

Newsline Extra

Southwell U3A

January 2021 - No 13



HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS



Our Christmas Party via Zoom, was a huge success, above are some screen shots of attendees

From The Chair

Marjorie Bramhill

Happy New Year – well, it's here again. What a bumpy ride we had in 2020 – and it hasn't finished yet. At least we saw the year out with a splendid party – enjoyed by about 150 members, great achievement on behalf of those members who presented their skills, with professional aplomb, all with the help of our very own Brian Platts as Master of Ceremonies, ably assisted by Richmond Kingsbury. What a tour de force – as they say in France. We conquered zoom big time – and I hope we can all look forward to more zoom meetings in the future.

This year, we are going to concentrate on recruitment. We will be planning events starting in January.

You know, our members and this committee aren't getting any younger, even though you might be surprised to read this. We need younger third agers to come along with more energy and ideas than we can come up with. So, if you know someone who has just turned their back on the world of work – tell them about the wonderful opportunities of u3a – especially in Southwell.

Just now we are looking for a Secretary to take the minutes at the committee meetings and a few other clerical tasks and, as I am sure you know by now, a Treasurer to keep our records straight and make sure we have enough financial resources to carry on. So – if you know someone who might be able to help with either of these posts or if you think you can do it – let us know. It is becoming clear that if we don't fill these posts, all the wonderful events we hold, and group meetings and outings - will come to an end. They don't happen without key players in the game. Time is getting short – and Tony Key will be leaving Southwell very soon, so put your thinking caps on and think – who do I know who could do that or – well I could do that. When u3a was searching for a new chair - I thought I could do that (nearly three years ago) – and I don't regret it.

That's my New Year wish. Hope it comes true.

TIME TO RECRUIT!

Brian Platts

It might seem odd to be talking about recruitment at a time when some of our groups are unable to meet at all and most of the remainder are restricted to meeting on Zoom. Now IS the time though to start planning for a better future, whilst in the meantime making the best of what we CAN still do.

There is a national u3a recruitment initiative in progress at present and Southwell u3a is acting as one of the Pathfinder groups, testing out various recruitment ideas. Our working group has taken the best items out of the national "toolkit" and Southwell u3a will be engaging in various recruitment activities over the next 6 months, along with ideas to enhance the u3a experience for new and existing members.

Amongst other things we will be making publicity material more visible and available around Southwell and the surrounding area, starting up a Facebook group, engaging with other local groups and organisations and holding regular coffee mornings for new and existing members. We also plan to hold an open day and recruitment fair around the time of National u3a Day, 2nd June 2021. Some of the activities will of course have to await a return to a more normal life but we do need to start planning now.

In the meantime, the most effective recruiter is YOU. Person-to-person recommendations of Southwell u3a and its many interest groups is likely to remain our main source of recruits. We still have a lot to offer to new members, even before we get back to our fully-functioning former selves.

Please then do spread the word, even if it's just by phone, social media and Zoom at the moment. Hopefully it won't then be too long before we can recruit face-to-face and help build an even bigger and better Southwell u3a in 2021!

Southwell u3a Party in Style!

Marjorie Bramhill

Starved of much activity since March more than 150 u3a members joined our Christmas Party by Zoom on 10th December, the first time we have linked up with so many members.

The Party, coordinated by Social Secretary Brian Platts, featured a variety of musical items and readings all with a Christmas theme. These ranged from carols played by Jim Munroe on a Roland Aerophone to a selection of medieval tunes on period instruments by Terry Gill. There was also a sophisticated rendering of Santa Baby by Annabel Kingsbury, complete with feather boa, a comic song about carol singers by John Tebbs, conjecture about the Star of Bethlehem from Sue Whibley of our Astronomy Group, a reading of Dylan Thomas by Jean Hogg (Literature Group), reminiscences of a childhood Christmas in Cleethorpes by Margaret Royall, winter pictures from the Photography Group and more pictures on the theme of religious faith from the History of Art Group, plus other items from the Literature, Recorder, and Folk Song Groups. It was all linked together by compere Platts with a series of groan-worthy Christmas cracker jokes and seasonal quiz questions which sparked off fierce competition for the prize of a u3a diary!

The rehearsal a few days earlier had been dire with everything Zoom-related that could go wrong going very wrong so there wasn't too much confidence for the actual party. However, on the day, miraculously everything just about went as it should do, apart from the ubiquitous issue of muting and unmuting, but then that just added to the informality of the event.

Maybe this will be the first of similar parties in the future. Let's hope so, I've already pencilled it in for next December!



Brian Platts as Master of Ceremonies, ably assisted by Stephanie

Annabel and Richmond Kingsbury
Performing
their version of 'Santa Baby'



Group News

We are all becoming more hopeful that we can start to meet again in person later this year and group leaders have kindly written something for members to consider when this may happen. Some groups are not taking new members at the moment whilst others may operate a waiting list or other groups may in contrast welcome new members so it is always worth checking with the group leader.

Astronomy Group

Sue Whibley and Richard Ashbery

Some of our astronomy members went out on Saturday 19th Dec to see if we could spot the once in a lifetime event called The Great Conjunction—where Jupiter and Saturn appear as a single planet. We could see it for about an hour before the view was spoilt by clouds. The true planetary conjunction occurred on Monday 21st December, but poor weather may have made it difficult to observe. The next 'conjunction' is in 2080, so not too long to wait!

Those of you who attended the party will have seen Sue Whibley's excellent talk on the "Star of Bethlehem". A conjunction is one of the phenomenon that may have been witnessed by the 3 wise men. Piece sent in by **Richard Ashbery**

Bird group 4

Chris Mercer

This group is holding a zoom Christmas quiz with an ornithological theme, with festive spirits.

Book group 2

Alison Clark

The book group's most recent read was Magpie Murders by Anthony Horowitz, which we enjoyed. Anthony Horowitz is well-known for his crime novels Moriarty and The House of Silk, based on Sherlock Holmes. He has also written the Alex Rider series for children and is behind an extensive series of television scripts, including Midsomer Murders and Foyle's War. Magpie Murders has an unusual structure, being a murder story set within another murder story. Both are intriguing, and the inner story is very much in the style of Agatha Christie, set in an English village in the 1950s with a detective who seems to be modelled on Hercule Poirot. The identity of the killers in both stories kept us guessing all the way through.

Our Book Group plans to meet via Zoom on the fourth Tuesday of the month, starting on January 26th, when we will decide on our reading programme for the year.

Drawing for beginners

Tom Chamberlain

This group originally tried to email in results of drawing from home but the results were unsatisfactory so members are waiting until they are able to meet again in person.

History Group

David Hutchison

Zoom meetings: April-December 2020

Next meeting is 1st January 2021 and the topic is Luther and the birth of Protestantism. (It is 500 years since Luther was excommunicated by the Catholic Church). Membership is currently closed.

The History Zoom group has 18 members. We decided to postpone continuation of our planned series of sessions on twentieth century international affairs until every History Group member had the opportunity to take part again in a meeting in the Library. Each meeting, therefore, has looked at a one-off topics.

The following topics have been provisionally scheduled for early 2021:

- 1) Martin Luther & the Birth of Protestantism
- 2) Historical Revisionism and the Dark Ages in England
- 3) Philip II of Spain
- 4) Sixteenth Century France

A few of these topics are linked to anniversaries – e.g. the session on Luther in January will be almost exactly 500 years after his excommunication by the Catholic Church.

Group News Continued

Language groups

Edmund Salter

Ed is happy to continue leading Spanish and Italian sessions into 2021 and if members are interested in another language he would be willing to investigate it. Much of the value is social and maybe the choice of language is of secondary importance please send enquiries into su3anewsline@gmail.com if you are interested.

Museums & Galleries

Margaret Royall

We have held one zoom meeting but the topic doesn't lend itself to zoom sessions so instead I have sent out a monthly newsletter with suggestions of suitable TV programmes, YouTube videos, documentaries etc. for members to watch in their own time. I now plan to hold a quarterly zoom meeting to replace the previous physical meetings.

Winter Gardening – Things we can do now

Colin Boulter

Our gardens have hopefully brought us some much needed joy and relaxation through this Covid troubled year. So what can we do to keep our spirits up and plan for the New – and hopefully much better – Year? Here's a few suggestions,

1) Continue to enjoy our Winter colour and produce.

Take a moment to marvel at the resilience of plants such as Hellebores, Fuchsias, and Chrysanthemums that are still putting on a show. Pick and enjoy your winter veg. including the last of the spinach and chard.



2) Jobs you can do on a nice day (although don't walk on the lawn or border too much)

Pick up the last of the leaves from the lawn – and put in a black plastic bag (with holes in) in a hidden corner for some lovely compost next year.

