



Chairman's Letter

I would like to take this opportunity to report on the last twelve months of Orpington U3A. Since Covid struck we have had, to quote Charles Dickens, 'The best of times and the worst of times'. I am pleased to say that despite the setbacks imposed by the pandemic we are still very active and our membership stands at nearly one thousand. Several new groups are starting as well as existing groups meeting face to face again.

Zoom and email have helped many groups stay in contact and the Mirthy talks have kept the Monthly Meetings alive. Now we are back in the Crofton Hall I am pleased to say our AGM on Monday 17th January will be 'back to business' as usual.

For me personally it is a very poignant time as I am standing down as Chair and Committee member, along with our Treasurer, Business Secretary and Newsletter Editor. I would like to thank those retiring, for whatever reason, for their commitment in making our U3A the success it is and I am sure you will join me in wishing them well for the future. Not only are my fellow committee members colleagues but I also see them as friends. We are fortunate in having volunteer candidates for the offices of Treasurer and Minutes Secretary. For a full list of candidates for election please see the AGM agenda with this newsletter.

Though you must tire of the repetition; this is a voluntary organisation and we depend for our existence on individual efforts. If you can contribute in any way, from making tea, helping organise a group, or expert advice on the committee, we would like to hear from you.

In this, my last report as Chair, I stand down with confidence that in our new Chair and Committee we will be in safe hands and I wish them and all of our members a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

William

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Orpington U3A website

Please check our website regularly for updates about meetings re-starting

www.u3aorpington.org.uk

Please share the information with other members who don't have online access.

ALL TELEPHONE NUMBERS quoted in the newsletter are as dialled from the Orpington (01689) Exchange

THE LAST DAY FOR RECEIPT OF COPY FOR NEWSLETTER NO 145 IS TUESDAY 18 JANUARY 2022

Please send your contributions to
il: newseditor@u3aorpington.org.uk

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*THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE
WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS
A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A
PEACEFUL NEW YEAR*

U3A coffee morning

On 16 November, our u3a returned to BR6 in the Walnuts, under new management but still as friendly and courteous as ever.

Some twelve of us met for the first time for many months, new members and old, catching up and reminiscing.

Why not join us next month, at 10.30 am on Tuesday 21 December for Coffee and Pastry (£3)



Solution to Cryptic Crossword No. 78

Across
1 Bolt, 3 Menacing, 9 Apricot, 10 Musty, 11 Discontented, 13 Senate, 15 Tsetse, 17 Teleprompter, 20 Solve,
21 Monarch, 22 Resettle, 23 Lead.
Down
1 Brandish, 2 Larks, 4 Entity, 5 Admonishment, 6 Inspect, 7 Goya, 8 Accoutrement, 12 Searched, 14 Needles,
16 Primal, 18 Terse, 19 User.

GROUP REPORTS

Monthly General Meetings

**2.15-4 p.m. in the Main Crofton Hall
near Orpington Station**

20 December

Matthew Sear

Choir; conductor Bryan Wells

17 January

AGM

Recorder Group

Bob Trott will give a talk on Air Traffic Control

21 February

Peter Thompson; When I was at the Bar

Walks



WELCOME BACK TO ALL THE WALKERS

PROGRAMME FOR THE COMING MONTHS

All walkers join the walks at their own risk. New walkers are welcome to join any of the walks - but please telephone us before coming on your first walk. Please don't forget to leave your phone number if you have to leave a message!

Unless stated otherwise, all walks start at 10 am

Please ensure that you wear suitable footwear for the walks. Also please note that the walk description is only a brief guide, not a complete breakdown of the walk.

London Explorers

The Mound at Marble Arch

Traditionally we do not have a London Explorers' meeting in December but described as 'London's worst attraction' you may not have visited The Mound.

If you have some free time you may like to think again. It is 25m (82 feet in old money) high, made of scaffolding covered in sedum turf and a few trees. There are 130 steps to reach the viewing platform but there is a lift.

