

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Sevenoaks u3a is heading for closure if you don't help!

The papers for the AGM on June 28th are included with this Newsletter. The AGM effectively marks the end of the u3a year and the next Monthly Meeting is in October.

The Trustees' Report makes it very clear that we are in a perilous position. We have over 800 members but far too few are actively involved in the day to day running of our organisation. No-one responded to my appeal for volunteers in the May Newsletter. Unless we have more people willing to come forward to undertake vital roles, **we are at risk of closure** which would mean the end of everything we do, including social events and outings, interest groups and talks.

The Number of Trustees on the Executive Committee (EC) is the main cause of this risk. To date we only have nominations for 5 Trustee posts, all current EC members willing to stand for election or re-election. This is the **minimum** number required by the constitution.

To avoid an emergency situation, should any single EC member fall under the proverbial bus, we need 2 more Trustees, one in Communications (some IT skills needed), and the other a Vice Chair Operations (internal members' activities). These posts can be very flexibly designed to suit your skills and interests. Helping can be very rewarding. You meet more people, make new friends, become part of a team with shared goals, and you learn new skills or update existing ones. If you are prepared to consider becoming a Trustee and would like more information or an informal chat please contact me, or one of the other trustees (Beryl Mansell, Helen Wood, David Lowe, David Taylor, Pam Walshe, Sue Christy) soon.

Supporting Teams. The news is not all bad. Recently, Pam Walshe has recruited new members for the Social Events team. Sue Christy has recruited a Group Development Team from scratch, and Jenny Ruffles continues to be supported by a full Membership and Recruitment team. Volunteers are however still needed for around 20 roles which would each take no more than 3 or 4 hours a month. If you are prepared to help, for an exploratory chat and more information, please contact:

Beryl Mansell: for Publications and Publicity (incl. newsletter): vicechair@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Bob Ruffles: for Science Open Group: science@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk
for Communications, Web Team
& Technical Support Team: webteam@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Mike Davies: for Computer Group: computing@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Dr. Ken Brown for EC and any queries: tel. **01732 462379**, email chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

This is to remind members that Sevenoaks u3a is holding its **29th AGM at 2pm on Wednesday, 28th June 2023 at the Bat & Ball Centre**, Cramptons Road, Sevenoaks, TN14 5DN. The Agenda, Draft Minutes of 28th AGM, Trustees Report 2023, and Trustees and Accounts Examiner's Report and Accounts 2022-23 are all attached for your information.

The meeting is to be held in person and not on Zoom this year and we hope you will be able to join us at the Bat and Ball Centre. However, we have made arrangements for postal votes for those unable to attend for which a voting form is also attached. These can be returned to the Secretary by post at Brooklyn Cottage, East Hill Road, Knatts Valley, Sevenoaks TN15 6YD or by email to vote@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk. **Postal votes must be received by 23rd June 2023**. Please remember that **anyone unable to attend still counts towards the quorum for the meeting if they return a completed postal voting form**.

We have a single candidate proposed for each Executive Committee (EC) post of Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Social Events Trustee. As the Chairman has indicated, we would still like to elect two additional Trustees to assist with the work of the EC, a Communications Trustee and Vice Chair (Operations). I have therefore attached Trustee and specific Vice Chair Nomination forms for anyone wishing to put themselves forward to join the EC in any of the above positions.

Helen Wood, Secretary.

JUNE 2023 MONTHLY MEETING – JUNE 28th at 2:00pm

Our Speaker this month is **Guy Bartlett** who is giving us a presentation entitled **"The History of the Red Arrows"**. Guy, a former teacher, is an aviation historian and uses archive film footage, technology, and a genuine enthusiasm to bring his subject to life. The Red Arrows pilots are amongst the most highly-skilled and experienced within the Royal Air Force. This presentation explores the history of RAF Aerobatics teams and includes a look at what goes into making the RAF Red Arrows the premier aerobatics team in the world. Guy's talk will include a significant amount of video footage to give the audience an immersive experience of flying with the team.

The talk will follow the AGM, details of which are shown separately in this Newsletter.

Tea and biscuits will be served afterwards.

Barbara Coleyshaw, speakers@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Bat & Ball Centre at 2pm



For technical reasons this month's meeting will NOT be relayed via Zoom.

