

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

The New Year is already well under way as we begin the second half of the u3a year. Looking forward, our activities will continue to be affected by the pandemic. At a personal level, as Group Organiser of the Opera Group, on December 17th I held the first face-to-face meeting for 18 months, and was hopeful that thereafter we would be able to continue to meet face-to-face. However, the emergence of the new and highly transmissible Omicron variant, predicted to peak in early January, led to a reluctant decision to cancel the January 7th Opera meeting. I am unable to stream a whole opera on Zoom, but fortunately some other Group and Open Meetings have been able to continue to meet, using Zoom technology.

The November Monthly Meeting was our first hybrid meeting

(audiences simultaneously live and on Zoom). The Executive Committee agreed that hybrid Monthly Meetings should continue at least up to June, but again, because of the rapid rise of Omicron, the January 26th Monthly Meeting will be on Zoom **only** (see below).

In the January 6th meeting, the EC "gave general support to the proposal that an event for Group Organisers (or several events for smaller groups of GOs) be held at some time during the next 6 months". In the past, biennial large events have been held for GOs. These have combined an educational component with a social complimentary lunch, a "thank you" to the GOs for all the work they undertake. Due to the intervening pandemic, such an event is overdue. There are however mixed feelings among

GOs about the success of, and need for, such events. The Group Development Team will need to reach a decision soon, to allow at least 3 months planning time, if the decision is taken to hold a major event before June. Or it may, over the next 6 months, be considered preferable to hold smaller "working parties" of GOs of related groups, to explore how they might cooperate, and at the same time find out what they actually want. **If any member or Group Organiser has any comments or suggestions** about these or indeed any other Sevenoaks u3a matters I would be very happy to receive them and respond to them.

Ken Brown
Chairman

chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

MONTHLY MEETING—FEBRUARY 23RD

Our speaker this month is u3a member **Chris Stewart** who will be known to a number of you following his talk to the Sevenoaks Science Group concerning Innovation with Architectural Glass and his follow up walking tour of London Architectural Glass. More recently he has given a talk to Science Group Members concerning his project to install a factory-built eco-friendly house. Chris has an excellent repertoire of talks and this time he will be telling us about **"The Flower Villages of Alsace and Lorraine"**. Dramatic history, architecture, vineyards and flowers will all feature in the talk about this much fought over area in North East France.



At the time of writing, plans for whether we meet in the Bat and Ball Centre and/or virtually by Zoom have not yet been finalized, and will be confirmed nearer the time.

Whatever is decided I do hope you will join us. The Zoom link will be sent out to all members via email a couple of days before the event.

Barbara Coleyshaw meetings@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

The deadline for items for inclusion in the March edition of the newsletter is February 15th, 2022.

u3a Monthly Meeting Reminder—Wednesday 26th January 2022 at 2pm

Please note this meeting will now be held on Zoom only.

Our speaker on January 26th is **Tom Way**, a wildlife photographer, and he will be giving a presentation entitled “**Wildlife On Your Doorstep**”, from deer to hedgehogs, from owls to foxes and more. He will be describing the stories behind how he took the images. The talk also covers our coastlines and Northern areas of the UK showing images of the very charismatic puffin and red squirrel.

Due to current circumstances, face-to-face meetings will only go ahead when it is deemed safe to do so, therefore this meeting will now be via Zoom only.

The Zoom link will be sent out to all Members via email a couple of days before the event and I do hope you will be able to join us.

Barbara Coleyshaw meetings@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk



SOUTH EAST REGION FORUM SUMMER SCHOOL—JUNE 2022

U3a South East Region are proposing to run a Summer School this coming June in Chichester. This will be the first one they have run since 2019.

11 courses are on offer :

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| Cycling | Earth Matters | Four 19th & 20th Century British Poets | Fun with French |
| Family History | Hatha Yoga | Mah-jong | Maths - Power & Pattern |
| Music - Jazz, Blues & Folk Music in USA | Ukulele for Beginners | Walking on the Downs & Coast | |



If you are interested in attending and would like to find more details about individual courses, please go to <https://u3asites.org.uk/southeastu3aforum/events>

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS GROUP

We have **two vacancies** in this group.

We cover a wide range of subjects including politics, arts and music, culture, education, including European film, television and the press. We meet on the morning of the first Monday of the month. Some members come purely to discuss issues while others like to prepare short papers on the chosen subject. We have lively and interesting meetings.

When Covid diminishes it is our intention to have some of our meetings in local European restaurants, and perhaps in the longer term we may consider visiting European cities.

We invite expert speakers to joint sessions with the Europe Studies group. At the moment we are holding virtual sessions on Zoom.

Please contact **Rob White** on euroaffairs@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk - or phone 07597 607309.



