

KANUTA



The Newsletter of the Knutsford and District **u3a**

February 2021

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Page 1 From the Chair	The vaccination program is progressing well and it is great news that many of you have received your first jabs. Whether you have already received your first vaccination or are still waiting please remember to adhere to the present restrictions and follow medical and government advice.
Page 2 Joining the Committee	Your committee have been meeting regularly by Zoom and at our January meeting we welcomed our most recent new member Helen Smith (thank you Helen). We still have a couple of vacancies on the committee if anyone else would like to consider joining.
Members' Meetings	At that meeting the committee took the decision that the membership subscription for renewals and new members (2021/2022 membership year) payable from the beginning of April will be £10. This is a significant reduction on the present subscription rate of £13 and reflects the curtailed activities due to the pandemic and the resulting restrictions. Hopefully with increasing levels of vaccinations and warmer weather we will be able to resume many activities by the summer.
Page 3 A Research Opportunity	We are making good progress in updating our administrative functions using the u3a software application 'Beacon'. Beacon will eventually enable us to run our membership information, communication and also our accounts on-line. We will be using Beacon for membership renewals in April but we may not be able to use the full on-line capacity of Beacon this year. More details to follow. All members will be receiving a unique membership number which, once activities resume, we may require when booking trips and outings.
Page 4 News from the Groups	We are continuing with our program of speakers on the second Thursday of the month as a replacement for our member's meeting that would usually take place at Knutsford Methodist Church (see below). In January we had a very well supported talk by Jacqui Hyman on textiles and their role in the rehabilitation of the sick and injured. We are also providing some extra talks as the opportunity arises which will be advertised by email (so please keep a look out for these emails). We were delighted that our treasurer (Adrian Long) was able to tell us about his ascent of the Matterhorn with some stunning photographs in a talk at the end of January.
South-East and Mid-Cheshire U3A Cluster	Finally, in this Kanuta you will find a list of activity groups in other u3as that are meeting by Zoom and are prepared to accept our members. If you would like to join one of these groups please use the contact details provided.
Page 5 King Lear Prizes	Best wishes to everyone; stay safe and look forward to a better summer.
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Page 6 What the Future Holds (a poem)	Mark Barley

Joining the Committee – a personal tale

When I retired 3 years ago I decided that I would never again sit in a meeting or do anything that reminded me of work! I was determined to spend my retirement playing music, swimming and looking after my grandchildren.

After about a year I became the organiser of the Knutsford U3A Jamming Group and last summer when I was writing the Covid Risk Assessment for the Group I found that I enjoyed it! I remembered that I had seen an email asking for Committee members for Knutsford U3A so I arranged with the Chairman to observe a Committee meeting. Much to my surprise I enjoyed the meeting! In particular I was interested to hear how the Committee is planning to use technology to reduce the administrative burden of running the local Group. Older people are often resistant to using Information Technology but there were no dinosaurs on this Committee!

Once I had agreed to join the Committee I received a Welcome Pack with details of my role of and lots of information about the Knutsford and District U3A. This meant that I felt able to participate fully when I was co-opted at the January meeting. It is early days, but I am looking forward to working as a Committee Member. I have fingerless gloves and fleece lined trousers ready for when the Jamming Group meets again outside... luckily the Committee meets via Zoom.

So, if you are thinking you might like to contribute more to your U3A, you could do as I did and arrange to observe a meeting. Who knows where that might lead?

Helen MacAlister Smith

Virtual Members' Meetings

2nd Thursday of the month at 2.15pm via Zoom

(log on from 2.00pm)

Thursday 11th February

Travels and Travails - Himalayan Foothills to Yorkshire Dales

Ranjit Arora will talk about her life in India before migration to the UK and her experiences of working in the UK as an independent Education and Management consultant.

Thursday 11th March

'Fool's Gold' – acoustic music from this entertaining duo.

Their shows combine stories - that's the stories about the songs - live music and projected visuals with live performances of the songs. All the shows feature a mixture of original and well-known music, joining in is virtually mandatory!

Thursday 8th April

Underground Manchester – a talk by Ed Glinert.

Ed is an experienced author, historian, journalist and public speaker. His knowledge of Manchester is prolific and he has written the highly praised Manchester Compendium. He is also a tour guide in Manchester, London and Liverpool and he runs New Manchester Walks for city tours.