Science Group Visit to Royal Gunpowder Mills, Waltham Abbey

A group of u3a members visited the Royal Gunpowder Mills to learn about the history of the manufacture of gunpowder and explosives to support the various wars that Britain was engaged in over the centuries. The mills were established in 1688 under private ownership but acquired by the crown in 1787 to enable better control of supply and quality of gunpowder to meet massive increases in demand, which arose over the period of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars and it became the largest gunpowder mill in Europe. The wooded site covers 175 acres and has its own network of roads, railways and canals originally used to transport goods around the site and down the River Lea to Woolwich Arsenal. Following the end of the cold war in the 1990's the MoD rationalised much of the defence estate and the Waltham Abbey site closed in 1991. Today it is now a heritage site with listed buildings undergoing restoration. Our visit included a guided tour by road and narrow-gauge railway to various buildings scattered around the site and to buildings that contain artefacts from the past.

Bob Ruffles



Water powered gunpowder mill



The group in front of a gunpowder press

SCIENCE OPEN MEETINGS

We do not hold an open Science Meeting in the summer months, so our next open meeting will be in the new season starting on **9th October**. The talk will be '**John Snow and the hunt for the cause of cholera in Victorian London**' by Mike Trevethick. This talk was postponed from earlier this year.

A reminder that our Science Seminar will be held on **7th June** looking at '**Future Energy – Alternatives to Fossil Fuels**'. This is being held at the **Orchards Conference Centre, East Malling** and **pre-booking is required** – admission is by ticket only. By the time you receive this, bookings may have closed; however, you should contact scienceday@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk to check whether you can still reserve a place.

The science team would like to recruit new volunteers to assist in planning and running our events. It is an enjoyable activity and if you would like to join the team, please contact **Bob Ruffles** at science@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.

Bob Ruffles for the Science Group

CALENDAR FOR JUNE

June 14th AM	Bridge For Pleasure Otford Memorial Village Hall	June 7th	Science Seminar "Future Energy" EMR Conference Centre
June 28th AM	Bridge For Pleasure Otford Memorial Village Hall	June 28th PM	AGM & Monthly Meeting "The History of the Red Arrows" Bat & Ball Centre

COMPUTER OPEN GROUP

There will not be a meeting during the summer break, therefore the **next meeting is scheduled for 23rd October**. However, the continuation of the group is in doubt since we are reliant on two committee members to research and present the talks at the monthly meetings and this is not sustainable in the long term. For the group to carry on, the members must play an active role in putting together the material for the meetings and to this end we have been given suggestions for topics such as shopping (food/clothes/household) on the internet, fitness/health apps and apps for identifying flowers/birds. Any members with knowledge of any of these areas would be very welcome and the committee will help in any way we can with advice on the preparation of the material for the talk, e.g. PowerPoint slides etc. If preferred 2 or 3 people could join together to produce a talk. Proceedings start at 2pm as usual BUT PLEASE NOTE THE VENUE HAS CHANGED. We are using the Methodist Church Hall which is still in Otford, 200 yards west of the old hall and adjacent to the library and Otford Builders Merchants. The car parking at the new venue is not generous and it would be preferable for members to continue to park in the main village carpark where possible. Any member who is willing to have a go should contact **Mike Davies or Charles Hebert** via email at computing@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

BRIDGE FOR PLEASURE

The Group plays at Otford Village Memorial Hall on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings of each month from October to the end of July, from 9.45 a.m. until 12 noon. We have run 5 tables recently with attendances of 18 and 19 which requires a bit of extra bidding by the more mobile from full tables - but we manage! Scores must have been low all round on 26th April as no-one came forward with a contending card! The winner on 10th May was Dave Lowe. New members are always welcome. We are an "open" group so new players can just come along on the day. We play ACOL in a 'Chicago' format so you do not need a regular partner. We change partners every 4 hands so you experience playing with 4 or 5 different people during the morning.

For more information, please contact **John and Sue Christy**, telephone **01732 463911** or email bridge@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.

Visit to Bletchley Park – 14th September 2023

With this newsletter you will find a flyer advertising a visit to **Bletchley Park** in September.

To book a place, follow the instructions on the form.

The **deadline** for inclusion of items in the **July** newsletter is **June 20th**.
Please send any information to: communications@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk