

Dates for your Diary

- 21st April - SGM & Monthly Zoom Meeting - Blue Lamp Trust
- 19th May - Monthly Zoom Meeting - From Earth to Mercury and Mars ... the QinetiC Input
- 2nd June - National u3a Day
- 16th June - Robots and Artificial Intelligence ; do we need to worry?
- 2nd July - Group Leader's Lunch
- 24th October - "Top Hat" at The Mill, Sonning (see page 3)
- 14th November - 2 Night stay in Thursford for Christmas Show
- 3rd December - Christmas Lunch

New Groups Potential

Several members of the committee held a zoom meeting on 24 March with Fleet u3a members who were interested in what was involved in setting up and running a new group. Paddy gave an overview of the great fun and joy you can have in being with people and learning a new subject that you all have an interest in. I gave an overview of the support that I and others can give to potential new group leaders and other committee members briefly talked about venues, financials and the Beacon system. Lots of questions were asked and a number of proposals for new groups were also suggested –

Art appreciation : Cribbage : Croquet : Embroidery : French Popular Songs appreciation : History, grammar and usage of English : Investments (shares, etc.) : Maths for the innumerate! : Running (slowly around Elvetham country park!) : Russian alphabet (possible leading to a Russian language group) : Social media safety online : Table Tennis : Wellbeing

We shall shortly be putting up an exhaustive list of suggestions for new groups on the website. The committee will be discussing the detail of how we move this initiative forward at its next meeting in early April and we shall be communicating the outcome of this to all members in the

next few weeks. If you have any additional suggestions for new groups please do not hesitate to contact either Paddy or myself. All offers to initiate new groups will be gratefully received. As we hopefully start to come out of lockdown in the coming months it will be key that we can re-invigorate and grow Fleet u3a through offering new subjects. Watch this space !

Chat from the Chair

By the time you read this we should have already had the chance to meet up with friends and family outside and be looking forward to haircuts very soon. With everyone wearing masks and sporting hairstyles not seen since the sixties it's very difficult to recognise each other in the street! Let's hope we can return to some normality soon.

With normality in mind, some outdoor groups are keen to meet up as soon as the lockdown rules permit and I know several Groups Leaders (GLs) are already making plans to restart their groups in line with COVID 19 guidelines. Indoor groups will have to wait a bit longer unless they can transfer into the open air! As a Bridge GL I would need to find a very still day to play bridge outdoors; a puff of wind could play havoc with the scoring!

As you know it is the first National U3A day on June 2nd as part of National Volunteers' Week. In addition to the stroll around Fleet wearing blue and yellow the planning group are considering an online series of taster sessions by GLs or other group members willing to talk about what their group does when they meet. More details coming soon.

As part of the post-lockdown relaunch of Fleet U3A we are hoping to be able to offer several new and interesting groups to you. We had a good turnout at a recent Zoom meeting to show how simple and rewarding it is to set up and run a group in Fleet U3A. We are hopeful that much will come of it. Please see Stephen Grosvenor's article later in this newsletter for more details.

By now, you should have received your personal notification of our Special General Meeting (SGM), to amend our constitution, on April 21st at 10.45. Please let us know if the email and attachments have yet to arrive in your inbox or by post for those without computers. We do need a good turnout, please, so that we are quorate. It will follow similar lines to the AGM in November but with a much shorter agenda. I look forward to seeing you there.

Keep smiling,

Paddy

**Stephen Grosvenor
Group Leaders Liaison Sec**

CREATIVE WRITING

Both Creative Writing Groups are meeting as usual, albeit on Zoom rather than face-to-face. This month's story comes from Creative Writing 2. If you are interested in this subject, we have vacancies.

Beverley Carpenter

Safe Haven by Sheila Morling

Jonathan felt cold, uncomfortable and miserable. Although he was eighteen, he wanted his mum. He was near to tears. How had he got himself into this terrible predicament? On his gap year with his mate Charlie, they had joined a group of young people protesting against the corrupt and unfair regime of this Middle Eastern country. They weren't armed or in attacking mode but were suddenly seized by some vicious looking police and bundled into a van, a few blows from wooden batons being aimed at them. They tried to explain that they had just been passing and wanted to know what the fracas was all about, they hadn't really joined in. Very few police appeared to speak English and they certainly couldn't understand the language of the country; communication was therefore almost impossible.

Jon's movement was restricted by the fact that he was manacled to a radiator in the dark room. Charlie was in another room; their captors obviously thought that separating them was a good idea. Jonathan was questioned by a young man who seemed ill at ease and almost apologetic for having to be his interrogator. His command of English was sketchy. An interpreter was mentioned and Jon was left alone once more. He hadn't actually been beaten up, at least not yet, he thought, but the uncertainty of his situation was extremely worrying. Would they be fed? What about exercise? Many gruesome thoughts ran through his mind. There was nothing much he could do at present so he dozed a bit. It was an uneasy slumber. How he wished he was in safe haven with his family.

