AM	1030 WOODLEY, etc, LUNCH CLUB CHAT			1030 ITALIAN LEVEL 1	1000 GERMAN IMPROVER
	PM			1400 WRITING FOR PLEASURE	1330 ITALIAN LEVEL 2 1345 MADRIGALS 1400 BOOKS	1400 SINGING FOR PLEASURE
TWO	AM		1030 POETRY		1030 CURRENT AFFAIRS	1030 FAMILY HISTORY
	PM		1400 SPANISH CONVERSATION	1400 TOWN STUDY (not December)	1400 FOR 1415 MEMBERS' MEETING	
THREE	AM					1000 GERMAN IMPROVER
	PM	1430 COLLECTABLES			1345 MADRIGALS	1400 SINGING FOR PLEASURE
FOUR	AM	1030 AMBLING (November)	1030 PHILOSOPHY	1030 PHOTOGRAPHY 1030 COMPUTER CLUB (not December)		1030 FILM FUN (November) 1100 CIRCLE DANCING
	PM	1400 for 1415 MONTHLY SPEAKERS MEETING (not December)	1400 for 1415 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY 1400 SPANISH CONVERSATION			

THIS IS A TIMETABLE OF THOSE GROUPS WHO HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY ARE HOLDING MEETINGS USING ZOOM