



Edenbridge U3A –March 2021

Newsletter from your Chairman

Yes it really is a year since we could all meet together - the time has flown! I hope you are all well. There is so much positivity about now with the vaccinations already having an effect on hospitalisations for people of our ages. I don't know about you, but I feel so proud of our scientists and the way they have proved to be world class. The scientists at Cambridge who have identified all the new variants of the coronavirus have shown the rest of the world how to carry out proper scientific investigation.



You may remember that this time last year I had a picture of the two cranes dominating the landscape of Oxted where the old gas holder used to be.

A year on and the development is nearing completion – the building is now serviced by just one crane. Most of the apartments appear to have been sold and Oxted definitely has a new skyline. While we have all

been in lockdown the construction has progressed at pace. Soon the need for the enormous crane will be over and the finishing touches will be made. From the station side you can see some of these already.



So big changes to the centre of Oxted but that is nothing in comparison to the changes that COVID-19 has brought about to our lives. Last month I talked about the new 'normal' – I'm not sure what that will look like anymore. The virus seems to be coming back in many European countries just when the numbers of infections are dropping rapidly in the United Kingdom. So we may be achieving some degree of immunity but, if we want to travel in Europe in the Summer, even with a covid passport, we may find that the infection rate there could be a problem for us. Whether you were for or against Brexit the way the European Union has handled the ordering and the distribution of vaccines has not matched the way our NHS has managed our vaccination programme.

So politics and vaccines aside, where are we with our U3A? It may (and I stress the word 'may') be possible to resume our monthly meetings in July. Many of the group

activities that had to stop because of coronavirus may also be able to re-start after the end of June, but it will be at the group leaders' discretion.

Your committee will be meeting at the beginning of April (by Zoom) to consider all the options within the road map that the government has set out. Let's hope that the downward trend of infections and deaths from Covid continues.

Westerham U3A runs a book group based around travel writers. They are looking to recruit a few new members. If you are interested, please contact Brian Swift for more information. We are so lucky to have this sharing arrangement with our neighbours, Westerham, Knole and Sevenoaks U3A groups.

The 21st March is National Census Day. Be aware that the scammers are already seeing this as an opportunity to get some money from you. The latest one is to email you to say that you have made a mistake with your census return and are liable for a fine. **THIS IS A SCAM** – the government will never ask you for money in this way! Since the last newsletter I have been bombarded with scam emails purporting to be from McAfee and Norton stating that my virus checker is out of date with offers to renew. Some of them look very plausible but others have spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. Remember you can check the source of the sender by hovering your cursor over the sender's email address – you will quickly see that they are not from McAfee or Norton. On one day at the end of February I had six of these scam emails in one day!

So, I hope you ***“Stay Safe, Stay Alert and enjoy that feeling of confidence that the vaccine has brought about”***. I hope we will soon be able to get together again.

Best wishes

Mike

Mike Collins, Chairman (chairman@edenbridgeu3a.co.uk)



PS Soon be time to see the azaleas in flower.