Dad had urged him to be responsible and on his guard for risky situations. He was ordered to phone home every weekend and to report where he was and what he and Charlie were doing. Their phones had been taken away from them so it was unlikely there would be a phone call this weekend as it was already Friday. What would his family think? Would Dad be in full panic mode, ringing alarm bells to the police and possibly the foreign office? Maybe the consulate would be informed. Then Jon realised that his mobile might have assisted in translations as he had an app for that purpose. Of course it would help if you knew which language to look up; perhaps Arabic to start with? But how to spell it? His mind was racing and he fell into an uneasy and uncomfortable slumber.

They had spent a very interesting time so far travelling around Europe, central Europe and then venturing farther east without any particular aim in mind. They stayed in hostels and sometimes managed to get work in a bar or cafe for low pay but with some sort of bed for the night thrown in. It all felt like a great adventure. Nothing terrible had happened to them so far. Had their luck run out? It seemed impossible to make contact with Charlie. When the interpreter came he would ask about his mate.

The door crashed open suddenly and Jonathan cowered by the radiator. The guy who entered didn't strike him as looking like an interpreter. He punched Jon and flung him down. What was the angry thug going to do next? Jon was shaking; would he even survive this awful ordeal?

He cautiously viewed the room from floor level; untidy as he had expected. Then he noticed discarded socks, trainers and an empty crisp packet. Relief flooded through his mind as he recognised the floor of his bedroom at home, his safe haven; he had fallen out of bed, the bump wakening him up. He climbed back under the duvet still disturbed by his nightmare, probably brought on by watching a late night TV program about hostage takers. He started to reconsider the gap year he and Charlie had been planning for the summer.

©SMorling

REMINDER to ALL MEMBERS

**Notice of Zoom Monthly Meeting and Special General Meeting
(SGM)**

10:45 Wednesday 21st April 2021

Spring Photographic Competition - Open to All

Tom Way's excellent talk and amazing images seen at the March Monthly Meeting have inspired us to have a Spring Photography Competition, open to all our members, who may each submit up to three digital images on the theme of "Something Old".



I regret that prints cannot be accepted. Entries should be emailed to me at my address below, **no later than Friday 26th April**.

They will be displayed on the Gallery page of our website where they can be seen by members, who will be asked to vote for the best three. To vote, choose up to three favourite images, rate them one to three, and email details to me between 2nd and 16th May. The winning submission will be featured in the new Programme booklet and will also head the home page of the website. All three winning images will appear in rotation at the head of our Members' Facebook Group.

Please read the entry conditions and instructions on voting on the Website Gallery page.

This is not a technical competition – you can use any camera you like, whether Pentax, Brownie Box or smartphone. I am sure voters will give as much weight to interpretation of the theme as to composition, exposure and focus, important though they are.

Any queries, please contact me. I look forward to receiving many stunning entries.

Chris Porterwebmaster@fleetu3a.org.uk

NB You don't need to be a member of any photographic group or an expert so please join in. Ed.

Possible web sites you may care to look at.

Anyone who joined the March monthly meeting on zoom may remember that Clive Stokes was chatting about other online talks he has accessed. Below is a list of these sites in case any are of interest to you. Thank you Clive.

<https://www.str.org.uk/product/online-lecture-censorship-and-british-theatre-1968-1971/>

Free online lecture 'Is this What We Got Rid of the Lord Chamberlain for? Censorship and the British Theatre 1968-1971

www.eventbrite.co.uk

Monthly free lectures with scientific themes from The Rutherford Appleton Laboratories. Down to earth and entertaining

www.denman.org.uk

Low prices for online lectures and workshops covering travel, cooking arts and crafts

www.gamesnight.macmillan.org.uk

Donations expected for superbly presented range of activities: Escape room, Murder mystery, Horseracing and Quiz night that can be pursued at any time

Potential New Groups

Barrie England would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in the following potential groups:

1. A group to understand and appreciate French popular songs by artists such as Charles Aznavour, Jacques Brel and Georges Brassens. Group members would need French at intermediate level or higher.. Because of the need to watch performances on YouTube, meetings would be held on Zoom.
2. The history, grammar and usage of English. Initially on Zoom, possibly in conventional meetings later.
3. A group to run slowly for 20 to 30 minutes round Elvetham Country Park once a week.

Let Barrie know if you'd like to pursue any of these.

Barrie's email address is baralbion@gmail.com

We have also had suggestions for Cribbage, Embroidery, etc. see page 1

Corsets and Trouser Belts

I haven't watched "Bridgerton" but no doubt many of you will be familiar with the shenanigans and abundant display of corsetry. My mother's generation were still ensconced in the things, but by the 1960s we were lucky enough that they went out of fashion and we could let it all hang out.

