

NEWSLETTER – January 2021

A message from the chairman

Happy new year, and welcome to the first edition of our new-look Newsletter.

Everyone's life continues to be in a state of flux, as legislation and Government guidelines on tackling the Covid-19 pandemic keep changing. Our u3a is no exception and we are keen to stay in close contact with you as the rules affecting our activities have to reflect what we can or cannot do.

Since the pandemic struck we have:

- launched our new website at www.basingstokeu3a.org
- introduced more frequent newsletters
- created a Facebook page www.facebook.com/Basingstokeu3a and members' group
- created an email address for general enquiries: basingstokeu3aenquiries@gmail.com
- started holding monthly meetings online ("webinars") until we can meet up again

We're on Facebook



Shortly after Christmas we sent you a membership renewal reminder (see the message from Linda on page 2), following a 2019/20 membership year which, in response to the pandemic, was extended to the end of 2020. With various vaccines on the way, we are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to resume our normal monthly and group meetings within the next few months. So as well as renewing your membership, please keep an eye on what we're doing: we don't want you to miss out on anything!

Rod Marshall

Your committee

Rod Marshall	Chairman
Janet Field	Business Secretary
Margaret Hayes	Groups Facilitator
Sue Seamour	Treasurer
Linda Wain	Membership Secretary
Richard Field	Webmaster and Assets Manager
Liz Horner	Systems Manager
Madeline Hussey	Marketing
Ian Stimpson	Committee member
Marie White	Co-opted member

basingstokeoldbasingu3agroups@gmail.com

Please note that personal email addresses have been removed from this online copy of the newsletter.

Supported by:

Brenda Austin Minutes secretary

Please send any general enquiries to:

basingstokeu3aenquiries@gmail.com

LOCKED IN – BUT DEFINITELY NOT LOCKED OUT

Even though we're reduced to keeping in touch remotely again, we will not be beaten! We're continuing to use Zoom, e-mail and other online software – to play bridge, for example. So we still have a wide range of groups and activities on offer. The committee is making sure that members without online access are kept in touch too, with a monthly newsletter delivery and a distanced 'hello' on the doorstep where we possibly can.

Our discussion and learning groups are finding it the easiest to carry on, with more than 30 activities for members to enjoy. The 'emailers' include a weekly quiz group, classical studies, cooking for men – and our circle dancers are continuing to practise their steps at home too, with the help of You Tube trainers. 'Zoomers' are getting together for art appreciation, biography, the environment, patchwork, and needles and pins, again to name but a few.

As always, further details can be found on www.basingstokeu3a.org and, for those of you who aren't online, just give us a ring on 07787 520281 to speak to a member of the committee.



Membership renewal

Thank you to all members who have been quick off the mark and sent in their membership renewal payment. This is such a great help to receive them promptly. If you haven't already made your BACs or cheque payments, we would be really pleased to receive them. Thank you again for all your continuing support during the ongoing challenging times.

Linda Wain

Keeping up to date

Please keep visiting our website for the latest news, at least weekly if you can. This is the easiest way for us to keep you up to date with news of how the pandemic is affecting our u3a, including the groups that are running. If you can't do this yourself, perhaps a member of your family or a friend could do it on your behalf. And don't forget our new Facebook page – do join us there too if you can, either to see what our groups are getting up to tell us what you've all been doing together!

Monthly webinars

Until we can resume our regular monthly meetings, we are running a series of live webinars using Zoom, including the opportunity to ask questions. Numbers are restricted, so please book quickly if you are interested. Each presentation will be recorded and shown later to anyone who misses out on a place however. They take place on the second Wednesday of each month, starting at 2pm.

10 February

Heroes and villains of the Basingstoke canal

Roger Cansdale is press officer and talks organiser for the Basingstoke Canal Society. He will be giving us a talk about the history of the canal in the light of some of the odd people who have been involved with it.

10 March

Tony Harris takes us back into Tudor history as Henry VIII, in costume, talking about his life and his wives!



Suspicious emails?

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has launched the new Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS). If you receive an email that makes you suspicious, forward it to the NCSC at report@phishing.gov.uk and their automated programme will immediately test the validity of the site.

For group leaders

1. As you will have seen elsewhere, we now have a Facebook page. Please view this as another means of promoting your group to potential new members. If you are not on Facebook yourself, draft what you would like to say, attach a picture if you wish, and email it all to:

basingstokeu3aenquiries@gmail.com

We will then take care of the rest.

2. We decided late last year that it would be better to start referring to "Group Convenors" rather than "Group Leaders", as the original description seemed to discourage some people from taking on the role. This change is now reflected on our website.

Christmas fundraising quiz

The Christmas quiz raised £255 for our u3a. Thank you to everyone who sent in a donation, and congratulations to Paula and Malcom Ward for winning the prize of a £20 gift token.

All the answers are now available on our website.

The Disability Forum
Basingstoke & District

CHAIR YOGA

Wednesdays 12 noon
ZOOM or watch live via Facebook

Every Week & FREE for all
Seated Yoga & Meditation

Pre-register by email - info@bddf.org.uk
to receive the Zoom link or
watch live via Facebook!
facebook.com/bddfforum

LOTTERY FUNDED

Music and Words Group

Our Music and Words Group members have been busy. Unable to get together, this group has been sharing updates on the local and London concert halls, providing TV and internet access to recorded concert performances, including the Proms. Some members have produced much enjoyed presentations on their chosen music, with a link to the relevant YouTube recording. These have included a lockdown quiz, a Christmas programme of music, carols and poetry, and *Africa's Unknown Classical Music Heritage*. This contributor is famous in the group for researching and introducing members to relatively unfamiliar pieces of music, which helps to broaden everyone's experience of different music cultures and composers.

Presentations coming up include *The Moon, From Russia with Love, A Walk round Brighton Hill, Baroque, and Composers' Travels*.

Creative Writing Group

Members of the Creative Writing group are keeping busy too.

The former librarian at Chineham, Cathy Foster, started this group last September. Members now Zoom twice a month to discuss their writing and work on various schemes together – which included Halloween and Christmas projects. The focus of the group is writing for fun and includes all levels of ability, from those who occasionally write the odd short piece to those who take it quite seriously.

Some have submitted work to the Bramley and Basingstoke writing competitions. One member writes mostly poetry (see right) and another, Guy Caplin, has self-published three novels on Amazon, with a fourth one ready for launch.

Old Friends

Old friends sat on a park bench like ...

Pages that you turn back to
Read again and check to see
Is that what I used to do?
Are they as they used to be?
Did I get the story right?
Have they left me
Standing on the spot,
Out of mind when out of sight,
While they are weaved
Into a wider more intriguing plot?

But over coffee, cake and chat,
A glass of wine, a chance to dine,
A photo or a memory shared
WhatsApp or a Facebook sign,
I'm glad I dared
To bridge the gap of all those years
Face up to unknown fears,
Learn their latest chapters
Share a line of mine,
Even the current disasters.

The past is just part of the story,
The joy, the thrill of meeting once again
Rekindles love, hope and mends.
Not book ends waiting for the sun to set
On the final word of old age.
No, together we set another date
Friends forever, gratefully growing old,
Turn each next page
And eagerly anticipate
How our story will unfold.

Joanne Weineck

DON'T FORGET!

You can stay in touch by emailing
basingstokeu3aenquiries@gmail.com
checking on our website at
www.basingstokeu3a.org
joining in with us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/Basingstokeu3a
or, if you're not online, ring 07787 520281