



# Poynton u3a News

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*[poyntonu3a.org.uk](http://poyntonu3a.org.uk)*

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## Poynton u3a Update

### Poynton u3a Membership Renewal

Membership renewals are occurring at a steady pace.

**Remember** you need to renew your membership **immediately** if you are involved in any Interest Group activities or want to continue to receive our Newsletter. Details were in the previous newsletter and are on the Membership page on our website.

### Third Age Trust Magazine

The Third Age Trust produces a magazine called Third Age Matters with five editions a year (April, June, September, November and February). The cost for the coming year is £3.60. If you would like to order your copies, email [membership@poyntonu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@poyntonu3a.org.uk).

### General Meetings

The next General Meeting is taking place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February at The Centre. The intended speaker was the photographer Jim Holmes but he is now unavailable. He has been replaced at short notice by Tony Bostock who will be talking about Cheshire Pubs and Pub Signs.



Here are a couple of pictures of the successful Christmas meeting.

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## Annual General Meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023

This year's AGM is on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March. As described last year, the view of the Committee is that a face-to-face meeting, with an opportunity for electronic input as far as possible for those not able to attend, is the best method for the future.

Therefore, we are inviting from members:

1. resolutions which members would like to be put to the AGM
2. the names of those agreeing to stand for election as committee members

Resolutions and nominations for the election of new committee members, together with names of a proposer and seconder, should be sent to our Secretary, Jayne Barnes (using [enquiries@poyntonu3a.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@poyntonu3a.org.uk) or post to 72 Clifford Road, SK12 1JA). The Nominations and Resolutions Forms are accompanying this newsletter and are also on our website.

The Constitution requires that we should give 21 days notice of the date of the AGM and its agenda. Proposed resolutions and proposals for committee membership should be received by the Secretary no later than **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2023**.

The agenda for the AGM on 21<sup>st</sup> March will follow the normal pattern, namely:-

- Minutes of the last AGM (2022)
- Matters arising
- Proposed resolutions
- Election of committee members
- Trustees' report
- Group coordinators report
- Annual accounts.

There will be a further mailing which will contain the relevant papers for the AGM.

## Photography Group

The first meeting of the New Year gave the opportunity for members to talk about their interpretation of the annual project, "Street Art", via sets of photographs on display boards. It was interesting to note the very different ways in which the topic had been viewed, sometimes 3-dimensional works of art from a variety of locations, sometimes paintings on walls and posters (Banksy style).

Just before Christmas, Janet had outlined various techniques we might use to capture people laughing in a natural rather than in an artificial way. Several photos gathered over the Christmas break showed the festive cheer very effectively.

Next, we looked very swiftly at photos submitted electronically for the quarterly project, "I Spy", in which we sought to capture a scene viewed through a frame of some sort in the foreground.

Peter briefly gave some useful advice on picture composition which we will be able to make good use of during the course of 2023.



The annual project for 2023 will be “Our Industrial Heritage” and it was noted that the outings for this year might provide some useful pointers. It is left to individual group members to choose their own topic for the project in the first quarter of 2023 together with the reason why that particular topic has been selected.

**Keith Batchelor**

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*Fancy trying your hand at photography? Then come along to one of our meetings or our photo outings. No previous photography experience is necessary, but you do need some kind of camera, whether it's a camera on your mobile or a full blown DSLR or something in between. We meet on the afternoon of the first Friday of each month in the Civic Centre when we share our photos and discuss various aspects of photography. We also go out somewhere each month to take photos which we share on a dropbox. We set ourselves various photographic projects throughout the year, so there are plenty of things to dip into.*

*If you are interested in joining the group or want more information, email [groups@poyntonu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@poyntonu3a.org.uk) with 'Photography Group' as the subject.*

## Members' Contributions

### Threats to humanity

At the time of writing, we gradually appear to be escaping, so we hope, from the threat of Covid-19 – a mortal threat which has travelled throughout the world in the last three years. It is now widely accepted that this disease originated in China in 2019. Vaccination has played an enormous part in keeping the number of deaths down but it will be some time before figures can be attached to losses in particular countries and Covid-19 leaves behind it a not insignificant number of long-term health cases. Less known to us in the UK is that in 2002 a strain of the coronavirus (SARS), which also originated in China, quickly spread from China to other Asian countries. There were a small number of cases in several other countries, including four in the UK, plus a significant outbreak in Toronto, Canada. This SARS pandemic was eventually brought under control in July 2003 as a result of a draconian policy of isolating those suspected of having the condition and screening all passengers travelling by air from affected countries for signs of the infection. I remember it particularly as it destroyed almost 3 years of work I had put into a World Conference which should have taken place in Hong Kong in 2003.

