



Editorial

Welcome to the sixteenth edition of these electronic newsletters. This seems to be an appropriate time to say thank you to all the people who have kept this newsletter going over the past few months. Thank you everybody for the text and the prose, the photographs, the quiz questions and the proof-reading.

It looks like the electronic newsletter will be continuing for a few more months yet so keep providing your contributions. Send your text and pictures to news@poyntonu3a.org.uk.

Wishing you and your families a healthy Christmas and a different New Year.

Poynton U3A Update

Poynton U3A Membership Renewal

What is the membership fee for 2021?

After a lengthy consideration, the Committee has decided that the fee for Poynton U3A renewals for 2021 will be £5 for the whole year. This reduced fee takes into account the diminished amount of activities during most of 2020 and the possibility of a similar situation prevailing at the start of 2021. Our £5 fee just pays for the per capita fee which we pay to "Head Office" which they have just increased to £4 for 2021 and the Beacon membership system fee (£1 per member). Any additional costs will be taken from our Reserves.

Remember you need to renew your membership **immediately** if you are involved in any Interest Group activities (Real or Virtual) or want to continue to receive our Newsletter from January onwards. You also need to renew if you want to take part in the AGM.

We thank you for supporting our efforts during 2020 and hope that you will continue to do so during 2021.



How do I renew my membership?

There can be no major renewals processing in the Council Chamber in January. We are going to have to rely on the alternative renewal method based on postal deliveries. The preferred method of payment is by cheque. If this is not possible, use cash.

Send

1. Your name(s) and membership number(s)
2. Stamped addressed envelope (SAE)
3. Cheque for £5 made payable to Poynton U3A or cash

to Poynton U3A Membership Secretary at 62 Clarendon Road, Hazel Grove SK7 4NS.

To save yourself a stamp, you can use a drop-off point in Poynton. The list of addresses can be obtained by emailing the Membership Secretary as indicated below.

Renewals requests left at these addresses will be forwarded to the Membership Secretary for her to process.

If there are any changes to your membership details, please ensure these are included as well. Members with a printer can use the form below.

Without a SAE, you will not receive a membership card. You will however be able to collect your card at a General Meeting. You should receive a receipt by email.

If you cannot use the above system for whatever reason and you want to renew, please contact the Membership Secretary by email (membership@poyntonu3a.org.uk).

Poynton U3A Membership Renewal Form Subscription for 2021 is £5.00

Memberships expire at the end of December. To continue to enjoy the activities run by Poynton U3A you need to renew your membership by January 31st 2021 by post using the following form.

Title ____ First name _____ Family name _____ Membership no. _____

Please list any changes to your contact details (including changes to your email address) :-

Please post this form with a stamped self-addressed envelope and a cheque for £5.00 (made payable to Poynton U3A) to Poynton U3A Membership Secretary, 62 Clarendon Road, Hazel Grove SK7 4NS.

National News

A couple of items taken from the Winter 2020 edition of Third Age Matters highlighting news from the National AGM.

The first is an article about the increase in the Third Age Trust membership fee which is mentioned above.

[Note: These fees are paid in arrears and so the fees paid in April 2022 are collected in 2021.]

The second introduces the new U3A logo which we shall be adopting over the coming months.

news

MEMBERS VOTE FOR THE FIRST SUBSCRIPTIONS RISE IN 12 YEARS

Members at this year's virtual AGM voted in favour of investing in the future of the U3A movement by supporting a 50p increase in the annual subscription.

The increase – the first in 12 years – is needed to roll out a development plan to attract new members and to help U3As make better use of technology. It will be introduced in April 2022.

508 members voted in favour of the board's resolution to increase the annual subscription that U3As pay to the Third Age Trust from £3.50 per member to £4 from 1 April, 2022, with 221 against and 22 abstentions.

An amendment by Malmesbury & District U3A to delay the increase to April 2023 was lost, with 261 voting for and 474 against, and 11 abstentions.

A resolution by Chipping Norton U3A to increase it by £1 to £4.50 was also lost, with 121 voting in favour, 621 against and 11 abstentions.

Chairman Ian McCannah said: "The Trust is an important port of call for U3As for advice on a range of issues from finance, health and safety and equality.

