

October 2021

Chairman's message



I hope that everyone has enjoyed a pleasant summer. Despite the poor weather this year, early in September I managed to squeeze in a wonderful family holiday in North Norfolk where the sun didn't stop shining!

u3a in our area

In my message last month, I said that I wanted to develop local and regional networking initiatives. I have made a start by meeting with Allan Walmsley the West Midlands Regional Trustee (who will be joining us at our December Core Meeting) and some of our local Chairs in the south Birmingham area. I am pleased to report that through the pandemic our own membership numbers have stood up favourably compared with some of our neighbouring u3a's. I have also introduced myself to the Solihull u3a Cluster and I look forward to meeting them to share our knowledge.

Members Consultation

You are being consulted about a new strategy from the Third Age Trust (for newer members this is the national representative body for u3a's in the UK) and the starting point has these aims in mind:

- ***Supporting an engaged, strong, and vibrant movement***
- ***Making membership an attractive opportunity for all retired people***
- ***Developing the u3a Voice***
- ***Maximising the u3a Learning Model***

See below the message from the u3a Newsletter issued on 17 September:

u3a is developing its vision for the future and we want to hear from you. You can comment using the email address strategy@u3a.org.uk or by completing the [online survey on our website](https://www.u3a.org.uk/about/vision#future) <https://www.u3a.org.uk/about/vision#future>

These are early days in the consultation, and I have been invited to join a Regional Group to move this forward.

Other news:

- *Sue Simpson (our Publicity Officer) and I are arranging to meet with our new Regional PR Officer Jeff Berliner with a view to raising our profile. We will also be continuing to make use of the Bugle Magazine.*
- *A u3a trading company has been formed to sell products and services – keep an eye on the national website www.u3a.org.uk for developments.*
- *U3a Eye - we continue to be recognised by the u3a Eye national photography challenge with, two more Balsall Common photographs selected last month – ‘London’ by Derek Robbins and “Under the arches” by Karen Coates – congratulations Derek and Karen! This month’s challenge is on the theme of “Black and White”.*



- *On a personal note, I led my first Ramblers Group walk in the beautiful countryside and canal towpaths around Lapworth. Despite the cattle it all seemed to go well, and I look forward to leading more walks in the future.*
- *New Members – on the last couple of Rambles it has been great to meet two new members to our u3a – Judy Hornigold and Juliet Hancox. Welcome Judy and Juliet – my introduction to u3a was also in the Rambling Group and I found it to be a terrific way to meet people and get involved.*
- *NOTE, the next Core Meeting is on 7th October and cheques for the November 20th quiz will be welcomed then. The talk is on the subject of “British Mammals” by Nick Martin.*

**Please try to support our Group Activities and continue to.
Learn, Laugh and Live!**

Best wishes and hope to see you at the Core Meeting on
October 7th, **Matthew Stephens**

[Click here for details of the Quiz Night Saturday 20th November 2021](#)

Group News

WE ARE OUT OF LOCKDOWN – So many of the groups are now operating. Please check on our website to see if your favourites are open. Coordinators please update your Webpages to show the status of your Activity Groups.

Out and About Visits

Visit - Thursday 14th October 2021 to Birmingham Buddhist Vihara and the Dhamma Talke Peace Pagoda starting at 2pm.



The purpose of our visit is to see the Pagoda, the associated monastery and learn about the Buddhist Faith. The Buddhist Vihara is in the Ladywood area of Birmingham on the banks of Edgbaston Reservoir. It is easily reached by public transport, or by car. There is no charge for this

visit; donations would be appreciated on the day.

If you wish to participate or require more details please email petercalver@outlook.com or telephone 01676 535318.

SLOW WAYS

Recently I watched the talk about SlowWays given by Daniel Raven-Ellison organised by u3a. He is a keen walker and wanted to set up a network of direct routes between towns and villages to encourage walkers to walk further, more often and with more purpose.