At the moment, so it seems, the human race has successfully developed its knowledge of scientific defences against pandemics. It was not ever thus. Human life even less than a thousand years ago has sometimes clung onto its very existence in a quite precarious fashion. In 1348 the Black Death arrived in England, killing around 40% of the population. The mortality rate in Europe appears to have been the same. Can we conceive of over a third of the people we know dying over a period of just a few months when the plague struck and within less than ten days of contracting such a disease? And the Black Death was only the most notorious epidemic of bubonic or pneumonic plagues which occurred on a regular basis. For the moment at least the present pandemic is not on the same scale. Nowadays advances in social structures, understanding of diet and sanitation, as well as a growing knowledge of medicine, have tripled our earlier life expectancy. But it is worth remembering that just over a hundred years ago, in the couple of years after the First

World War, which was in the life time of both of my parents, a 'flu epidemic killed more people than had been killed in the four years of that war, well over 20,000,000. In the UK the number of deaths was around 280,000. It is estimated that it affected some 60% of the population. None of my father's family died from it but he used to recite the children's rhyme of that time

*I had a little bird  
Its name was Enza  
I opened the door  
And in-flu-enza.*

His school was closed to reduce the risk of contagion – just as swimming baths were closed in the early years of my life to reduce the risk of poliomyelitis before a vaccine was available. And Manchester was luckier in 1918 than most cities in that it had a very influential senior medical officer who made great efforts (despite opposition from a number of quarters) to halt public gatherings where the contagion could so easily be spread and to contain the troops, returning from war, in barracks. At first the infection was quite mild. But soon it appeared in a much more severe form which could end in the lethal secondary infection of pneumonia and/ or uncontrollable haemorrhaging which filled the lungs.

For no known reason this pandemic died out in the summer of 1919. Bacteriologists at the time had no explanation for its appearance and it was only in 1933 that it was realised that influenza was transmitted by a virus. The illness was called Spanish 'flu (*La gripe*) from the fact that the highest early mortalities were in Spain.

In my own lifetime we have had epidemics of Asian and Bird 'flu, the popular names of variants of the influenza virus (1957 and 1968) for both of which the number of deaths was c.60,000. These two epidemics hit children and the elderly hardest, while the 1918/19 epidemic seems to have affected particularly the strongest age group (20-35 years old).

Perhaps less well known is the fact that influenza attacks have been with us over a much longer period of our history. Medieval doctors knew of influenza but could not explain it - even less cure it. They were berated by their paymasters for their constant failures to deal with it. So they coined the Italian term *influenza* ("influence") for it. They stated that this disease was something "influenced" by the appearance of comets in the sky. Almost certainly they did this more by design than coincidence. After all it absolved them from their lack of understanding and therefore the curing of influenza since the paths of the comets in the sky could hardly be seen to be within their provenance as medical doctors!

Our total concern with Covid-19 seems to have allowed us this year to forget the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of another type of threat, this time one for which we ourselves were wholly responsible. In October 1962 the world held its breath as, for the first time, humanity came close to annihilation from a new threat - the atomic weapons which had been developed and now were on the point of being used in what was called the Cuban missile crisis, a

drama played out between the United States and the USSR. I had just left home to become a university student. Hardly had the course begun when lectures were cancelled and we were told we might wish to return home to be with our parents when the end came. Many did. The black humour of students appeared on a notice in the student union building "Take your choice – become a small pile of dust by yourself here or a bigger pile of dust at home with your family". John Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev eventually came to an agreement - more by good luck than good management - as later became clear. Almost exactly a year after Kennedy announced a peaceful solution to the American people, he met his death at the hands of one of his own countrymen on a visit to Dallas. A year after that and on the second anniversary of the original sighting of Soviet missiles in Cuba by an American U-2 plane, Khrushchev was removed from power by a conspiracy of his former underlings.

As I write President Putin has refused to discount the use of weapons of mass destruction in the war in Ukraine. And the UN Climate Change Conference (Cop27) is taking place in Egypt. The promises made at last year's Conference (Cop26) in Glasgow have not been met.