The views over Hyde Park are good and should be even better in the next few weeks with the autumn colours.

As you leave there is a fascinating art exhibition, 'Lightfield', by Anthony James. It consists of 12 interconnected Led lights.

Both events are now free but the Mound is due to be dismantled at the beginning of January and I think both may close on 21 December. You need a dry day, preferably sunny, as the platform is open to the elements. **So it's DIY.**

The easiest way to get there is by number 6 bus from outside Charing Cross Station. It stops at the top of Park Lane and you walk straight ahead towards Marble Arch for the entrance.
Good luck

Wednesday 15 December

Circular walk around Keston and Nash.

Meet at the Greyhound car park. There is parking available on Keston Common. This is an undulating walk visiting the remote hamlet of Nash, which could be muddy in places after heavy rain. The walk is approximately 3 ¾ miles.

For those wishing to eat, lunch is at the Greyhound.

Wednesday 19 January 2022

Circular walk around High Elms and Farnborough

Meet at the Rose and Crown, Green Street Green for a 4 mile walk through High Elms and Farnborough. The terrain is undulating with one steep incline but no stiles. As we will be walking through woodlands and fields it could be muddy underfoot.

Forthcoming Events

Monday 14 February 2022

Visit Dancesport International, Unit 4, Aurelia Rd, Croydon CR0 3BF at 11.15am.

Founded by Peggy Spencer MBE and Geoffrey Hearn, the workshop makes costumes for West End shows, dancers on cruise ships and, of course, "Strictly come dancing". We will be given a guided tour of the workshop.

Cost **£27.50** to include a drink on arrival. Please make cheques payable to **Dancesport International Ltd.**

London Explorers

On Thursday 27 January, we will be visiting the Cartoon Museum which is situated a short walk from Oxford Circus. There we will explore the wonderful world of British cartoons and comics from the earliest days of their appearance in the 18th century to the present day. The cost of the trip, £13, includes admission, a talk by the museum director and tea or coffee.

Anyone interested, please contact:

Christmas Quiz
1. Myrrh 2. Donner & Blitzen (Thunder & Lightning) 3. Sugar Plums 4. Indian 5. In the Bleak Midwinter
6. Germany
7. St. Stephen 8. Isaac Newton 9. Coca-Cola 10. 1957

Town and Country Lunch Group

On 14 October a group of us met up for an Otford themed tour followed by lunch. We started off by visiting the newly restored Hospice of Hope coffee shop. We knew from previous visits that we were in for a cake and coffee treat.

We then walked the short distance to the Archbishop's Palace where we were met by our guide and Palace Trustee Nick Rushby. Our talk started in the gate house and was given initially by Rob who is the local historian. Rob gave us a talk about Otford going back to antiquity. He explained that Otford was an observer rather than a participant in the history that has taken place over the centuries. The Darenth valley, unusually for Kent, runs from south to north therefore placing Otford on the path of travellers and armies heading for London.

Modern developers have tried to acquire part of the palace lands but the council have now granted a 99-year lease on the site and buildings to the Trust, which is working to conserve the Palace, create an interpretation centre for Otford and the Darenth Valley and operate it as a self-sustaining community resource.

Nick gave us a tour of the palace grounds and Tudor buildings finishing with a visit to the tower, which for the moment is locked up and awaiting planned restoration to incorporate a museum and shop. Another useful thing the Trust has done is to provide coloured plaques on buildings, to show what they originally looked like and their original use. Information boards and signposts are also provided strategically around the village to guide visitors. An interesting fact is that the Archbishop's Palace was, at the time, bigger than Hampton Court. A wonderful model showing how the Palace originally looked, is currently to be found in Lullingstone Castle.

Our visit was rounded off by a visit to the Bull pub where we all had a nice lunch.



We are constantly being warned about scams and Beverly Nicklin's talk on 15 November was a reminder of some of them

Examples of mobile phone scams

Text scams offering you money for an accident you may have had is often a ploy to get your personal details. Don't reply, even by sending a 'STOP' text. Simply delete the message.

