

NEWS BITES! JULY/AUG 2020

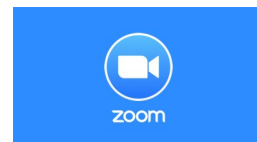
Sharing ideas across 34 U3As in Nottinghamshire

THIS MONTH WE FOCUS ON THE OUTCOMES FROM THE U3A NOTTS NETWORK ZOOM MEETING ON JULY 29TH

37 members attended and 25 Notts U3As were represented.

Ian McCannah Chair of the Third Age Trust raised the following points

- Covid 19 has had a big impact on U3As and the response to the virus varies enormously from those who are doing nothing to those who are being very proactive.
- Coming out of lockdown will probably be very slow because of the demographics and a vaccine will be necessary before many groups will start.
- Ian will be putting suggestions for moving forward to the TAT board on August 18th and this will be made available. This will include going out into the community to recruit new members.
- **The next meeting to discuss further ways forward during Covid will be on Zoom on August 26th**



Ian also reported on the TAT development plan 2017-2020 identifying the following :=

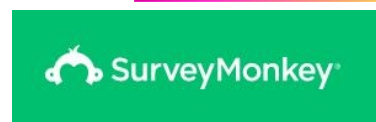
- A learning hub which has been speeded up
- Raising the profile of the U3A externally and linking with other organisations with the same charitable objectives.
- To hold a conference on Positive Ageing
- To ensure the U3A has a clear identity focused on Learn, Laugh, Live
- A Trust U3A has been established and has around 200 members and 20 interest groups. This may continue after Covid as it provides a U3A experience for those who cannot access a group/
- Beacon developments are delayed by 9 months.
- A trading company has been set up outside the Charity so commercial products such as leaflets, banners and branded clothing can be purchased.
- It is proposed to increase the capitation fee to £4 from April 2022. This will help with more investment in technology and an increase in staff. A decision will be made at the AGM on September 29th.

Other discussions centred on the concerns for a diminishing membership overall and an increasing age profile of the membership.

- There is little recruitment amongst folk who are newly retired.
- There is a national campaign with trailblazers determined to get new members, but this is on hold until enough U3As have got on top of Covid and monthly meetings can reopen
- Notts Network has a publicity group from 8 U3As. Currently employers, who have been approached, have not responded to our suggestion to include U3A in their pre-retirement processes. The group will meet again in September.

Further presentations and discussion focused on holding on to members during the Covid crisis :-

- Proactive group co-ordinators who encourage group facilitators to provide something for the members.
- Providing sample risk assessments to help the facilitators.
- Extending the year so members get 2 years membership for the price of one.
- Film group where the group watches a film that is streamed and then meets on Zoom to discuss.
- Futurelearn courses done together. www.futurelearn.com
- Further guidance on risk assessments will be provided by the TAT.
- Virtual pub group on a Saturday evening and coffee bar virtual group.
- Singing for fun group using Youtube.
- Survey monkey is a useful tool to gather members views.
- Whatsapp and telephone groups are other ways of keeping in touch.
- Important to deliver bulletins/newsletters to those members who do not have internet access.



WhatsApp

Many of the suggestions given in the first page of Newbites this month are already being carried out by U3As within the Notts Network. The articles below represent some of the activities just one U3A are doing—Carlton and Gedling—finding ways to keep existing groups going, and starting up new virtual groups.

Bonsai Back in Business

The Carlton and Gedling bonsai group had been keeping in touch through WhatsApp, emails and Zoom meetings, but it is a bit difficult showing off the finer points of wiring, pinching out and root pruning though zoom – and that’s when we can all get the technology to work. In July, we had our first socially distanced meeting in a garden, and it went really well. Colin and I even managed to find takers for some of our Bonsai cuttings. So you’ve tried everything else in your gardening groups, now it must be time for bonsai. If you want ideas for setting up a bonsai group, please email me at pkmartinez14@gmail.com.



Film Study Group

We’ve never had a film group before in Carlton and Gedling U3A. But with cinemas and theatres being closed we thought we’d start one off. We meet twice a month to watch a film agreed at the previous meeting. To keep the programme interesting we alternate the selection of film: we discuss a classic film from the history of cinema in one meeting and in the next, a fairly recent or contemporary film.

So far we’ve been able to choose films from a variety of free streaming platforms, notably iPlayer, All4 and YouTube. The advantage of these streaming platforms is that we don’t all have to watch the film at the same time, they’re available to anyone with a smart tv, internet connection or cable....AND THEY’RE FREE. People study the film at their leisure in the two weeks between meetings.

We started off at almost the very beginnings of cinema with a couple of short films by Melies and our latest classic was Orson Welles’ astonishing directing debut *Citizen Kane*. Next up is a twisty time travel thriller: *Twelve Monkeys* directed by Terry Gilliam. It’s all about the attempt from the future to prevent a global pandemic – well that couldn’t happen here could it! It’s going to be interesting comparing the Gilliam film with the film which inspired it: Chris Marker’s *La Jetee*, another stunning directorial debut. If you’d like to discuss taking your U3A’s film group on line or starting a film group, email pkmartinez14@gmail.com. Paul Martinez

Opera Study Group

Our Carlton and Gedling opera group has taken on a whole new lease of life since the lockdown started. We are now meeting twice a month, instead of once as previously. At each meeting we discuss an opera we have all watched in the preceding fortnight and one of us introduces the next opera we are going to watch in the next fortnight.

We have been watching operas on YouTube, usually on the Operavision website. The operavision operas are usually high quality in performance, picture and audio. There are 30-40 operas available at any one time and they are usually available for a couple of months each. ALL FOR FREE. The repertoire is, if anything, particularly strong on operas which are less well known although there are lots of popular classics as well.

Although we are not terribly advanced technically we are making use of the zoom facility for the host to show opera clips using the shared screen. Our next opera is that beautiful, three handkerchief tragedy *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

If you want info about how to set up an opera interest group, or if you’d like to swap information please email me pkmartinez14@gmail.com. Paul Martinez