The Trust provides professional help and support, which comes at a cost.

"We are the 22nd largest charity in the UK, with the equivalent of 16 full-time staff, significantly less than other membership organisations."

John Fairhurst, of Malmesbury U3A, said raising subs would be antagonistic at a time when U3As were not fully functional and increase the likelihood of non-renewals. By 2022, many U3As would be under financial stress. "We should be focusing on retaining members rather than finding new ones," he said.

Christine Clinch, of Chipping Norton U3A, said: "Most U3A subscriptions appear to be below £20. Chipping Norton subs are £18 this year, including the national magazine. Malmesbury only pay £12." She said subscriptions at the Women's Institute were £43 and the organisation had 90 staff. "The U3A, with twice as many members, can only afford 19, some of whom are part-time." She praised national office initiatives such as Zoom tutorials and the Keeping in Touch U3A Facebook page.

A FRESH NEW LOOK FOR U3A

A new modern image for the U3A was unveiled at the AGM. Ed Link, chairman of the Communications and External Affairs Committee, said the refreshed look was designed to make an impact "to show we have something exciting for all people no longer in full-time employment. That this is a whole new chapter in their lives, not the epilogue."

Posters, banners, flags and publicity materials in the new look will be free to U3As to download and personalise.

A survey of members in October 2019 showed that the movement is ageing. The rate of growth is falling, with fewer new U3As starting up and more U3As reporting a decline in membership numbers. "We must broaden our base with increased diversity," said Ed. "And we must appeal to the next generation of media and tech-savvy people."

All materials will be available through the new brand centre and online shop, which is being extended to include branded products.

Below: The new U3A branding



Photographic Group

At our latest Zoom meeting we were in festive mood, wearing a variety of hats, jumpers and twinkly fairy lights to review our two projects, Autumn Scenes and Autumn Appetites. As usual there were a variety of members' interpretations as well as a few dug out of archives due to the restrictions in place at the moment. There were some very colourful leaves, trees, Halloween pumpkins as well as wildlife. Janet gave us tips to help us with our December project, Christmas, including lighting, subjects and camera settings.



During the year we work on our individual annual projects which we will review in January. As well as our monthly meetings we have an outing to a local area to take photographs. This month we will meet at Quarry Bank Mill to explore the village of Styal where there are cottages and a chapel built for the mill workers.

Kate Marsham

Gardening Opportunity

For the past year, Poynton Allotments have been working on a project to create a Barrier Free garden for the use of Community Groups. The garden is situated at Poynton Allotments, off Coppice Road (Turn after bridal shop and follow the track around). We are very grateful for generous grants from Poynton Round Table, Waitrose and Rotary and have now built 3 raised beds and a patio area. There is also a 'Chalet' with chairs and a verandah (for sheltering in the event of a passing shower).

Two of the raised beds have been 'adopted' by local community groups. The 3rd raised bed is available for use by a U3A group if there is interest? The bed is a very manageable size (about kitchen table) and is approximately 2-foot high so is ideal for people who cannot bend or have walking difficulties. There is a small car park adjoining the area. It may also suit people who have moved into sheltered housing. Below is a photo of the area and a photo of one of the other beds planted up with enticing fresh veg!



If anyone would be interested in joining such a gardening group, or would like further details, please contact Sandra Batchelor by sending an email to groups@poyntonu3a.org.uk.

Tony Penny

The Spanish Group goes international

The Spanish Group has continued to meet every Monday thanks to Zoom. We have two 30-minute virtual meetings with a coffee break between them. We regularly have 8 to 10 group members in virtual attendance. We have now gone international as one of our members has been joining us from the Canaries and two have been joining us from Catalonia in Spain. Each week we have a grammar exercise to improve our language skills and a translation to improve our vocabulary. Some weeks we each prepare a short presentation in Spanish for the rest of the group either on a current news topic or perhaps an aspect of Spanish or South American culture. Recently we have been playing the “Who am I game”. This involves giving a series of clues about a famous person’s life and the rest of the group try to guess the identity. The emphasis is on having fun whilst learning Spanish and we seem to be succeeding on both counts.