Also in 1962, as I pondered as a student whether to return home, Peter Paul and Mary's *Where have all the flowers gone?* which ended with the refrain *When will they ever learn?* was being performed in English, German and French - the last by Marlene Dietrich at a UNICEF Conference. Sadly, I don't think there is a Russian version!

## David Sewart

### New Year Resolution

I'm not making one this year  
My record is not good.  
I'm chucking in the towel now  
To save sweat, tears and blood.  
I've lost that optimistic streak  
That blossomed long ago -  
It's been replaced by pragmatism  
That mirrors my life now.

Instead, I'll carry on the same,  
Self-centred to a fault,  
Grumbling on about my age  
'Til short breath brings a halt.  
So into yet another year  
For worse or even better,  
I'll spoil myself for one more time  
And buy a brand-new sweater.

**Ian Beverley**



Sudoku No 40

			8			2	6	
2		6					3	
8						7		
5		3			7			
	4					1		
7	6		5		2			
	7				3	4		
				4				
		1	7		8	6		

Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9

Below is the solution to No 39

4	3	7	5	6	9	8	2	1
6	1	2	8	4	7	5	3	9
5	9	8	2	1	3	4	7	6
7	5	4	3	9	8	1	6	2
1	6	9	4	2	5	7	8	3
2	8	3	6	7	1	9	5	4
3	7	1	9	5	6	2	4	8
8	4	5	1	3	2	6	9	7
9	2	6	7	8	4	3	1	5

More quiz questions from Hooha.

1. Which English actor was offered the role of Lawrence of Arabia, before Peter O'Toole took the part?
2. Who wrote the song Islands in the Stream, recorded by Dolly Parton and Kenny Rodgers?
3. What makes jam set?
4. Small sharks have recently been found swimming in which northern river?
5. 22nd January 2023 will begin the Chinese year of which animal?

Below are the answers to the questions in the previous edition.

1. Is almond milk a modern product?  
*No, it has ancient origins but came into common use in Medieval times.*
2. Name of the last dambuster who recently died at the age of 101.  
*George 'Johnny' Johnson.*
3. What is the first word of Shakespeare's play Richard III? Is it "The", "Now" or "When"?  
*Now (is the winter of our discontent...).*
4. Which African country was founded by released slaves?  
*Liberia.*
5. How many Santas does it take to change a lightbulb?  
*One, there's only one Santa!*

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And finally, a message from **Lesley Witton**, chair of Cheadle and Gatley u3a

I am delighted to tell you that our Environment Group will be starting up again in January. Peter Briggs, the Group Convenor has planned monthly walks to take place on the second Thursday in the month at 10.00am. They are all local and about 3-4 miles in length. More details are below.

I would be very grateful if you would publicise this in your u3as as Peter is very keen to invite all members of the NECN to join him. Several members from other u3as enjoyed previous visits to the Castlefield area and to Worsley organised by Peter.

*[If you are interested in joining one of these walks, please contact Nigel, our Interest Groups Coordinator, and he will pass on your details – [groups@poyntonu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@poyntonu3a.org.uk) – Ed]*

## **Cheadle and Gatley u3a - Environment Group - Environmental events for 2023**

Cheadle and Gatley u3a's Environment Group is an Open Group within the North East Cheshire u3a Network (NECN).

It will be re-convening in January 2023 and will give members opportunities to enjoy a variety of both natural and built environments in the North of England. A programme of 6 visits has been prepared for January to June 2023. During these walks we will seek to understand and to study how changes in local and global environments affect the lives of people and animals in defined environments.

We may assess threats to various local environments in Cheshire and in Greater Manchester. Members will note historical influences (such as the Industrial Revolution and the development of mass transport, especially of road vehicles, railways, canals and civil aviation).

Particular attention will be paid (whenever appropriate) to buildings in local towns, villages and neighbouring cities. Their architecture and its adaption to the countryside should focus our attention.

We may also observe aspects of climate changes caused by human activities (especially the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation and release of greenhouse gases from factories, incinerators, transport and poor farming methods).

We are now alert to threats caused by severe weather (e.g., heatwaves, high winds, droughts, heavy rain, floods and wildfires). We can take some steps to mitigate these locally and in our personal and family lives. We can also do many things jointly by observing and reacting to our natural environments where we all can enjoy our leisure time. We must encourage organizations that endeavour to conserve our natural world, especially our parks, rivers and canals, hills and coasts.

**Peter Briggs**