Prune roses while they are dormant. Cut back to just above an outward facing bud and remove any crossing or dead/diseased branches.

Spread a layer of compost around shrubs and the base of hedges to keep moisture in.

Keep outside container plants just off the ground so they can drain and not freeze.

Keep the bird-feeders clean and topped up, & the birdbath clear of ice, and enjoy the show.

3) And some jobs for the not so nice days.

The ground will be wet, fortunately most of the garden will be asleep, so don't feel bad about not going out so often.

A good time to reflect and plan. What went well this year? What not so well? What do I do differently next year? Browse the seed catalogues – and clear out old out of date seeds!

Check things in the greenhouse – are the dahlia tubers nice & dry. More bubble wrap over the tender plants? Treat yourself to a maximum/minimum thermometer?

Clean and sharpen the secateurs and loppers – they'll be in demand early next year. And promise to put tools away clean and sharp next year! Not too early to service the mower.

Get some more plant supports for next year and get them in before the shrubs keel over.

Be ready to knock snow from any plants bending under the weight, as it may snap or damage fragile branches.

We're past the shortest day – watch out for the first snowdrop which will herald the awakening of our gardens and most of all ENJOY!

New Groups Co - ordinator

Ann Powers

Have you discovered there isn't a group which caters for your interests? If this applies to you now is your opportunity to propose or start a new one. Helen Geeson has recently managed to do just this, despite these challenging times, by establishing a Patchwork Group which is proving to be really enjoyable.

My role as New Groups Co - ordinator is to assist you in starting a new group yourself or promoting your ideas to see how much interest there is from other members. If you would like to propose or start a new group then please contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Ideas for keeping in touch

Paul Martinez, support officer Notts Network

There has been so much interest in my original video about putting u3a interest groups online that I have replaced (and I hope improved) with a small group of 5 videos. I list the videos below and the links to my YouTube channel where you can watch the video.

The videos are:

Part 1 Zoom - Why should I bother? This video discusses the benefits of going on line and how easy it is. The link is: <https://youtu.be/2rhBgkocLo>

Part 2 Get your group on line in 5 simple steps This video breaks down the process of getting on line into 5 simple steps. The link is: <https://youtu.be/Bu9L83gKir0>

Part 3 Zoom screen sharing for u3a interest groups This video focuses on the key facility for interest groups: the ability to share screens and therefore share any type of content in the course of an interest group meeting. The link is: <https://youtu.be/ZNRQ0roQ8G4>

Part 4 Zoom for every u3a interest group Rather bravely, I argue the case that any and every interest group can go online and focus in particular on a dance interest group: Scottish Country Dancing. The link is: <https://youtu.be/LeFKqZVyQxw>

Part 5 Hosting your zoom u3a interest group This video focusses on key Zoom controls for interest group leaders and introduces what you can do with a YouTube account. The link is: https://youtu.be/ax_TtHg7Tfw

Every Mind Matters

Website NHS

The link to this NHS website is <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>.

Mental health has been much discussed this year when we have none of our usual support systems in place. The NHS website Every Mind Matters focuses on helping us to relax more, achieve more and enjoy our lives with expert advice and practical tips. There is a quiz to help you build a mind plan which they will email to you if you choose to complete it and various ideas come up after you have answered 5 questions.

New Year Planning

Jane Zdanowski

As we move into the New Year there is an opportunity during long, dark and let's face it gloomy days to take stock and plan for the year ahead of us. Planning something may help to build confidence of what the future holds and bring pleasure in that thought, it may be a shared experience with family and friends and give us purpose.

During my New Year I check out my recipe books and the many pages torn from newspapers and magazines to see what I can try out especially those more complicated recipes that need time and attention. I take stock of the books I bought, mainly secondhand, and decide whether actually I will ever read them. I look over the packets of seeds left over from previous years' gardening and throw out any that may not be viable, in 2020 because I had the time I also kept a lot of seed from my plants. A favourite pastime with many friends is sorting out photographs; this gives us all such a lot of pleasure to remember past happy times and again may be a sharing moment with family and friends especially useful now that our lives are so constrained.

If you are happy to share some of your activities, including photographs, in January and February that would be great. They may be used in future Newslines, on <https://www.southwellu3a.com> (check out the new look) and on the new Facebook page when it is launched.

Scam warning: Fake DPD emails and texts.