There are 140,000 miles of footpaths in the UK but most of the routes are long distance ones eg Offa's Dyke and the Highland Way. He wanted to set up routes which are shorter and more local which had a good starting and finishing point which can be reached with ease by public transport if necessary, safe and easy to navigate, all off-road with resting/eating places every 5-10 Km. Preferably accessible to as many people as possible and also to include any historical facts along the route taken. He liaised with the Ramblers Association and Ordnance Survey and from maps decided on 2,500 destinations with 7,000 routes resulting in 100,000 Km of footpaths. Then many volunteers walked these routes to verify them to work out a rating system. 3 months ago a website was set up www.betaslowways.org What he is hoping is that people will plan a route between a village or town via footpaths only and download the details onto the website.

On the website, I put in Balsall Common and found 6 routes radiating from Kenilworth, 6 from Solihull and 7 from Coventry of varying lengths. There are none direct from Balsall Common although there is nothing to stop anyone researching a route e.g. Balsall Common to Berkswell and putting it on the site. So if you are interested, investigate the website, get out your map and explore the area then put your routes onto the slowways site.

FILM STUDY

The next film for the Film Study Group to viewed and discussed will be

The Dish.

July 1969, Apollo 11's astronauts will walk on the moon and a huge satellite dish outside a sheep-farming Australian town has been chosen to beam the footage globally. The whole world is depending upon scientist Cliff Buxton (Sam Neill), who must

steer the eccentric crew who man the telescope through a sea of mishaps and disasters that threatens to spoil the town's finest hour. Watching over them is a by-the-book NASA representative who can't quite understand their quirky working methods. A comical culture clash erupts in this effortlessly funny tale (based on a true story) of how history's biggest televised event was almost cancelled.

The film will be shown in the Westlake Room at the rear of the Village Hall on Wednesday 13th October, starting at 2:00pm. A small charge of £1.50 per person is made to cover the hire of the hall.

(This film was originally scheduled to be shown in September, but was cancelled due to the hot weather)

THEATRE GROUP

The number of COVID cases prevents us from having full outings at the moment. However, there are a couple of upcoming events that we have booked for ourselves so I am sharing here as it would be good to see some familiar faces.

[The Grey Mist — The Priory Theatre, Kenilworth](#)

On all week from 25th to 31st October. We are going on Wednesday 27th.

[Fascinating Aida - Belgrade Theatre](#)

Only on 29th October. Funny and rude.

Balsall Common U3A and Amazon

Balsall Common U3A is a member of Amazon, affiliation programme.

This means if you go to Amazon by clicking on the link on the Home page of Balsall Common U3A's web site www.balsallcommonu3a.org, the U3A will receive up to 6%, of

your purchase value at no cost to yourself. The link to Amazon is at the bottom of the home page of the web site just above the photograph taken at a core meeting. Balsall Common U3A will only be credited if you access Amazon through the link on our website.

Picture taken by the editor



u3a community project Hugh Town, St Marys, Isles of Scilly

Titbits

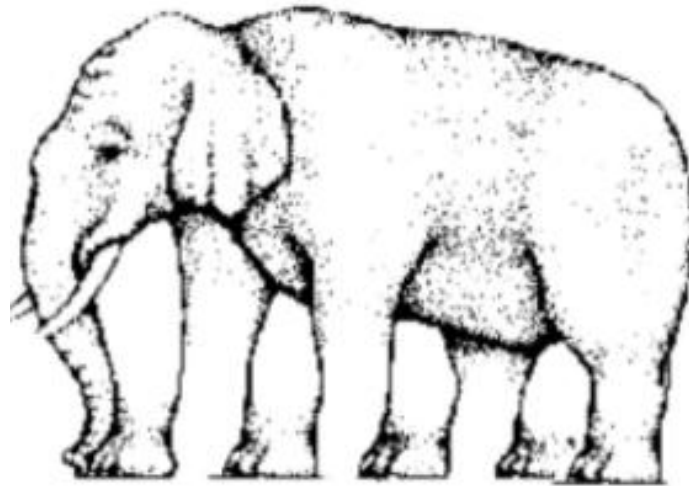
This is Wilson. He is now working from home 😊



SPOT THE 10 DIFFERENCES



How many legs does this elephant have?



If you know of any member who is in hospital, ill at home or bereaved, please inform a committee member and, if appropriate we will arrange to contact the member or a family member.

If anyone has anything they wish to be included in The Sentinel email it to editor@balsallcommonu3a.org by the 20th of the preceding month