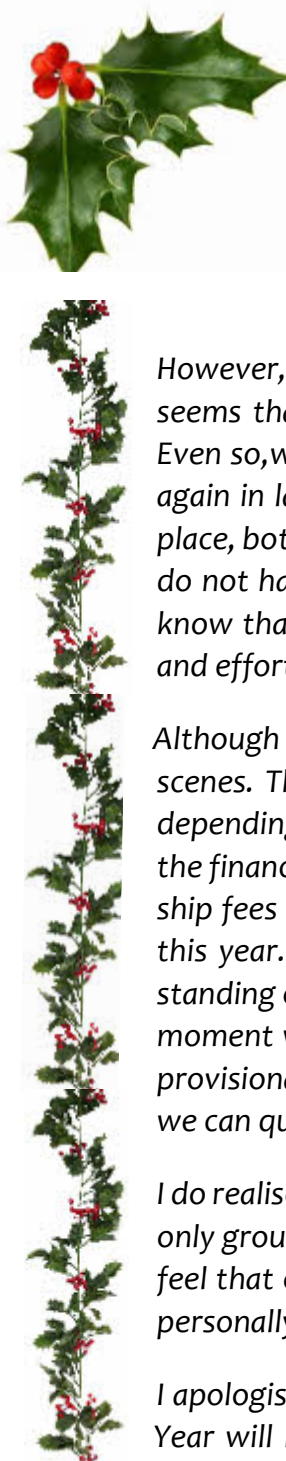


From your Chairman

A vertical decorative border on the left side of the page consists of a string of holly leaves and red berries. At the top, there is a cluster of three holly leaves and three red berries. Below this, a thin stem of holly leaves and berries runs vertically down the page.

What a difference a year makes! Last December we were busy celebrating 25 years of BU3A and looking forward to enjoying the festive season with friends and family. This year we look back on a year of very limited BU3A events, severely curtailed by the Covid 19 outbreak, and our Christmas celebrations will be rather muted as we will not be able to socialise as much as usual, and may have to make difficult decisions as to which members of the family we see.

However, at the time of writing there is a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel, as it seems that vaccines are becoming a distinct possibility in the not-too-distant future. Even so, we cannot even begin to hazard a guess as to when we shall be able to meet again in large groups. Some consolation is that Virtual meetings have started to take place, both for general meetings and some interest groups. I realise that many members do not have internet access, and others (like me) are baffled by the technology, but I know that the Committee, particularly Andrew Adams, have put a great deal of time and effort into getting these virtual lectures up and running.

Although we have not been meeting recently, quite a lot has been going on behind the scenes. There have been several Committee meetings (some actual and some virtual, depending on the rules at the time) and our new Treasurer, Brenda Last, has taken up the financial reins. No doubt a decision will be taken in the New Year regarding membership fees for next year, as obviously Members may feel they have been short-changed this year. (Could I remind you that BU3A are unable to make amendments to your standing orders. Also decisions will have to be made regarding new members, as at the moment we are unsure as to when we are able to offer them anything. We do have a provisional programme of meetings arranged for 2021, and once we get the green light we can quickly get things moving.

I do realise that all of this has been frustrating for Members, but we are by no means the only group of people whose activities have been severely affected this year. However I feel that our problems are minor when compared with those who have suffered both personally and financially due to the virus.

I apologise if these notes are all a bit 'Doom and Gloom' but let us hope that the New Year will herald a new beginning. In the meantime, may I wish you all the happiest Christmas that you are able to have under the circumstances, and that things will improve so that you may have a 'Happy New Year.'

Peter Lester

Zoom Lecture Meetings

By the time you receive this newsletter we will have had our second zoom lecture. The lecture format has, I think, been well received and I have had a number of positive comments following our first lecture, despite the issues with the technology.

The most common response about our first lecture was “thought provoking”, and I think that sums up the range of views received. I do appreciate your comments, as this way of delivering lectures is new to us all, including some of the speakers. The lectures do allow us to maintain our Monday morning U3A slot and also give an opportunity to see people we may not have seen for several months. I know members have been prompted to make contact with others following the lectures and this is another good outcome.

I am very conscious that the lectures are only available to those who have access to zoom and are confident in using the programme, or at least up for having a go. Members who are not on email have been written to with the programme of lectures. It is hoped that a friend or family member may be able to assist these members, either on the day or in watching a recorded version. With the speaker’s permission we do try to record the lectures and make them available to those who, for whatever reason, are not able to be present on the day.

Our thanks to Bernadette Pitt, our lecture secretary, for her hard work in organising these lectures.

Future Meetings on Zoom

Monday 4 January

The semi-pro Sixties and Seventies

David Caulfield

A musician’s classic (and often hilarious) journey of the highs and lows of discovery, hope, glory, mishaps and adventure.

Monday 1 February

A Poor Experience–Victorian Street Life

Graham Harrison

Monday 1 March

The Musical Theatre of Gilbert and Sullivan

Bernard Lockett

Membership

Thank you to all members who have renewed their membership this year. Renewal has been a rather drawn out process for a number of reasons, and I thank you for your cooperation in these difficult times.

As we have not been able to meet for some time, and this situation is not likely to change in the foreseeable future, the committee has decided not to issue membership cards for this year, 2020/21. Last year’s cards will remain valid and all those who have re-joined will keep the same number.

We have 549 members this year and have over 50 people on the waiting list. At the present time we feel we cannot offer new memberships as adding new members to the zoom list may well exceed our licence limit, which would be to the detriment of existing members, and there is little to offer. The committee keeps new membership under regular review and welcomes members’ views.

*Andrew Adams,
Membership Secretary*