Paul Freeborn

Members’ Contributions

How to get to Poynton

Once upon a time, in the 1950s when everyone we knew was young, Poynton was easy to reach from surrounding areas. There were trains which went from Poynton station at very regular intervals coming from Macclesfield, through Stockport, to Manchester and from Manchester back again, stopping at each station they passed. As many people were not car owners some would cycle or walk, depending on whereabouts they lived, to Poynton, or to Middlewood and Higher Poynton stations, where the track went from Manchester and Stockport to Macclesfield via Bollington in one direction, or Hazel Grove and Davenport in the other.

Once an hour a single-decker bus, the No 32, left Lower Moseley Street, Manchester, travelling via Didsbury, to Cheadle Hulme, Bramhall and to Higher Poynton, before turning round and returning to Manchester. Then there was the No 20, a beautiful red and white double-decker, smokers upstairs where there were long seats with an aisle against the offside windows, which came from Chorlton Street bus station in Manchester along Ardwick Green, Longsight, Levenshulme, Stockport, Hazel Grove, under the railway bridge at The Rising Sun and on to its turning point at Lostock Road, off London Road South, before its return journey. This happened once an hour, and on the half hour between a No 20A, a similar vehicle did the route, turning down Chester Road, Poynton to Woodford church.

A single-decker No 8 bus went from under the arches near to the Plaza steps in Mersey Square, Stockport, coming to Poynton before proceeding to Macclesfield.

Really Poynton was the centre of the world, as we knew it. Hopefully, reader, (can you tell that I am currently re-reading Jane Eyre?) you may remember much more than I can about the transport systems which served the village, and, if so, it would be delightful to hear more details and your memories.

Helen J Stanley

What Season?

A bright, still, crisp morning at the end of November and I get the bus to the Miners Arms. The bus has resumed its timetabled route since Wardsend bridge reopened at the beginning of November. Today I am in search of redwing, an attractive bird similar to a song thrush but, as the name suggests, with a patch of red under the wing. I walk a short distance along the Middlewood Way. Today there are very few birds. As the weather has been exceptionally mild on the continent also maybe redwing are not yet migrating to the UK in search of food.

But my walk home via the cobbled track which leads onto Moggie Lane proves interesting. I stop at the gate next to the oak which was cut down earlier this year. Part of the trunk, about three metres high, was left standing. A nuthatch lands on the clean-cut top, calling loudly, almost as if objecting to the fact that the tree which provided it with a home has gone. The trunk and hedge are swathed in ivy which is covered with white flowers. These attract hoverflies, wasps and other insects, searching for nectar, a late source of food.

I stop at the next gate, and across the field notice movement under a small tree. A jay is repeatedly hopping to and from a low branch to the ground and back again. It must have an acorn cache there.

Approaching Wardsend I hear long-tailed tits. Hoping they will fly in my direction I find a break in the hedge at the side of the road and stand there perfectly still. One comes so close I could touch it, a tiny ball of feathers, pink, grey, black and white, with a long tail. It moves round acrobatically among the twigs, searching for seeds, beetles, flies and other insects, then rejoins the flock which moves on.

Suddenly the song of a solitary bird fills the air-it is a song thrush. Does it think it's spring? The advantage of 'skeleton trees' without leaves is that it is easier to spot birds and this one is perched on a branch near the top of a tall tree. It is in a garden bordering Narrow Lane where I am aiming for. Tucked away and often missed by people walking along this lane is the Book Cupboard. Anyone is welcome to exchange a book as I do today.

Only five minutes from home I choose to follow a quiet path away from the traffic on Dickens Lane. Suddenly there is a commotion in front of me. Two wrens are in aerial combat, possibly two males claiming territorial rights and a section of hedge as a nest site next spring, so early. They have to survive winter before then.

Back home, sitting, enjoying a coffee and writing this piece, I take a good look at the garden through the window. It is hard to believe it will be December next week. There are still flowers on summer flowering plants, geranium, roses, hebe, nasturtium, campanula, hydrangea, marigolds, kaffir lilies and more.

Richard tops up the bird feeders regularly, fat balls, kibbled peanuts and kibbled sunflower seeds but there are noticeably fewer birds around than in recent autumns. Starlings and house sparrows are the most numerous.

