



SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

Dear all

Welcome again to a Newsletter from your u3a Committee – with kind contributions from several members too.

We are all hoping things will start to get back to some form of “new normal” in the near future and that we can all renew our friendships and join once again with others to share company, learning and FUN!

When this happens, a number of groups have indicated that they might have room for new members. These include:

Art Appreciation; Art Practical; Current Affairs; Knit and Natter; Poetry Reading; Science and Society; Singing; Longer Walks. Maybe some of you could start a new hobby or area of interest.

SEE THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER FOR INFORMATION REGARDING SPEAKER MEETINGS

Here's a selection of articles from some of your Group Leaders and members:

OUTINGS

RHS Garden 'Bridgewater': Thursday 1st July. Depart New Mills 9.30am. Costs to follow.

RHS members free entrance.

Please email outings@newmillsu3a.org.uk to book a place.

Please see Outings on the **Groups** Page of the website for up-to-date information.

Northumberland Holiday: 19th August.

After speaking recently to Richard our driver I am very hopeful that the holiday will go ahead. Also, I see that Kynren have tickets on sale so that is another good sign. We will do our utmost to keep the party safe but if anyone is seriously having doubts about travelling in a coach in August, I would appreciate you contacting me asap to enable me to fill your place.

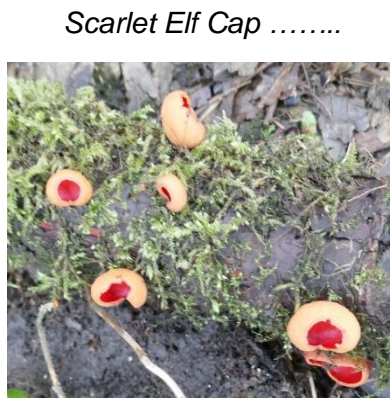
Barbara

SOME SPRING FLOWERS TO CHEER YOU UP

(Photos courtesy of the Gardening Group and friends)



Daffs and Crocuses



Scarlet Elf Cap

.....on the Sett Valley Trail



First meal of the Spring?



Monsal Head (photo by Colin Foord)

Cycling

There has been a hiatus in the activities of the cycling group this year because of covid-19 restrictions. But we are looking forward to being able to cycle again in groups of six in April.

In October the group cycled 22 miles from Tideswell, Little Hucklow, Eyam (for coffee), Froggatt, Curbar, Baslow (for lunch), Hassop, Great Longstone, Monsal Head and Cressbrook, in two socially distanced groups of six. December's ride was a 15 mile circuit towards Marple from New Mills, winter weather making an outdoor picnic an unappealing prospect.

Ann Apps

Le Club Français

It was with great trepidation and only following conjugal coercion that it was agreed to restart sessions via Zoom in September. However, the decision was the correct one: it has been great renewing friendships and learning and laughing together. We would thoroughly recommend using Zoom in these restricted times because of and despite the following circumstances.

Given my technological incompetence it was no real surprise that there were a few initial hiccups. I had inadvertently double-booked the first session with the result that I was on the first booking while everyone else was waiting to be let in on the second booking! Our confidence and competence have since come on apace, to the extent that we now not only talk to each other but also show photographs.

We do not use the u3a Zoom facility for the simple reason that our time slot had already been nabbed before the general offer was sent out to group leaders. We have not yet managed to split into smaller groups to have conversations, which is a pity. Conversely, we have an obligatory break after 40 minutes which allows us to fortify ourselves with coffee and biscuits, as was our custom at Spring Bank Arts Centre.

The sessions have been remarkably varied. We have used material sent out by Amazon.france and gained information on the Auvergne and the river Dordogne. We have told each other about things that we love – e.g. special coffee cups, a garden bench, a camper van – and things which we hate – e.g. litter louts, noisy motor bikes, people who wear masks which don't cover the nose. We are now moving on to Guillaume le Bâtard (aka Bill the Bastard aka William the Conqueror) and his link with the Côte Fleurie. We are also about to recommend a bucket list of places to visit before we die, which we hope won't be too soon.

Article and photos below by Bob Wass.

La rivière à Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne



La Massif de Sance en Auvergne



MORE SPRING FLOWERS



Flower photos contributed by the Gardening Group

CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Current Affairs Group currently meets monthly via zoom on the first Wednesday of each month at 10 am (for a 2 hour discussion)

The purpose of this group is to discuss issues surrounding current news events. We have met via zoom since last October – and there has been plenty of news since then to discuss!