Action Fraud has seen a surge in reports relating to fake emails and texts purporting to be from DPD. The messages claim that DPD was “unable to deliver your parcel today” and provide instructions on how the recipient can arrange another delivery. The links in the emails and texts lead to fake websites that are designed to steal money, as well as personal and financial information.

Victims of this scam have reported losing over £242,000 since June. For more information, please visit <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/alert/fake-dpd-messages-lead-to-over-200000-in-losses-since-june>

How you can protect yourself:

- If you're unsure whether the email or text is genuine, then don't use the link. Instead, visit the DPD website by entering the official web address directly into your browser's address bar, or search for it and follow the search results.
- Remember, your bank will never ask you to transfer money to another account, or contact you out of the blue to ask for your PIN or full password.

If you have received an email which you're unsure about, you can report it by forwarding it to report@phishing.gov.uk. You can report suspicious text messages by forwarding them to 7726.

BEWARE

Marjorie Bramhill

Please be aware that there is a vaccine scam doing the rounds. I am aware of texts supposedly sent by the NHS saying "*We have identified that you are eligible for your vaccine. For more information and to apply, follow here: [link to application form.](#)*"

This is fake, the NHS would never ask for credit card details.

Are you a fan of quizzes and missed them this year? Watch out for the short quizzes we have included in Newline and no cheating by looking at the back page. A webpage that you may like to check out is randomtriviagenerator.com. It may be useful for family quizzes too.

Examples from this site (answers on back page):

- 1 Who composed the jazz classic “I got rhythm”?
- 2 Boo Boo is the companion of which cartoon character?
- 3 What duo lost their Grammy for Best New Artist in the early 1990s?
- 4 What was the name of the album Men at Work released in 1981?
- 5 What actress fell for the American reporter in the 1953 movie “Roman Holiday”?
- 6 Which country did bagels originate from?
- 7 How many squares are there on a standard Scrabble board?
- 8 By what name is Mardi Gras known in Britain?
- 9 The Pope is guarded by soldiers from what country?
- 10 What special room was used by patrons who did not want to be seen enjoying a pint in the pub?
- 11 What country was Prime Minister Tony Blair born in?
- 12 Who sent the Spanish Armada to invade England?
- 13 What word did Alexander Graham Bell suggest for answering the phone?
- 14 What Christian movement was founded by George Fox?
- 15 Which American inventor held 1093 patents?
- 16 How many neighbours does Lesotho have?
- 17 Which popular artist was born as Robyn Fenty in 1988 in Barbados?
- 18 What is the only country that borders both Belgium and Spain?
- 19 Machu Picchu is also known as what?
- 20 What is the lowest land point on Earth?

COME DINE WITH MEN RECIPE
TURKEY, CRANBERRY AND FETA ROLLS

If you're not already over-turkeyed, here is a recipe that went down well at our recent Christmas meeting of CDWM. We made it with fresh turkey mince but the version below can be adapted for left-over cooked turkey.

Warning - if you find yourself with more than the required 400g of turkey, don't be tempted to throw the extra into the mix, as your rolls will burst in the oven. Been there, done it!

Ingredients – makes 12 small rolls:

400g fresh turkey mince – available in 500g packs from Tesco. Also from Stoppard's in Southwell, if ordered a day in advance (min 500g).

If using left-over cooked turkey, chop up finely – you can make up the weight with finely chopped stuffing if desired.

- 1 garlic clove, crushed (or 1 teaspoon ready-chopped garlic)
- 1 spring onion, finely chopped. 1 chicken stock cube
- 100g feta (can use brie if prefer). Salt and pepper to taste.
- 320g pack puff pastry (ready-rolled from the chiller cabinet - eg. JusRol or Co-op own brand – not a block of frozen puff pastry)
- 4 tablespoons cranberry sauce.
- 1 egg, beaten

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180c (170c fan) and line 1 large or 2 small baking trays with parchment paper. Add the turkey mince, garlic and spring onion to a large bowl.

If using left-over turkey, add at least half the beaten egg at this point, to produce a fairly sticky ball. Add the chicken stock cube finely crumbled or chopped. Mix well.

Add in the feta (or brie), roughly torn into small pieces and season with salt and pepper.

Unroll the pastry and cut it into two widthways (from middle of one long side to middle of opposite side) so that you have 2 rectangular shaped pieces.