If you have bird feeders in your garden, consider yourself very lucky if you see a party of long-tailed tits. It is very entertaining to watch these sociable little birds hanging upside down on feeders doing acrobatics. They won't stay long, as one flies off others follow, twittering as they go.



Long-tailed tits, a watercolour by Viv

Vivienne Arnold

Christmas Contrast

Years ago, I longed for snow
For Christmastide to hurry;
Now I'm old and not so bold
I fear a sudden flurry.
In chill or rain, I'd find a lane
From which to plunder holly;
Now I pop into a shop -
Wrapped up, complete with brolly,
Prepared to pay for berries gay
And yet begrudge the outlay.

I have no love for crackers now
Nor think their mottoes funny.
Oh, to be young, with carols sung
So heartily for money.
To still believe that Christmas Eve
Brought Santa's gifts by magic -
(I had no doubt I'd be left out,
Life couldn't be so tragic).

Back I'd climb into that time
When Christmas meant such pleasure
For now, I find it more a bind
And ruminate at leisure -
On its expense and, using sense,
Cut down on cards and presents
And then, of course, feel deep remorse -
Who sent, last year those pheasants?

I do not go for mistletoe
So, in the hall it's missing,
(Such a lot, is there not
Of colds caught spread by kissing?)
It is the post I dread the most
This 'season of goodwill',
The sadists who succeed to send
Each tax demand and bill.
So, I receive by Christmas Eve
In vile, concerted way -
A batch of mail which cannot fail
To spoil my Christmas Day.

BAH - HUMBUG !

Ian Beverley

Pictures from Our Perambulations

With the onset of cold and wet weather, perambulations have become more limited. However, there is still colour to be found.



Pyracantha with red berries



Sorbus with white berries



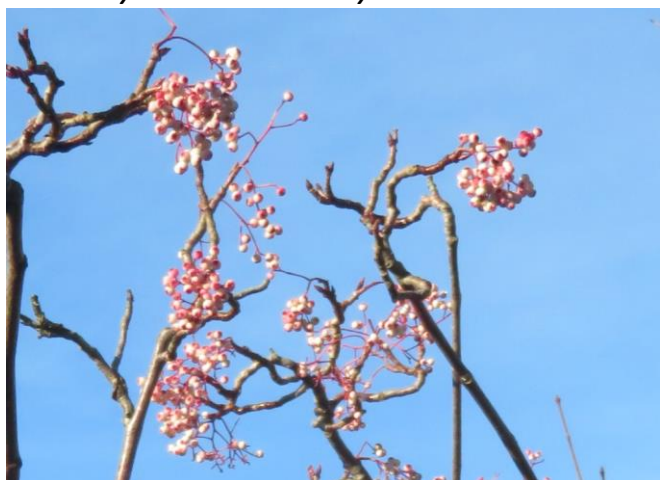
Holly



Pyracantha with yellow berries



Callicarpa (Purple Beautyberry)



Sorbus with pink berries

Plant identification by our Horticultural Correspondent

Human Communication – Part 2 of 3 - Development of Speech

Without language almost all the achievements of the human race which we see around us every day would not and could not exist. Language is one of the very few things which distinguishes us from all other animals. It allows us to communicate with one another in seemingly infinite ways. Human vocal language does not resemble any known form of animal communication in the world. This is because human vocal language evolved as a distinct and autonomous function together with human speech organs and the human brain. As we speak our brain is constantly controlling the necessary changes in the muscles of our face and throat as well as the normal requirements for breathing. It is also maintaining the parts of the inner ear which make us more sensitive to the sound frequencies of the human voice. Damage to any parts of this highly complex and interlocking system can easily limit or even destroy the end result of this process - which is speech.