Each meeting we pick a small number of topics for discussion at the next meeting. We also discuss events that have unfolded since the previous meeting.

Recent topics have included:

- The US election and its aftermath, Trump's behaviour and what the Biden administration will be like.
- Right wing populism
- Conspiracy theories, what they are and how we can explain them
- Government management of the COVID-19 pandemic and why SE Asian countries have done way better than the UK
- How to build back better after the pandemic and the future of employment and income
- Democracy, power sharing and levelling up.
- The growing furore in Northern Ireland around Brexit and sinister aspects around this
- The probabilities of a United Ireland and Scottish secession because of Brexit
- General Devolution and Unification themes

A warm welcome is extended to any new members – contact groupscoordinator@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Rick Seccombe



Science and Society

The Group continues to meet once a month via Zoom, which looks likely to continue for some time yet.

Since October we have heard about: the history of epidemics in Europe; the jet stream and how it affects the weather; sand suitable for building, glass, etc., which is a finite resource that we use profligately; and home insulation and heating.

In March we shall learn about vitamins; and the topic for our April meeting is water consumption. The topic for each meeting is led by a member of the group.

The group's future programme is published on its website page:

<http://newmillsu3a.org.uk/activities/activities-science-and%20society/activities-science.html>

Group Coordinator, Ann Apps

German

A few from the German group meet each week on Zoom to continue practising our German. Each week we try to have some 'news' to tell each other. Sadly, given lockdown, it's harder sometimes to find an interesting topic than to speak the German.

We have worked together to read and translate interesting magazine articles, listened to CDs of native speakers to help our pronunciation and hopefully to prepare ourselves for a long awaited visit back to Germany.

Last week the Group discussed the menu below from the hotel-restaurant at Schmausemule (*apologies to the German language from the Editor for not being able to add an "umlaut to the second letter "u"!*) – photo provided by Chris Wass.

Mike Tetley and Christine Wass



SHORT WALKS WITH PUB LUNCH – GROUP 1

Assuming the facility for groups of six to meet outdoors continues, I aim to organise the first walk of the year on Tuesday 10th May. Assuming we won't be able (or wish) to eat indoors we need to find a venue that will be serving meals outside – and pray for good weather! Suggestions welcome please.

Chris Weaver

SHORT WALKS GROUP 2

The meeting date has been changed to the last Wednesday of the month, at 10.30 a.m.

The next meeting is planned for Wednesday 28th July, appropriately socially-distanced as the rules are at the time. Members will be contacted with further details nearer the date.

Looking forward to seeing everyone again.

Pat Cooper

YOUR COMMITTEE

Following the AGM in February, the make-up of your Committee remained much as before, thanks to several members agreeing to continue in post until the next AGM even though they would have preferred not to. So please think about whether or not YOU might like to join the Committee at the next AGM and whether or not you would be prepared to take on a specific role. We will definitely have the following vacancies:

- Chair
- Business Secretary
- Speaker arranger

If you think you might manage one of these roles please get in touch with any member of the Committee to discuss – in particular the person currently in the role you might fancy doing. Job descriptions for some are on our website.

The Speaker Arranger need not be a member of the Committee, but is welcome to join us as required.

SPEAKER MEETINGS

Ann Apps recently surveyed members (those with email addresses) to gauge the likely interest in holding Speaker Meetings via Zoom while the situation regarding meetings indoors remains uncertain and found the response to be encouraging.

We are therefore planning five meetings to be held on the third Tuesday of each month at 11 a.m. These are:

April 20th Nicola Hardman. Her work with the Dogs Trust Manchester.

May 18th John Hope. Time Through the Ages. A journey through time telling devices over the centuries showing the development & improvement of time telling devices from the sundial through to the atomic clock.

June 15th Alison Mees. Living the African Dream. After 16 years in Africa helping to keep cheetahs in the wild, her talk covers wildlife, conservation and community work.

July 20th Simon Author. 'My Life in Crime'. His career at the criminal Bar, his unusual family history for a barrister & cases he dealt with.

August 17th Fools Gold. Steve and Carol Robson. "The Zoom Show" is a programme of songs with stories, audience interaction and supporting visuals.

To join the first talk, email zoomtalks@newmillsu3a.org.uk and you will be given instructions.

Other bits and pieces:

- Keep an eye on our website for news and information at newmillsu3a.org.uk
- Remember to renew your Membership Subscription for this year
- Make sure you all stay safe and well and are looking forward to better times soon