We last heard Ed talking about "Literary Manchester"; now he is going to reveal the mysteries of "Underground Manchester". We will explore places such as the huge World War Two air-raid shelter with wartime relics, surprises under the Cathedral, the massive atomic bomb shelter, subterranean streams and well-known canals. He also promises to answer the question 'were there really plans for a railway tube system under Manchester?'

An Opportunity to take part in Research

We have been approached by a research associate at Lancaster University who wonders whether members of Knutsford U3A might be interested in the opportunity to take part in an online research study.

Dr. Kate Slade works in the Psychology Department at the University and aims to understand the impact of social isolation (related to COVID-19) on both hearing and memory in two groups of people: older and younger adults. This research study is completely online so participants can take part from their home.

Kate says

“Our research seeks to understand how social interaction (particularly affected by Covid-19, and related social distancing), might affect both hearing, and memory function. Right now, social interaction is more complicated than ever, and this might have repercussions for communication, particularly for people with hearing impairment. There is growing evidence for a relationship between hearing impairment and dementia in older age, and that social interaction may play a role in this. In our online research, we want to try to better understand the relationship between these things (socialisation, hearing, and memory).

Because the study is all online, you can take part from the comfort of your own home if you have access to a laptop, or computer. We are looking for adults between the ages of 60-85. To take part you must be a monolingual speaker of British English, and have no history of language, neurological, or psychiatric disorders. You will complete short online questionnaires and tasks as part of the study over the next 12 months. This will involve completing demographic questionnaires, memory tasks, hearing tests, and mental health questionnaires once each month. You will receive a small inconvenience allowance for your time taking part in the research in the form of shopping vouchers.”

If you would like to receive more information, ask any questions or participate please contact Kate at k.slade2@lancaster.ac.uk

THE COVID-19 SOCIAL HEARING STUDY

in 2019
11 MILLION
are living with hearing loss

by 2035
18 MILLION
will be living with hearing loss

40% of people
aged 50+

71% of people
aged 70+

hearing in **noisy places** is particularly hard, which can lead to **social withdrawal**

hearing loss is a **risk factor** for **cognitive decline**, while **social interaction** is a **protective factor**

RESEARCH QUESTION:
WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEARING LOSS, SOCIAL INTERACTION, AND COGNITIVE FUNCTION?

Do you think you could help? We are looking for volunteers to participate in online research.

WHO CAN TAKE PART?
YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IF YOU ARE:
Between 18-30 or 60-85 years old
A right-handed, monolingual speaker of British English
Without any (history of), language, neurological, or psychiatric disorders

WHAT WILL THE STUDY INVOLVE?
The study involves completing questionnaires, memory, and hearing tasks on your computer over the next 12 months. The total time required each month is around 30-60 minutes.
To register your interest in participating email: k.slade2@lancaster.ac.uk

This study has been approved by Lancaster University Research Ethics Committee
contact the researchers to learn more or take part in the study:
Dr Kate Slade - k.slade2@lancaster.ac.uk
Dr Helen Nutta II - h.nutta.ii@lancaster.ac.uk

Lancaster University | UKRI | Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

News from the Groups

German

A German conversation group has begun and we had our first meeting via Zoom in the middle of January. We meet every other Friday for a 40 minute Zoom session. The group is of intermediate standard and try to speak only German at the meetings beginning with what we have been doing over the previous two weeks. Christa Chadwick is a native German speaker and has kindly agreed to help keep us on the right track. If anyone would like to join, please email adrian.long@icloud.com and you will be sent a link, usually on the Wednesday before the meeting.

Our next meeting is Friday 12th February at 09:30 AM and every fortnight thereafter.

Adrian Long

South-East and Mid-Cheshire U3A Cluster

U3As across the region are sharing Virtual Group Meetings. If you have an interest in any of them, please make contact as indicated below.

