



Chairman's Message

Winter turns into spring on March 20th and we can look forward to watching nature wake up. We can see buds beginning to form on trees and bushes. We can see early spring flowers in bloom. We may even be tempted to start to tidy up the garden in preparation for the months to come.

A downside to all this of course is "The List" - doesn't every household have one? In our house "The List" is prepared by Senior Management (my wife) and consists of jobs that have been put off during the winter months (and probably from last year) but which now need urgent attention. Once completed however, we can look forward to idle summer days in the garden, or indeed, even start to enjoy face to face u3a activities once again.

As the roadmap takes effect, it is nice to think that as more of the population get the jab and infection and fatalities drastically reduce that, even with some hygiene restrictions placed upon us, we can get back to some semblance of normality.

The optimistic message must therefore be.....

Get those Bowls dusted off ready for the season

Get those Bikes ready for the road

It's on its way!

Warm weather !!

Long sunny days!!!

SUMMER IS A COMING

I look forward to seeing you all soon

Alan Starkie

Feedback from Group Support

You will all have seen [the Government's roadmap](#) for ending restrictions on activities. By reference to that roadmap, Group Support has contacted group leaders to ascertain the group's preferred date for restarting. As one of the challenges we face is the timely booking of premises, the focus was on activities based in hired premises. The exercise proved to be a great catalyst to triggering the debate within each group as to what the consensus was on restart.

Nothing recorded in this exercise is binding. Groups will be contacted nearer the time, to verify the group's planned restart is unchanged. Similarly, our restart plan may have to be revised in line with any revisions to the Government roadmap and guidelines and advice from the Third Age Trust.

In outline, the feedback from premises-based activities can be summarized as:

10% of groups have opted for a Step 3 restart (no earlier than 17th May). It is important that these groups accept that social distancing applies and that for all groups other than exercise classes, the number of attendees at a session is limited to 6.

60% of groups have opted for a Step 4 restart (no earlier than 21st June). This marks the beginning of the 'new normal', where restrictions are removed. From this point onward, the onus is on individuals to undertake their own personal risk assessment and to decide whether they are comfortable that their wellbeing is not unduly threatened by participation in activities.

30% of groups have opted to defer restart until September.

Paul Andrews

Chair, Group Support Team

Change to u3a Membership Year

A reminder to all our members that the next membership year will now commence on 1st October 2021 and run to 30th September 2022, and that no membership renewal payment is required in advance of that date. The annual membership subscription remains at £15 and future membership years will run from 1st October to 30th September.

Doreen and Deirdre, u3a Membership Team

Treasurer's Report

The absence of premises-based activities in this 2020-2021 financial year means that comparison of our financial activity against that of the previous financial year is meaningless. Certain payments had to be made; most notably the payments to the Third Age Trust (£8,616) for membership and use of the Beacon system. The abandonment of courses and cancellation of planned courses and trips required that we repaid around £10,000 of members' contributions that had been paid in advance. Recognizing the special relationship which we have with the scouts and guides, we have been paying a monthly retainer that takes account of the use we make of the building for storing equipment and ensures the headquarters are there for us when we restart activities.

In summary, we started the 2020-2021 financial year with a bank balance of £60,413. Some 1,537 members renewed and their commitment to the u3a is greatly appreciated. £12,635 of the subscription money was received on or after 1st April 2020 and appears in the 2020-2021 accounts. Once the payments to the Third Age Trust, accountant's fees, refunds to members, premises retainer payments, website costs and the usual office expenses are factored in, we will end the 2020-2021 financial year on 31st March with a bank balance of around £54,000.

A fuller report will be provided alongside the accounts at our next AGM.

DERRICK FEWINGS, Hon. Treasurer

National Census Day 2021

The Census 2021 is going to be largely an on-line event. Everyone is required to complete a census form but arrangements have been made for (1) anyone not quite sure about what to do or (2) unable to complete it in this way.