You may get a text or advert encouraging you to enter a competition for a great prize. The scammers will charge extremely high rates for the messages you send them, as high as £2 per text message. Don't reply.

Trivia scams involve you answering general knowledge questions to win a prize. If you try to claim your prize, you may have to call a premium-rate number, often beginning 0906. You then have to listen to a long recorded message, designed to keep you on the line. It's highly unlikely there'll be a prize at the end of it. Don't phone back to claim.

'SMiShing' (SMS phishing) is when a scammer texts asking for personal or financial information. The message may appear to be from a legitimate company, like a mobile phone provider, but legitimate companies never ask you to provide sensitive information by text. Don't reply to these texts. Simply delete them.

Unless you're using a secure webpage, don't send or receive private information when using public WiFi. And be aware of who's around you when using a mobile device to go online.

For more information and help and to report this and many other types of fraud, visit [Action Fraud](#) the UK's national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre.

The **NHS** will never ask for payment or any financial details.

Bromley Trading Standards is promoting a new telephone number that connects customers directly to their bank to check that calls are genuine. The number **159** is a pilot scheme set up by banks and telephone companies to fight fraud. If you call 159 you will be presented with a series of options. You can then use your keypad to get through to your own bank without having to look up the number or wait for ages to get through.

A TSB scam If you receive the following message claiming to come from TSB— please ignore it.

We need to let you know about some changes to our internet banking service, to meet new banking regulations and make everyday banking more secure. We recently updated our system to use an extra layer of security call Strong Customer Authentication(SCA) to confirm your identity when you log into internet banking. This relies on us having a valid number to send you a One Time Password(OTP) which you will need to log in. Please log in below and update your account on our new SSL standard internet banking security server.

**ADVANCE INFORMATION ON A POTENTIAL SHARED LEARNING PROJECT
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BRUNEL MUSEUM**

Brunels' Tunnel, which connected Rotherhithe and Wapping, was constructed between 1825 and 1843. It was the first ever tunnel dug under a river and is still in use today as the route for TFLs Overground Railway. The Brunel Museum sits at the top of the Rotherhithe Shaft and is seeking funds for refurbishment and a new exhibition. You can find out more about the museum on their website <https://www.thebrunelmuseum.com> However the Brunels did not dig the tunnel themselves; they had a large workforce probably around 36 men on each shift and two shifts a day plus lots of other labourers doing a variety of support tasks. The museum has good records of the tunnelers who perished whilst working on the tunnel but very limited records of the rest of the workforce.

This is where our SLP may be able to help. Our project is likely to research the workforce; what were their names? where did they live? what about their families - did they move with them or stay at home? Indeed where were their homes, were they recruited from the tin mines of Cornwall or the coal mines of Somerset? As you can imagine this will be a challenging task and we are currently looking for U3A members who would be interested in hearing more about the project and who might be interested in becoming a member of the team. We are still at the planning stages but in all probability we are aiming for the beginning of 2022 as a start date. We guess that this will be a popular SLP and demand for places might be high.

If you are interested in being kept informed of the project and would like to ensure that you get advanced information about volunteering please send an email to u3aglsenetwork@gmail.com Please tell us which U3A you belong to in your email.

We anticipate that more information will be sent out in early December.

Greater London South East U3A Network

u3aglsenetwork@gmail.com

Science and Technology

Following our August/September re-start of ordinary meetings, we held similar gatherings at our usual venue of St Paul's Church (Victor Childs room) Orpington in both October and November. The attendances have been good, and seem to be back to what they were prior to the start of the COVID Pandemic.

In October, Viki Worthington gave a talk on the possible link of gut microbiome having an impact on neurological diseases, which at first sight seemed somewhat illogical to the audience but at the end we felt that it could not be discounted. Following this we had a few brief scientific and technological items spotted in the media, and a general discussion on Viki's suggestion that we introduce a sort of Brains Trust at future meetings. The plan was accepted, and probably starting in December, we will have volunteers answering questions posed by other members as of general interest.