Local U3A	Group	Contact
West Cheshire Rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukelele 	kenwakefield2014@gmail.com Tel: 01829 270851
Sandbach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choir • Geology • Painting-Watercolours • Practical Photography • Pilates / Beginners' Yoga (paid tutor) 	groups.co-ordinator@sandbachu3a.org.uk
Knutsford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geology • Random History 	mhbarley@waitrose.com
Holmes Chapel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginner Bridge Online Tournament • Guitar for Beginners • Local History • Patchwork and Quilting 	groups@holmeschapelu3a.org.uk

Other groups that are “in the pipeline” and are still to be confirmed are:

Local U3A	Group	Contact
Sandbach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History • Play Reading (joint with Holmes Chapel; but script delivery is an issue) 	groups.co-ordinator@sandbachu3a.org.uk
Holmes Chapel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knitting for Charity (not meeting online but in regular communication and happy to include others in our projects) 	groups@holmeschapelu3a.org.uk

An Arts Activity which may be of interest to you:

King Lear Prizes

The *King Lear Prizes* is the new national creative arts competition for older people stuck at home because of Coronavirus.

The competition's name was inspired by William Shakespeare's famous play, which was written around the time of outbreaks of the plague in London in 1605-06.

The *King Lear Prizes* was launched to encourage people to produce new works of literature, drama, poetry, music and art during the pandemic.

The *King Lear Prizes* are specifically for older people (those over 65) and for people who are keen amateurs or first-timers, rather than professionals.

The latest round of the competition has just opened to entries and runs until 19th March 2021.

The competition accepts entries in poetry, real stories (short stories from people's lives), art and musical performance and there are over £2,000 worth of prizes on offer. The winners will be picked by a panel of expert judges including Gyles Brandreth and Julian Lloyd Webber. You can enter at a level suitable for you, there are separate categories for beginners and the more experienced.

The *King Lear Prizes* website at <https://www.kinglearprizes.org.uk> gives more information about the competition and the organisation which runs it.

There is also the King Lear Arts club which is a free on-line Arts Club for the over 60s.

Sue Allan

Secretary

U3A Online Learning Events

The national website lists a wide selection of Learning Events that are available to members. Many are being delivered via the Zoom video conferencing/webinar platform and there are some 'How to Guides' and 'Online Tutorials' to help you use Zoom if you are not familiar with this tool.

Some topics for February include:

- A Taste of Japan
- Maths Activities and Games
- Wellbeing in Nature

For more information, go to the website at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

Your Kanuta

During these times of lockdown, you will have noticed that Kanuta is mainly reporting on what is going on online. Sadly, invitations to live theatre or concert trips (with their associated booking forms) and reports of group activities and outings will probably be missing for a while yet.

In the meantime, and perhaps continuing into our post-lockdown life, is there something else you would like to see in your newsletter?

Suggestions can be sent to newsletter.knutsfordu3a@gmail.com

What The Future Holds!

A hundred years of changes have improved the way we live.
We take them all for granted now, and rarely do we give
A thought about the years ahead and 'what the future holds',
But change has hidden dangers as you'll see from what unfolds!

There could be plans for major change not very far away;
When time for work and study might be spent on play.
We've built ourselves computers to ease the daily grind;
So will they build a programme to educate the mind?

With a wealth of information available online
It might not be impossible to make it intertwine
With the minds of every human alive on planet Earth:
Instant global knowledge; imagine what that's worth!

Brains could be up-dated in the middle of the night.
The written word would disappear completely out of sight.
There'd be one common language; no point in having more.
Countries all united; the world an open door.

With everyone so clever most problems disappear:
Poverty and hunger; all that people fear.
With everyone an equal there's no more need for war:
Peace and joy in every land, that's what we're striving for!

Banks and shops would vanish; few were that efficient.
Jobs and trade would be no more; we'd all be self sufficient,
With robots working night and day to service our demands:
The only problem: how to use the time that's on our hands!

We could party at the libraries or in the empty schools,
With everyone intelligent in a world devoid of fools.
We could travel almost anywhere and take in every site,
Or sit at home and watch old films morning, noon and night.

But is it quite so simple, do we need to think it through?
It's bound to be quite boring if there's not a lot to do;
And during this pandemic, most gains become a loss,
Whatever changes might be planned, covid is the boss!

With major changes put on hold until another day,
As we wait until the vaccine sends that dreadful bug away,
Take the time to give some thought to what may lie ahead;
If there's no challenge left in life, we might be better dead!

Remember though, it's total fiction
Don't despair by my prediction!

Peter Willgoose 2021

{Peter is a member of the Writing for Pleasure group}