If you have access to the internet but are unsure about what to do

Once you have received your Census letter you call the Support Service on 01772 595 463 for help to complete the details on-line. You will be given a date and time for an appointment, with a checked and trained adviser, who will talk you through the form.

If you have no internet access at all or you are unable to complete the on-line form because of a disability

You can request a paper copy from the Office for National Statistics Support Line 0800 141 2021. It will be sent to you by post and you can complete and return the form by post.

You have until **4 May** to use these options.

Speaker Meetings go online

After a long break in 2020, we were able to arrange a series of Speaker Meetings via Zoom.

The first meeting took place on 4th February, when author and historian **Julia Clayton** transported us back 2500 years to Sparta, the largest of 2000 separate city states in the region now known as Greece. In an enthralling talk, we heard how Spartan ideas, attitudes and culture such as constitutional monarchy, token money, team sports and the welfare state, form the basis of our modern society. Julia commented that the Spartans would have approved of the u3a, conforming as it does to their philosophy of lifelong learning.

On Thursday 4th March over 50 members enjoyed a most entertaining and informative talk by professional entertainer **Stephen Wells**. The topic was 'The Curious Incident of Agatha Christie', and we heard how the famous author staged her own 'disappearance' in 1926, after receiving the devastating news that her husband had been having an affair. After a much publicised investigation involving Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Edgar Wallace and Dorothy L Sayers, she was finally found 10 days later, very much alive and well, at the Hydro Hotel in Harrogate (now the Old Swan), having caused huge embarrassment to her errant husband, whom she divorced shortly afterwards.

An excellent presentation, complete with archive photos, film clips and music, added to our enjoyment of this excellent talk, [and you can now watch a recording of his talk here](#).

Next Speaker Meeting

Thursday 1st April will see the welcome return of chocolatier **Andrew Thwaite**, whom some of you might remember from his visit in early 2019.

Andrew's passion is enriching other people's lives with chocolate and he has done that successfully for more than 20 years with some of the biggest names in the chocolate industry, such as Barry Callebaut, de Zaan, Keylink and many others. During his career he has been a manager, a strategist, a consultant and a teacher but above all, in his own words, has remained 'a natural-born chocolatier'.

Andrew writes:

'I am very much looking forward to speaking to your members on 1st April. The title of my talk



will be Brilliant Brands, the History of Popular Confectionery. I will talk about two of our most iconic chocolate producers, namely Rowntree's and Terry's, how they shaped the way we enjoy chocolate treats today and the stories behind some of their most popular products. I will also be sharing some fascinating tales from the factories.'

If you would like to attend Andrew's talk but haven't yet registered, please email speakerteam@aughton-ormskirk-u3a.co.uk before 29th March (please don't leave it until the last minute!) to be added to the list.

More talks in the pipeline include:

- 6th May **John Whittles:** *No Honey, I'm Solitary!* A talk on the fascinating life cycle of Mason Bees.
- 3rd June **Fool's Gold:** Musical duo Steve and Carol Robson present '*Dark Light*'.
- 8th July **Carolyn Kirby:** *Women with Wings* – the background to Carolyn's latest novel.

Pamela Ball, Speaker Secretary

Creatures in disguise

Derrick Fewings set this puzzle for his grandson.

There are 24 creatures hidden in the following paragraph and you have to find them; in doing so, you can ignore spaces and punctuation marks. To get you started, the first creature is shown in red:

This **harks** back to the day when people made their own entertainment. You may think I am a rotter for trying to catch you out. It is all a matter of taste. Regarding an approach, do go to the end then feel free to reread as slow as possible. Go at your own pace. Stick at it. If you find all 24 creatures, I will congratulate you and crown you best in class. Get them and be famous, else you will be forgotten. Cheer up. Be a realist. You will not get them all in one minute, else I would need to add more. It can't be done. When it is done, do not flounce off if you have not got them all. The madder you get, the more you will miss. Read over your answers. Share them with someone.