Unfortunately the medical profession submitted me to the wearing of surgical corsetry during 1976 and 2003, both extremely hot years. In 1976 we had one of the hottest summers recorded, and a drought lasting months, with many areas resorting to collecting water from stand pipes.

I suffered severe backache, exacerbated by the tumour growing on my auditory nerve, which from time to time affected my movement. This was not diagnosed at this early stage, and instead of prescribing physio and exercise, the received wisdom was to immobilise.

This was achieved by making me a massive, heavy surgical corset with two long whalebone type things at the back for support. Not a pleasant sight, very hard to put on and unbearable in the heat.

Very foolishly, I caved in to the pleas from two of my male teaching colleagues to accompany them on a school camping trip to Malham Tarn, as a lady teacher was needed for supervision, as it was a mixed party of teenage boys and girls.

I am not the camping caravan type, so I said no. However, daily pleading and a love of the Yorkshire countryside wore me down, and I agreed to help out. "Don't worry," I was told. "We will put your tent up for you. All you will need to do is to come on the trips and patrol at night to prevent any tent hopping."

Yes, on arrival, my tent had been put up for me. So far, so good. After a meal round the camp fire, John and I patrolled until we reckoned all the kids had settled, then I ventured into my tent.

Not my cup of tea. I could not stand up in it to take my corset off, and anyway, I thought it wise to keep the support on, as a sleeping bag is hardly de luxe. After sleeping fitfully, I resisted the early morning urge to go to the loo for as long as I could, and finally succumbed.

On coming to, I realised the tent had been pitched on a slope, and I was half way out of it. I don't know how I managed this, but somehow I crawled out, and as I tried to stand up, I immediately ricocheted back. The whale bones had caught on the guy rope. So I spent a while shooting backwards and forwards. The rest of the holiday is a blur.

Fast forward to 2002 on holiday in Spain. That summer, I had suffered the indignity of an umbilical hernia, which was very painful. My GP had manipulated it back in, but warned me it could happen again. It sure did, with a vengeance! A Spanish doctor came to our apartment and told me to go to Malaga hospital.

A couple of friends drove us there - an agonising experience, but of course by the time we got there it had popped back in. I spent about three hours there and was sent away with X-rays for my doctor at home and a prescription for a surgical corset, which I could get from a pharmacy in Estepona.

Spain is different to England. Here, pharmacies tend to be solemn, with everyone keeping to themselves. Not so in Andalusia. The shop was tiny, full of equipment, commodes, wheelchairs etc. There was no room to swing a cat, let alone space for customers, but miraculously the place was full of good humoured, patient people.

They looked horrified as I stumbled through the doorway, and fell back to allow me to be seen immediately. The proprietor, a plump kind little lady, had very little English, but she read the prescription and led me to a tiny back room to measure me and try out various specimens.

My word, did it hurt! The little crowd in the shop had stopped chatting and were following proceedings carefully. Every little "ow" was met by a wave of sympathy. Finally, battered and corseted, I emerged to cheers and back patting.

Let's just say the rest of the holiday was pretty hot!!

On arrival home by doctor referred me urgently for surgery. It was 8 months before I was operated on, as the surgeon was concerned about my health generally, and insisted I had lots of investigations, involving three other consultants.

This meant I spent the summer of 2003 wearing this thing round my middle in the blazing heat.

Now fast forward to 2007. Nothing to do with corsets and heat, just the humble trouser belt. I was visiting Outpatients at Frimley to have pins removed from my toes following a half foot reconstruction for arthritis.

This involved six weeks in a wheelchair. Mike drove me, but we could not get into a disabled parking

Cont page 4

place. We drove round a few times, but in the end had to opt for an ordinary space. There was not enough room for Mike to open the passenger door fully, and he managed to ram the wheelchair across the door. As I have no balance, and couldn't use the left foot, I had great difficulty transferring to the chair.

As he leant forward to help me, I slammed my leg on the door and yelled in pain. This startled him, and as he tried to straighten up, he realised he couldn't move. Somehow the belt on his trousers had caught up on the wing mirror of the adjacent car.

We were in quite a pickle, as I couldn't help him and he couldn't turn round. A deranged "dad dance" somehow managed to release him, and a very flustered Mike somehow threw me into the chair and he set off on the long walk to the hospital. It wasn't that long really, but he was recovering from two hip operations, so it seemed long.

To add insult to injury, he realised his glasses case had come out of his trouser pocket, so he parked me and went back and found they were under the car. The consultant was concerned about the bruise on my leg, but I wasn't inclined to explain its origin. It would have taken too long!!

