



## Edenbridge u3a Chairman's Newsletter January 2023

Dear members

Christmas has been and gone, the snow has melted and 2022 is over. I wish you all a 'Happy New Year'. I hope it will be a good year for you all. As a country we seemed to be winning the battle against covid and vaccines have proven to give us good immunity against the virus and its variants. What has happened in China shows us that we need to be on our guard against covid at all times. Unfortunately, we can't leave behind all the nasties of 2022 - the struggle of our Ukrainian friends continues and shows us a real-life version of David versus Goliath. The rise in

our energy bills and the increase in our cost of living in general are still very much with us. I will say 'nothing' about all the strikes at the moment!

Our year ended with Tony Harris - alias Dame Nitty Nora - giving us an entertaining afternoon for 87 members on the history of the pantomime which was accompanied by savoury treats washed down with mulled wine and finished off with Irish Coffee. I have to admit that the knowledge he imparted that afternoon had a considerable effect on the way I watched the local pantomime, Aladdin, at Chequers Mead with our three grandchildren. Thank you, Tony, for explaining the code of the pantomime.

On a different note, we did have a brief spell of Winter – not quite lasting until Christmas Day! Now we are back to very mild conditions. Will our daffodils be in flower before the end of January? Global warming is rapidly becoming a very real issue - just look at the situation in the Alps and Pyrenees where you have to find a resort over 2000 metres above sea level to find snow, and even then, the snow is machine made!



Back in our garden a wallflower plant is in flower - normally a May flower! - and the catkin buds are close to bursting AND this is the first week in January! Bring back the real Winters.

I remember the golf course at Limpsfield in

the 1970s being closed from the beginning of January to the end of March as it was covered in snow and the ground was frozen!

Most of us are from an era of news watchers. Do you have a favourite?

Beth Rigby, Tom Bradby, Julie Etchingham, Clive Myrie, or Sophie

Rayworth to mention a few? Whatever your choice many of you will remember Nicholas Owen, a newsreader for ITV Lunchtime News for many years. He is our guest speaker for this month. Many years ago, he started his journalism career as a reporter for the Surrey Mirror. What followed was a succession of different roles including some time at the BBC as well as ITV. I am sure we are in for an interesting afternoon on the 25 January.



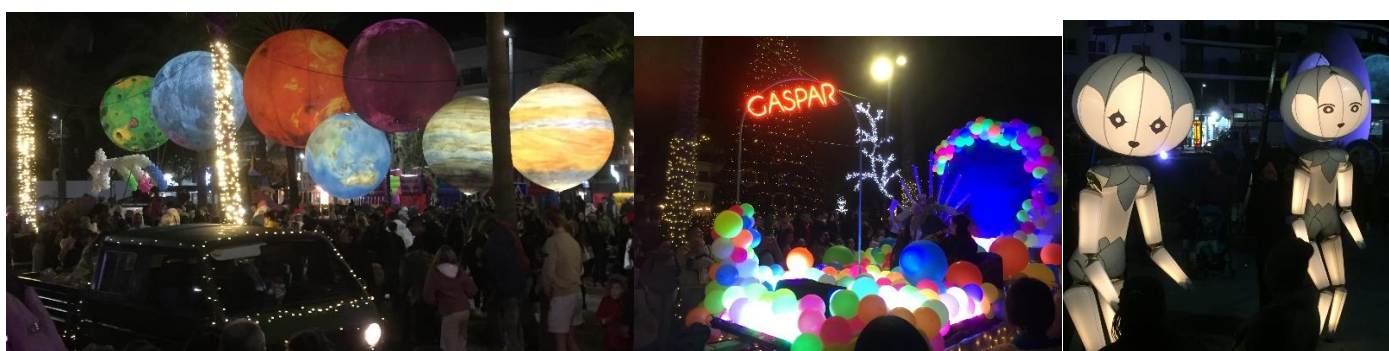
### ***Your u3a Edenbridge Committee for 2023:***

As you may be aware we are always asking you for volunteers to help run the Edenbridge u3a by becoming a member of the committee. This year we will be losing more committee members as they reach the end of their term of office – all are voluntary, none are paid, but without them our u3a group just wouldn't exist. This is our current committee:

Chairman	Already extended his term of office
Vice Chairman	Position vacant
Treasurer – Peter Welch	Ends his term of office in 2022/23
Website manager – Sue Farrell	Ends her term of office in June 2023
u3a Business Manager – Colin Fairman	Extended his term of office
Membership Secretary – Estelle Barling	Ends her term of office June 2023
Groups Manager – Brian Swift	Extended his term of office
New member support – Maggie Buckingham	Started her term of office in 2022
Speaker Manager – Maureen Young	Started her term of office in 2022
Minuting Secretary – Christine Prickett	Starting January 2023
PR and Social secretary	Position Vacant

Nobody wants to see our u3a group close but unless we can have a committee for the future that is what will happen. Please consider becoming a committee member!

Finally - I am writing this newsletter on the 6 January. It is like having Christmas all over again as I am in Spain and last night witnessed the *Fiesta de los Reyes*, the annual 3 kings festival. Traditionally this is the night before the children get their Christmas presents and is celebrated by families going to watch a carnival procession including the 3 wise men who throw sweets to the crowds lining the procession route. The children come prepared with empty bags to collect the sweets. After the fiesta the families go home, and the children put out their clean shoes ready to be filled with the Kings Day presents. Photos below taken of the procession and crowds in Ibiza on 05.01.2023.



The 3 wise men (or effigies of them) represent Melchior (from Arabia) Balthazar (from Africa and Caspar (from the Orient) who travelled to Bethlehem to bring gifts to baby Jesus. Despite all the hype about Father Christmas in the rest of Europe most Spanish children still believe that the *Fiesta de los Reyes* is their real Christmas.

That's all folks. Stay safe and stay healthy. See you at Crockham Hill Hall at 2pm on the 25<sup>th</sup>

*Mike Collins*

Chairman

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