The November meeting began with an hour long French documentary film on what is known as 'The Blob' – it being a unicellular organism that despite having no brain or a mouth can learn as well as detect and digest food. Scientifically known as **Physarum polycephalum** it is a type of slime mould with the film being based on research undertaken at the Paris Zoological Park.

After the tea break Anthony Bradburne gave a colourful talk about iridescence and the science behind nature's brilliant hues. We then further discussed the Brains Trust format and updated the list of potential questions, with the idea to encourage everyone to get more involved without having to undertake the usual hour long presentation. Finally we completed what turned out to be a slightly longer meeting than usual with some selected media sourced items of interest.

Anyone wishing to join the Group is welcome to attend; full details are available on the Orpington u3a website, or for more information contact the Group Leader, Viki Worthington, whose details are on the Members Area section.

OVFM (Orpington Video and Film Makers)

If you enjoyed our short presentation of films at the October Meeting you may be interested in delving in to the making, editing and special effects that make it all happen. Today's technology means that movies can be made on inexpensive phones.





BOOK SALE NOVEMBER 2021

Thanks to the U3A members who donated books and in return purchased many more. Happy reading.

It has been a long time since we had our last sale and I am pleased to tell you that just under £50 was raised to support our local library book groups. We will buy a set of books and donate them to the library when we have read them (there is a bit of money left from our pre-pandemic sale). To those who do not know-we have been doing this for about fifteen years and hope to continue in the future. Hopefully, look forward to another sale in May.

Thanks also to "Bookworms" members who helped at the event and to Charmaine who volunteered to take the remainder to a charity shop. See you next time.



Rummikub is a fun, easy game to learn. It's similar to the card game Rummy but played with tiles. When we came back after lockdown, I reduced the number of tables from 3 to 2, and we spread ourselves over two days: the usual 3rd Tuesday of the month and the day before. We now have vacancies on both days and would welcome anyone who'd like to join us. We're a friendly bunch and always willing to help beginners, so please get in touch.

SUDOKU

1	8				3	6	2	5
6	3							9
		9	1			4		
2			7			3	8	
	4		6		5	7		
3			5					8
9	1		8				6	

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD no 78

Submitted by Cryptic Crosswords 1

1		2			3	4		5		6		7
				8								
9								10				
11												
												12
13		14						15				
						16						
	17									18		
19												
20						21						
22										23		

Across

1. Taking a high ball back with time to run for it (4)
3. Threatening people serving without return (8)
9. The fruit essential in every Capri cottage (7)
10. Sum up the extremes of terribly stale odour (5)
11. Female having small, satisfied feeling but totally, restlessly, unhappy (12)
13. There is no resistance in Eastern assembly! (6)
15. Fly being more firm within set up (6)
17. TV presenter's aid having temper with petrol mixture (12)
20. Find the answer in the capitals of Spain or Laos very easily (5)
21. King of the butterflies? (7)
22. Lie down again – the letters to note! (8)
23. Heavy metal in place of the vanguard? (4)

Down

1. A trademark is hard to flourish in a threatening way (8)
2. Harmless pranks for birds (5)
4. Independent body, the hospital department is taking it to an unknown destination (6)
5. Dan? His moment was spoilt by receiving counsel regarding his future conduct (12)
6. Perhaps an earwig taking a copper to hear to have a close look (7)
7. Going over your account leads to finding the artist portrayed (4)
8. A cement court characters used to obtain dress or equipment accessory (12)
12. It is necessary to see Chard reformed and closely inspected (8)
14. Rattles the points? (7)
16. Not surprisingly, prim Alison covered up for the original (6)
18. Half-heartedly the setter turned to being brief and to the point (5)
19. Confounded ruse and sure playing for the employer (4)

Solution on page 2



Christmas Quiz

1. Which of the gifts presented to Jesus by the Wise Men was commonly used as an anointing oil?
2. Which of Santa's reindeer are named after meteorological terms?
3. In the poem 'The Night Before Christmas' visions of what danced in childrens' heads?
4. Christmas Island is located in which Ocean?
5. Which poem by Christina Rossetti has been set to Music as a carol?
6. Which country was the first to use a tree as part of the celebrations at Christmas?
7. December 26 marks which Saints' day?
8. Which famous scientist was born on Christmas day in 1642?
9. Which company first dressed Santa Claus in red?
10. In what year was the Queen's speech first televised?