Sylvia Brown

UP OOO UP - A Wordsmiths Word

One word in the English language that could be a noun, verb, adjective, preposition is *UP*. This two letter word in English has more meanings than any other two-letter word, and the word is *UP*. It is listed in the dictionary as an [adj], [prep], [adj], [n], or [v].

It is easy to understand *UP* meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake *UP*?

At a meeting, why does the topic come *UP*? Why do we speak *UP*, and why are the officers *UP* for election and if there is a tie why is it a toss *UP*? Why is it *UP* to the secretary to write *UP* a report? We call *UP* our friends, brighten *UP* a room, polish *UP* the silver and furniture, warm *UP* the leftovers and clean *UP* the kitchen. We lock *UP* the house and fix *UP* the old car.

At other times, this little word has another meaning. People stir *UP* trouble, line *UP* for tickets, work *UP* an appetite, and think *UP* excuses. To be dressed is one thing but to be dressed *UP* is special.

And this Up is confusing - A drain must be opened *UP* because it is blocked *UP*!

We open *UP* a store in the morning but we close it *UP* at night. We seem to be pretty mixed *UP* about *UP*.

To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of *UP* look *UP* the word *UP* in the dictionary. In a desk sized dictionary it takes *UP* almost 1/4 of the page and can add *UP* to about thirty definitions. If you are *UP* to it you might try building *UP* a list of the many ways *UP* is used. It will take *UP* a lot of your time, but don't give *UP* you may wind *UP* with (*UP* to) a hundred or more.

When it threatens to rain we say it is clouding *UP*. When the sun shines we say it is brightening *UP*.

When it rains the earth soaks it *UP*. When it doesn't rain for a while things are drying *UP*.

One could go on and on but I will wrap it *UP* for now My time is *UP* !

So I hope this whole thing cracked you *UP* . Now I really will shut *UP*

Ed

Cookery Group - Hot Cross Bun Results

Here are pictures of some of the buns made by those who joined in the Cookery Groups open 'Hot Cross Bun Making' on Wednesday 31st March (as advertised in the last Newsletter). By all accounts they taste very good.

Carole & Jackie (Cookery Group)

They look really yummy Ed.



What's in a name

The South Africans have an equivalent to the Welsh town of :

llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysilliogogoch.

It is :

Tweebuffelsmeteenskootmorsdoodgeskietfontein.

The meaning being :

Twee = two

Buffels = buffalo

Met = with

Een = one

Skoot = shot (noun)

Morsdood = stone-dead

Geskiet = shot (verb)

Fontein = spring [of a river].

It is the name of a farm, not even a village.

Martin Vlietstra

Both would be a nightmare for newsreaders if ever there was a Covid variant originating from either of these places.

Ed.

TAT Zoom Event

Special Subject Week – Open to all u3a members in the UK

Exploring World Faiths - 12th-16th April

To register go to the following web site.

There are different topics on each day

<https://u3asites.org.uk/west-midlands/events>

Find us on Facebook

Fleet u3a has its own Facebook page Our page on Facebook can be found by entering "Fleet u3a" in the search box at the top of a Facebook page. You will need your membership number to see it and join in.

U3a day

Wednesday June 2nd is the first u3a day, a national series of events aimed at raising awareness of u3a to help us attract new members. Here in Fleet we'll be playing an active part. There'll be a series of online taster sessions for our groups so potential members can find out more about what's on offer. Also during the day, we're asking members to be out and about in Fleet town centre at lunchtime wearing the u3a's distinctive blue and yellow. We'll try to get as many posters and signs displayed as possible and to catch the attention of people who may have no idea what u3a does. Nearer the time there'll be more details but for now put the date in your diary and encourage anyone you know who might be interested in joining to go to our website or Facebook page to find out more.

Adrian Van Klaveren, Publicity Sec

COMMITTEE EMAILS



| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Chair | Paddy Powell | chairman@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Secretary | Alan Jones | secretary@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Treasurer | Neil Morley | treasurer@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Membership Sec | Fiona Godfrey | memsec@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Group Leaders' Liaison Sec | Stephen Grosvenor | groups@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Events Sec | Carol Howlett | events@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Webmaster | Chris Porter | webmaster@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Monthly Meetings Sec | John Gawthorpe | meetings@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Newsletter | Sandy Redman | news@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Enquiries | Jan Glasscock | enquiries@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Programme Sec | Andy Kirk | programme@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Minutes Sec | Barbara Jones | minsec@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Venues Sec | Barbara Jones | venues@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Outreach Sec | Jenny Teagle | outreach@fleetu3a.org.uk |
| Publicity Sec | Adrian Van Klaveren | publicity@fleetu3a.org.uk |

***PLEASE AVOID TELEPHONING MEMBERS BEFORE 9 a.m.
OR AFTER 5 p.m.***