Spread the cranberry sauce over each piece of pastry, leave about 1cm clear along the long edges. Divide the turkey mixture into 2. Make into 2 long thick sausage shapes, and lay each piece towards the edge of one of the long sides of the pastry sheets.

Brush the opposite edge with egg; roll pastry and mixture up towards the brushed edge until the 2 edges overlap, with the egg assisting the seal. Draw the tines of a fork across the overlapping edges to complete the seal.

Cut each of the large rolls into 6 small rolls (needs a sharp knife) and place on the baking trays. Brush with any leftover beaten egg and bake, seam side down, in the oven for 25 minutes or until golden brown. To avoid "soggy bottoms". Drain off any liquid from trays and turn the rolls, after about 15 mins.

Allow to cool a bit and serve with extra cranberry sauce or chutney/ketchup. Any spares will freeze or reheat well. Enjoy!

Answers from trivia quiz	
1. George Gershwin 2 Yogi Bear 3 Milli Vanilli 4 Business as usual 5 Audrey Hepburn 6 Poland 7 225 8 Shrove Tuesday 9 Switzerland 10 The snug	11 Scotland 12 Philip II 13 Ahoy 14 Quakers 15 Thomas Edison 16 Just 1 17 Rihanna 18 France 19 Lost City of the Incas 20 Dead Sea Shore Israel.

Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked, mountainous country on the Old Silk Road in Central Asia. It has a population of around 5 million of mainly local Muslim Kyrgyz stock. The capital, Bishkek, is one of the greenest, in terms of the environment capitals, of the former Soviet Union. My interpreter Natalia, who was from Siberia, now lives near her daughter in Canada, and claimed that Stalin was kind to animals. I asked her once, "Why are Russians so friendly and human, when they had suffered so much oppression and had little religion for a generation?" She replied, "Grandmas."

No one wants to work the land, which goes back to serfdom, so the country is farmed by Koreans; the local district heating system is also run by Koreans. The heating season ends in March no matter what the weather. There were celebrations for everything including the successful heating season. We were out in Kyrgyzstan to advise on governance and organisation of the energy sector and rehabilitating the Central Asia electricity system.

The system was a mixture of hydro-electric power stations in the mountainous states and the coal of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The states were mutually dependent, not only in energy but also for water supply and irrigation. The rivers that once drained into the wasteland of the Aral Sea in the west had been diverted to irrigate the cotton and apricots of the fertile Fergana Valley in the south.

Owing to the nature of my work I had the opportunity to get out and about. Near Osh we took a walk up Mount Sulaimon that reputedly it had been visited by Solomon. Most workers were not paid regularly, with some lucky ones living in electricity substations with enough land to grow vegetables and keep chickens. Even the professor and specialist we went out with were desperate for funds. We flew back with passengers who were standing, whilst their baskets of apricots bound for market had the privilege of a seat belt. We scraped past a mountain peak and then made a very low entry to Manas airport. On one trip we travelled east along the Chui valley towards the Chinese border. On the road, we were held up by sagging trucks loaded with scrap metal, detritus of the former Soviet Union, bound for a resurgent China.

We headed for Lake Issyk-Kul 118 miles by 60 miles and 5000 feet above sea level and second in size only to Titicaca. It was a former nuclear submarine development base, situated thousands of miles from the sea, and away from prying eyes. Nearby Lake Issyk-Kul – Balykchy, which was the industrial centre, is derelict and forgotten, we visited a derelict holiday camp designed for hundreds; however it was "closed until Monday" when a group of 12 workers from Czech Republic were expected!

Nevertheless, their hospitality was wonderful. We spent weekends in Russian dachas with tables laden with food and drink. Their allotments are not neat English rows of vegetables, but a riot of fruit and flowers and a bower with a chessboard. Cooking is by burying a pot

of what will become stew under a mound of earth, covered by a fire for a few hours, or days. Meals are followed by the singing of mournful Russian songs.

I was on short-term contracts; out there for a month or so, home to write up, then out again to present. This is fine, provided you alter the terms of reference to fit what is achievable. I mainly went native with local managers and engineers. Fortunately, as a transmission and distribution specialist I could roam the country - Economic tourism.

I was prompted to write this account after reading *The Lost Pianos of Siberia*. Its author Sophy Roberts was trying to find the pianos that had been shipped out to Siberia when it was a place of exile at the time of the Tsars. Siberia became a cultural haven, visited by the likes of Liszt. I totally understand her diversion into an exploration of the history and culture of the place