Answers on back page

Annual General Meeting

The 2021 AGM will be held on Thursday, 26th August at 11.00 a.m. in the Scout & Guide HQ (provisional venue). All members are invited to put this date in their diaries now, before the diaries are filled up with exciting and more entertaining activities!

Some of the present committee will be standing down having served the maximum 6 years allowed by the constitution so you now have the opportunity to volunteer your time to ensuring that our great organisation continues to provide the activities which can be enjoyed by present and future members.

Signs of Spring



photo:
Bill Soens



photo
Lyn Jenkins



photo
Bill Soens

LOCKDOWN QUIZ

1. What is the capital city of Iceland?
2. What brand of whisky can be made by inserting the word 'famous' in front of which game bird?
3. From which UK island do cars with registration plate GBM come?
4. A 'moggie' is a slang term for which pet animal?
5. 'A Shropshire Lad' is the best-known poetry collection by which writer and classical scholar?
6. Which same word can be used to describe a time of illness, a drinking session, and a boxing match?
7. Who was the inventor of the well-known toy construction kit 'Meccano'?
8. Where was that inventor born?
9. In the Royal Navy, what rank is abbreviated to CPO?
10. 'I am a Rainbow' and 'Coat of Many Colours' are children's books written by which US Country singer?
11. In which country was a wine company set up in 1853, still producing wine nowadays, by a Thomas Hardy? ...not the UK author, nor Nelson's captain at Trafalgar!
12. Which EU country has the largest population?
13. On Friday, February 12th, the Chinese New Year began. It is now the year of which animal in the Chinese calendar?
14. It is customary, at their New Year celebrations, for Chinese children to receive gifts of money, given to them in envelopes of which colour?
15. It is also customary, although not this year in UK, because of the pandemic, for which mythical creature, with up to 15 dancers inside the costume, to parade the streets and dance, to bring good luck to everyone watching?
16. In which year did Hong Kong return to Chinese sovereignty?
17. Who was the last UK governor of Hong Kong at that time?
18. What is the most common blood group in the world?
19. In January 2021, Storm Filomena brought record snowfall to which European capital?
20. What was actor Burt Lancaster's first name?

Answers on next page

Alan Bonner

Our Facebook Page

With the passing of our dear friend Brian Bostock, the administration of the Aughton-Ormskirk Facebook page has fallen on my shoulders and I am honoured to follow in Brian's footsteps. The [u3a Facebook page](#) is intended as a supplement to our own comprehensive website, offering sometimes daily updates on various subjects and inviting members to respond to the content. We would be pleased if more members offered their views on whatever subject is covered.

The content on the Facebook site varies between the very serious Scam reports through to amusing and comedy selections. It goes without saying that the major topic for the past year has been, and still is, the coronavirus pandemic with all the conditions and restrictions that have befallen us, not least of which is getting a haircut !!!! At the moment this author makes our Prime Minister look neat and tidy !

It seems that there may well be a chink of light at the end of this very long tunnel and information on any progress will appear on our Facebook site.

Bill Soens

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CHAIR of SOCIAL: Paul Andrews

CHAIR of FINANCE & RESOURCES: John Tomlinson

SPEAKER SECRETARY: Pamela Ball

MINUTE SECRETARY: Les Rippon

Other committee members

Ian Grant

Pamela Green

Colin Russ

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Answers to Lockdown Quiz page 7

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|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Reykjavik | 8 Liverpool | 15 Dragon |
| 2 Grouse...Famous Grouse | 9 Chief Petty Officer | 16 1997 |
| 3 Isle of Man | 10 Dolly Parton | 17 Chris Patten |
| 4 Cat | 11 Australia | 18 Group 'O' |
| 5 A.E.Housman | 12 Germany | 19 Madrid |
| 6 Bout | 13 The Year of the Ox | 20 Burton |
| 7 Frank Hornby | 14 Red | |

Answers to Creatures in Disguise page 5

shark, hen, otter, tit, llama, roach, dog, eel, ass, goat, stick, rat, crow, man, mouse, tench, bear, toad, ant, nit, ounce, adder, dove, hare