

ANNUAL REPORT 2020 – 21

You might be tempted to dismiss 2020-21 as the year in which nothing happened, but you would be wrong!

It began with cautious optimism following the easing of some Pandemic restrictions over the Summer. The Committee was able to meet in person in September – the first time since February. We welcomed our new Treasurer, Robert Cole, and our Vice-Chairman, Tina Hyndman, was able to say a proper 'Hello' to the other members. A few days later the doors closed again as the number of Virus cases increased nationally. Our next in-person meeting wasn't until July.

Everything reverted to Zoom. Some Groups did keep going [as they had since the first Lockdown] – All About Birds, Books, Drama, History of Art, Photography, Rocks and Ruins, and Sideways History – while the rest waited for better days.

The lack of activities, especially Open Meetings, during the second half of the previous year meant that by August 2020 we had more money in the Bank than we needed. All our funds come from members, so the Committee decided that the best way to repay them was to offer reduced price membership for prompt renewals. Over three-quarters of our 2019-20 members took up the offer. Whether that was through loyalty or a response to bribery we shall never know, but the Committee was encouraged by the fact that so many were ready and waiting for everything to get going again. By the end of this August our membership was 259.

Eventually Scientists developed a vaccine – and we could make plans.

Our Walkers were first off the mark in April and Coffee Mornings were successfully re-introduced in May. We had to wait until August for an Open Meeting -- the only one of the whole year – when 85 excitedly returned to The Parkhouse and listened to a thought-provoking talk from Devon and Cornwall Police about Cyber Security.

Throughout the year Anna Crew has worked her magic with the articles, poems and photographs she has been sent. She has produced attractive, interesting and informative Newsletters each quarter, even though reports of actual group activities were few and far between. Once again we record our thanks to her and her contributors.

Our new Treasurer and a few particularly IT-savvy committee members put their heads together during the year and devised an on-line enrolment facility. Some may say, “About time!” However, members with no access to

computers must never feel disadvantaged, so we will be keeping the cheques-and-Post system running alongside.

During the year we were saddened by the deaths of Doug Russell, a valued and highly-respected member of the Family History Group, and Pat Netherton, a Founder Member and our first elected Secretary. She was known to many as 'The American Lady' and loved going on our Theatre Trips.

We also lost Henry and Miranda Kitchen who ran Creative Writing 2. They moved to Sussex to be nearer their family. All have left gaps and are greatly missed.

It wasn't an easy year for anyone, but the fact that we are still here and still going strong is a tribute to every one of you who played a part in keeping things together. I personally have been hugely supported by our Committee and once again want to thank them for all they have done. But thanks do not stop there. They extend to all Group Leaders, whether or not you have been able to hold meetings, for keeping in touch with your members; and beyond that, thanks go to all individual members who have reached out to one or two others. You have all helped to keep our u3a alive.

Bude u3a is us, it's what we make it. So let's look forward to the year ahead and do everything we can to make it The Best!

Jo Arnold