Answers on P3

ANNUAL GROUP COORDINATORS REPORT 2021

What a difference a year makes! Last year as I wrote this report, I remember trying very hard to send a positive message about the future of the organisation. Then along came the Christmas that never was and we started the New Year feeling deflated, but with a brave smile on our faces.

Thanks to our wonderful Group Leaders, many groups were able to carry on in some capacity, be it via zoom, email or phone. We would like to thank them for the consideration they have shown and the effort they have made to persevere. With a steady stream of new members joining us, Orpington u3a is thriving; come along to one of our meetings and you will see friendship and laughter all around you. If you haven't yet joined a group, give it a go, as this is the way to experience u3a at its finest.

Inevitably the virus has caused a toll on both our members and our groups. Some of our groups have folded, either because the Group Leader feels unable to continue, or because the members do. Wherever possible we endeavour to find someone from within the group to continue as Group Leader; this is not an onerous undertaking if it is shared between members. We would like to remind members of all groups that everyone needs to contribute: perhaps organise a meeting or a speaker for your group; offer your home once in a while for a meeting; offer to make or provide the refreshments; lead an outing; offer lifts; the list of ways to support your Group Leader is endless.

Our website remains the best place to find out all the latest information on groups and the Interest Group list is included in the Newsletter every six months. We are always looking for ideas for new groups; these are advertised on our website and in the Newsletter or you can 'sign up' at our monthly meeting.

Janet and I are always willing to help and our contact details are available on page two and on the website. We look forward to catching up with you all over the next few months and to the continued success of Orpington u3a.

Group Coordinators

NOTICE BOARD



New Group News

The rock 'n' roll years – 1955 to 1969 – is a small (maximum EIGHT) music appreciation group that specialises in a key fifteen-year period of popular music. The first fifteen years of rock 'n' roll, covers Elvis and the Beatles originals and imitators and such genres as doo-wop, trad jazz, folk, the Brill building, Motown, flower power etc.

The format is that each attendee chooses at least four titles based on the month's chosen theme. Discussion and commentary will then take place between records. Members take turns at choosing the following month's theme. The sessions are from 2 to 4pm on the last Thursday of the month. Light refreshments to be served, with those who cannot host contributing £1.

If you are interested in joining this group, please contact the Group Coordinators

Folk Dance Group

Please be aware that this is now run independently so is not a U3A group.



Piano and Instrumental Duets is a friendly little group of musicians who meet once a month on the first or second Monday to make music together. We play mainly music from the classical repertoire but would not turn down the opportunity to show off our latin or jazz skills etc. We have one or two vacancies and are open to players of any orchestral instrument. Currently we have pianists, recorder and flute players. In the past we have had violin, clarinet and oboe. If you are a player, even if you are a bit rusty, our group may be the opportunity to improve your skills and play with others. Please contact me if interested.



DIGITAL INCLUSION FOR ALL - FREE sessions

Pop-in classes 3-5pm on the following Sundays:
12 December, 9 January, 13 February, 13 March, 10 April, 8 May and 12 June.

Sessions for helping individuals to improve their IT skills.



Built 1933 Closed 1982

Does this cinema look familiar?

Does it bring back memories?

I would love to hear about your experiences of the Commodore on Orpington High Street.

Did you go to the children's Saturday sessions?

Perhaps your parents took you to see films at the Commodore.

Did you buy sweets? Icecreams?

Did anyone do their courting on the back row?

Can we get together and swap stories about going to the cinemas in Orpington and also Petts Wood?