

IT'S BEGINNING TO FEEL A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS 2020

December 2020 Newsletter

Hi everyone

It's Richard Field back again, bringing you the Newsletter this month. It seems a long time ago since I wrote the first Newsletter back in Summer 2020 – and a lot has happened since then! We have now just come out of Lockdown 2 and entered Tier 2. Festive celebrations are just round the corner. Have you got your Christmas bubble sorted yet?

Committee Activities

Your U3A Committee met recently and we have some important news to tell you about:

The Christmas Quiz is now in full swing. We have had just under 30 donations to date, which has raised over £200, helping us raise funds for our local organisation. Please take part if you can and encourage others, it's open to anyone. As well as being great fun, it will help us all to keep and build our membership. You can find it here - <https://www.basingstokeu3a.org/christmas-quiz>

Membership Renewal - we are going to ask you to renew your membership to our U3A at the turn of the year, at a much reduced fee of £15, to cover the period January to August 2021. It enables us to continue to support the wide range of activities you can still enjoy and your opportunities to keep in touch with friends, as well as meet our commitments to the U3A Office and Beacon. We can also continue our work, building and strengthening the choice available to you as the year progresses. Life *will* return to normal! **Membership Renewal instructions will follow towards the end of December.**

Distribution of this Newsletter to people without Internet access - the Committee are now printing off and distributing copies of our Newsletter to all members, who do not have Internet access.

Monthly Meetings - Linda is busy organising monthly webinars for us while we still can't meet together. Members have thoroughly enjoyed the first three, one on Queen Victoria, one on Big Ben and last week we enjoyed one celebrating Christmas, with some interesting history on our Christmas traditions, interspersed with some lovely Christmas songs from the 30s and 40s. Thank you Linda!

Our next talk will be on 13 January 2021, same time - 2pm, same place - in the comfort of your own homes! This will be another webinar presentation entitled '30 years of travel in China'. You will find the talk fascinating with fantastic photography of areas explored by the speaker. He will hold your attention throughout his presentation. Registration for the talk will follow after Christmas.

As you may have seen from our website, we now have an email address for any enquiries: basingstokeu3aenquiries@gmail.com

Group Activities Continue

Our Needles and Pins Group Lend a Hand at Christmas



Early in December, our Needles and Pins Group waved off eighty gaily wrapped shoeboxes, filled with toys, sweets, stationery and toiletries and bags of hand knitted blankets too. These will be opened by underprivileged children in Eastern Europe, who receive very little else at Christmas. Mustard Seed Relief Missions organise an annual appeal and with a team of willing helpers, from Chineham, the Rotary Club and the Basingstoke area, Sue and John, spent much of the year collecting and sorting, knitting and crocheting to help support it.

Lockdown 2 to Tier 2 allows some groups to meet

Well, we're restricted in Tier 2 at the moment, so thank goodness for Zoom, email and other on-line packages. Click on <https://www.basingstokeu3a.org/covid-19> for full details, but we have a wide range of groups using Zoom now, and others are considering it. With the move from Lockdown to Tier 2, some groups have been able to start again. Groups meeting outdoors, such as Cyclists and Walkers can meet in groups of 6, keeping social distance.

Recently the Walkers group met up outside Worting Church and walked past Tangier Park, Manydown Park, Battledown Flyover, before returning to the start at Worting.



Since they are classified as sports, Table Tennis and Line Dancing have been able to start again indoors, with very restricted numbers, in order to comply with Government guidelines.

Holidays and trips are being planned for 2021. Book now for Croatia on <https://www.basingstokeu3a.org/excursion-and-holiday-details>. In 2020, we had to postpone our visits to: Houghton Lodge & Gardens, Stratford on Avon, Buckingham Palace and a concert at Royal Albert Hall. All these will be resurrected for 2021 with a couple of other things we hope.

The national organisation is helping us as well. We've put their Winter Learning Programme on our local website as it's very wide ranging and looks to have something for everyone. There is relaxation to be had, as well as learning! Check it out on [Winter Learning Programme](#) Don't worry about the opening the file - you will see I've renamed the (rather long) link.

Marketing News

We are now on Facebook!

We have both a public Facebook page and a private Facebook group. The intention is to restrict membership of the group to members of our u3a who wish to join it.

If you want to view the page, you will have to join Facebook. You can find our page, by using Facebook search facilities. To get things started, we have put three postings about the December webinar, a photograph from the visit to SS Great Britain and the Christmas quiz. If there is anything you would like to post to the page - and we very much hope there will be lots of posts in the future - you can either email them to basingstokeu3aenquiries@gmail.com or we can give you administrator privileges for the page, so that you can post directly yourself. I hope all of you will help to keep the page as fresh, up to date and appealing as possible.

We have contributed to the new Love Basingstoke website, being developed by the Council and to the Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council Over 55s Directory.

We'd like to know what you think we're good at and what we could do better; and what opportunities we might be missing. Just a quick reply to this email with your views would be much appreciated.

So keep enjoying as much as you can everyone, the committee is working hard for us all behind the scenes. Take care and have a great Christmas, in your support bubble!

Richard Field