Some 40,000 years ago there was a tremendous development of creativity in the human race. This was the time of the first cave paintings. Deer had been animals which you set out to hunt and eat and there were other animals which, if you were not careful, hunted you. Now each of these types of animals could appear together on the wall of your cave. They were there but they were not really there. They were symbols of the world outside. They were abstract and creative thinking. And they doubtless stimulated discussion and increased use of language. A fierce animal was anything but fierce on the wall of your cave. Some have related this development to the development of complex language. But 40,000 years ago, our ancestors had spread out from their original home in Africa into what we now know as Asia and Europe. An enormous shift in human language development could not have occurred simultaneously over dispersed populations. So, it is now accepted that the basis of language began to appear perhaps even a million years ago and certainly before our ancestors left Africa. It was then taken by successive groups of those leaving Africa and began to evolve further in different ways in Europe and Asia. Evolution is a very slow process for humans as it moves slowly through generations of some 25 years.

But how did the process begin. Perhaps it is not surprising that Charles Darwin, who had first proposed the notion that all life was descended over time from common ancestors, offered an opinion on this. He suggested that the origins of language are a series of musical sounds in calls to attract mates like the singing of birds. This is common also to certain other primates. Others have suggested that the origins of language lie in the use of our hands, a signalling method developed in hunting where sounds might warn off potential prey. And it is the case that moving one's hands is quite often an unconscious part of speaking. Yet others see the origins in mimicry (onomatopoeia) – bees buzz, a horse neighs, dogs woof, cows moo. At first sight this suggestion seems rather limited as it can't deal with silent things. But hammers are not silent when you use them and the eating of food was almost certainly less delicate than good manners require of it today.

More recently it is suggested that all three of these have together played a part in language. Singing wordlessly, humming and chanting stimulate larger group bonding. A constant noise created with a variety of pitches might well put off unwelcome potential visitors - a predecessor to today's motion sensors and security lighting.

It has been calculated that the world population of humans had probably reached 1,000,000 by 10,000 BC. And they were still for the most part hunter gatherers, although larger groupings were becoming territorial and the concept of farming was appearing. But although these people had a facility for fairly complex language they did not write or read and were therefore prehistoric as they left no written records. There were innumerable languages with very small vocabularies which would merge as the populations merged and as writing began to appear some 5,000 years ago.

David Sewart

Things to Do

Sudoku No 16

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

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

Below is the solution to No 15

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

More quiz questions from Hooaha.

1. In Imperial China, only The Emperor was permitted to wear what colour?
2. What are the colours of the flag of Iceland?
3. Which heavy metal British rock band was formed in Hereford in 1968?
4. Which country in the world has the highest number of citizens with red hair?
5. What are the three secondary colours?

Answers to the quiz in the previous edition

1. What did Leo Baekland invent in 1907?
Leo Baekland invented Bakelite, a plastic resin, in 1907.
2. In Pride and Prejudice what is Mr Darcy's Christian name?
Mr Darcy's Christian name is Fitzwilliam.
3. How was Farrokh Bulsara better known?
Better known as Freddie Mercury, born 4 September 1946 in Zanzibar.
4. Goldeneye was the original name of whose estate in Jamaica?
Ian Fleming the creator of James Bond.
5. Who was the tallest English monarch? *King Edward IV who was six foot four and a half inches tall.*

Town Council Information

Poynton Tip

Tony Penny has pointed us toward the following item which is on the Town Council website.

“Cheshire East Council has begun its consultation on household waste recycling centres. The council currently runs eight household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) for use by residents. The contract for this operation ends in 2023 and Cheshire East are consulting on what should happen at the end of the contract.

All of the scenarios being considered (except for the status quo) would result in the closure of the Poynton site. The Town Council is extremely concerned that closure of the Poynton site would result in reduced levels of recycling, increased fly tipping, and increased car journeys which will be detrimental to air quality.

To have your say, complete the Cheshire East consultation online by using <https://surveys.cheshireeast.gov.uk/s/HWRCReview2020/>

The deadline for completion is 5pm on Monday 4 January 2021.”

The Town Council website has up-to-date information about Poynton on its website - www.poyntontowncouncil.gov.uk and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/poyntontowncouncil/>

Hopefully there will be a time next year, quite when we are not sure, when your groups will be able to gather once more, in reality as opposed to zooming, and Poynton U3A will again have regular meetings in the Civic Hall, and all members can meet as we used to in the past. Meanwhile the Newsletter team and all our contributors wish you the very best restricted Christmas you can have, and a much more social year in 2021.