NORDIC WALKING

Wednesday 9th February 10.30

Meet on the green at Ide Hill opposite the Cock. The walk will be 2½ miles to Emmetts and Toy's Hill. There are some hills. Lunch after the walk will be at the Cock – Covid permitting.

nordicwalking@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

AMBLING

Wednesday 16th February 10.30

Meet outside the Buck's Head in Godden Green, TN15 0JJ. The walk will be about 4 miles going to Seal St Lawrence. Leader Velma Keys. It will be followed by a lunch at the Buck's Head – Covid permitting. ambling@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

NATIONAL u3a ONLINE EVENTS

At the time of writing there are 6 online events planned for February.



Feb 3rd at 10 am Cryptic Crosswords for Beginners
 Feb 3rd at 2 pm The Geology of Igneous Rocks
 Feb 9th at 10 am Laughter Yoga Workshops
 Feb 18th at 2 pm Egyptology : The Valley of the Queens
 Feb 23rd Exploring World Faiths
 Feb 24th at 2 pm Geometric Abstraction

To find out more about any of the events mentioned, go to <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events> and then click on the appropriate link.

BRIDGE FOR PLEASURE

9th February and 23rd February 2022

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.

The winner on 12th January 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 partner. For more information, please ring **John and Sue Christy** on 01732 463911 or email bridge@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.



KAY JAMES—100TH BIRTHDAY ON JANUARY 22ND

John and Sue Christy (Group Organisers) and all the members of the Bridge for Pleasure group wish Sevenoaks u3a member, Kay James, a very happy 100th Birthday. Kay played bridge regularly with the group until the first Covid lockdown.

Sevenoaks u3a Executive Committee would also like to wish Kay a very happy 100th Birthday. In a wonderfully lively telephone conversation, Kay said that she was brought up in Westerham, and during the war travelled in Europe and the Far East. She has great-grandchildren. She reads a lot and does the Daily Telegraph Codewords and Crosswords, including an occasional Cryptic Crossword if she has finished everything else!

Although she “cannot go fast” in the morning, she basically manages well. Asked what she put her long life down to, she thanked first the NHS which 2 years ago replaced one of her heart valves, and then said that she has always been a non-smoker.

Ken Brown (Chairman)

FEBRUARY DIARY

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| Feb 9th | Nordic Walking | Feb 9th | Bridge for Pleasure |
| Feb 14th | Science Open Group Meeting | Feb 16th | Ambling |
| Feb 21st | Computer Open Group Meeting | Feb 23rd | Monthly Meeting : Chris Stewart—“The Flower Villages of Alsace & Lorraine”. |
| Feb 23rd | Bridge for Pleasure | | |

SCIENCE OPEN GROUP

Our next talk will be on February 14th 2022. The topic will be **'SE Water Strategy for SE England' by Lee Dance** and will be delivered via Zoom.

With 2.2 million customers in the South East Region, water is becoming a finite resource and the question of where South East Water will get its water from to supply the growing population is an ongoing problem.

SE Water is working with five other neighbouring water companies to create a more holistic regional plan. Lee will talk about the challenges the region faces and the solutions being proposed over the next 75 years.

For **Virtual attendees**. If you attended our earlier Zoom webinars we have retained your registration details and you will automatically receive an invitation nearer the time. If, however, you have not registered then please send us your details via the following link.

scienceday@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Our **March 14th** talk will be by David Thickett talking about the **Conservation of Artefacts Held by English Heritage**. More details next month.

Bob Ruffles

COMPUTER OPEN GROUP

The Computer group will be holding a virtual meeting using Zoom on the **21st February 2022 at 14.00**. The talk will be given by **Vincent Dodsworth** a volunteer for the **National Museum of Computing** which is located on the Bletchley Park site but managed independently. Vincent will be telling us about the **Developments in Computing from WW2 to the Present Day**.

Any member who wishes to join the meeting will be very welcome. Anyone who has already given us an email address will be invited automatically but others should send an email to computing@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk and leave an email address so that we can send a link to join the meeting.

Mike Davies

U3a PODCASTS

Each of the monthly u3a podcasts lasts approximately half an hour and covers a wide range of topics. The columns below give a flavour of what is available. All podcasts since the service started can be viewed on our supplementary Connect & Learn website at <https://www.sevenoaksu3a.connectandlearn.org/national-u3a>.

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| January 2022 | In this latest episode we learn about the u3a 40th anniversary woodland, talk about the u3a Kindertransport learning initiative and talk to a u3a member in Australia about how the organisation works abroad. |
| December 2021 | In the festive special of the u3a radio podcast, there is a choir singing carols and a message from Third Age Trust CEO Sam Mauger. |
| November 2021 | In this episode there are conversations with a man who invented cricket rankings, with one of the u3a radio team about her experience on working on the Olympics and with a member of Burnham on Crouch u3a's Archaeological group. |
| October 2021 | In the October episode of our u3a radio podcast, there are talks with a u3a geologist about his adventures travelling the world, with the winners of the u3a creative writing competition and much more. |

