



Editor's update



Well, here we are into the final newsletter for 2021 and I think we will all be glad to move into 2022. Many thanks to all members for their support and positive feedback and hope 2022 will bring some further brightness. I expect many of you will be attending far too many Christmas lunches so perhaps in January we need to talk about weight management!! Talking about Christmas lunches I

remember the very first one I was doing for my in laws and as we had a tiny kitchen and a small oven rather than cook a huge turkey for the 4 of us, I thought I would try cooking pheasant. So, I bought 2 from our local butcher and although a bit nervous about doing the whole Christmas thing served them with pride and remember the look on their faces, they had not expected pheasant!! Needless to say, it did not go down particularly well with them! As we cleared the remains from the table, I escaped to the kitchen and berated my husband, I then burst into tears which was definitely not like me. One of the early signs of pregnancy is bursting into tears at random moments and guess what several months later our first child was born! May I wish you and yours a safe and Happy Christmas and no cooking disasters!



December monthly meeting

We had a really interesting talk for our December monthly meeting, when June Howlett, Road Safety Officer, Transport for Bucks talked to us about driving as we get older. There was interest in the Driving assessment, whereby an assessor comes to your home, and after a brief chat, you get taken out for a drive on your familiar roads. They will then give you individual feedback to improve your driving and confidence. Cost is £37 – see link below.

We also learned about the E-learning module, which is free. It identifies areas where our driving changes, and where the most accidents are likely to happen. See link below. <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/road-safety/support-for-older-drivers>



We also heard a superb performance from our very own **ukulele** group – watch it on our website!

<https://chalfontsu3a.org.uk/25035-2/#december2021mm>

– You will need a password to access the area which is currently %\$C4T\$%

Next monthly meeting

Members who joined our monthly meeting on Zoom had concerns that they couldn't hear questions to the speaker from the people in the hall. Our technical team are working to resolve this issue, and we hope to have a solution in place for our next meeting which is on **Wednesday 12 January 2022 at 2pm**. For those members who receive this newsletter by post please contact me on the telephone number you have been given to confirm if you wish to attend. We will hear some fascinating stories of life at sea from a solo yachtsman as he traversed the oceans. A graphic that he uses from the Zen Dog has been added!



Message from Groups Co-ordinator -Lesley Bedford A big thank you to all group convenors who continue to do such a brilliant job. We had another very successful coffee morning at the Greyhound Inn in Chalfont St Peter where it was lovely to see old faces and some of our new members. There has been interest in a knitting group, all levels of ability welcome so if you are interested in joining this group, please let me know and I will ensure you are included.

Big thanks to John Bradley for continuing to keep us posted on the Tai Chi group run by the Chiltern U3A. I am pleased to say that we are close to starting our own in person Tai Chi group in January and anyone interested in this please let me know.

We are keen to start another Pilates group to add to the three already running and anyone interested again please let me know. groupcoordinator@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

Let's hope we can all have a very happy, enjoyable, and safe Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

Excursions "Behind the Seams"

So popular were the trips to DSI, the company in Croydon who make dresses and costumes for **Strictly Come Dancing**, that we did two excursions. What a wonderful experience – we learned how the designs only come through on a Tuesday or Wednesday and by Friday morning the dresses must be back with the BBC for rehearsals and final adjustments! Each stone, tassels and embellishment are applied by hand and all materials are specially dyed to DSI specifications with suppliers from all over the world except China. And to make it all more special we could even "try on" the dresses!



Barbara Brady modelling one of the fabulous dresses. Some amazing shoes! Try walking in those, and two photos of Carol who showed us around DSI demonstrating how the beads are attached to the dresses.....



Blenheim Palace Christmas Event



Unfortunately, due to bad weather on the 7 December the Light Trail, Christmas market and rides were cancelled at the last minute by Blenheim Palace. In fact, we were on the coach at Beaconsfield before the information came through! But “never mind we said – let’s go anyway” and with our pre-

booked tickets we were able to enjoy the “Story of the Nutcracker” exhibition in the Palace which didn’t disappoint. And of course, the cafes and shop were open so we could finish the afternoon with a cup of tea and a chat. Thankfully, Blenheim will **be refunding the cost of the Light Trail tickets.**

Val and Tricia – Excursion convenors

Beginners Spanish



“The group goes from strength to strength recently welcoming new members and our Spanish is improving, albeit slowly” says convenor Ivor Spector. “To celebrate we treated ourselves to a wonderful dinner at the Spanish restaurant Pluma in Old Amersham” and ordered the tapas in impeccable Spanish! It’s onwards and upwards for 2022”.

Feliz Navidad a todos!

The Cribbage Group has been inactive due to Covid and lack of numbers. It is hoped to re-start in the New Year. so If you are interested in playing or learning to play Cribbage, please contact **David.Burbidge. cribbage@chalfontsu3a.org.uk**



Cryptic Crosswords

Convenor Bob Leven has sent these cryptic conundrums for you to attempt

Hooter goes at the end of great championship game (5,4) -- -- -- -- --/ B -- -- --

Accommodation for one who’s collared? (8) V-- -- -- -- -- -- --

Handles fruit? (6) -- -- -- -- P -- --

Answers at end of newsletter. (No peeping!)



TaiChi update from John Bradley

As mentioned by Lesley Bedford we are close to being able to start our own group.

Meantime the Chiltern u3a TaiChi Group has restarted face to face at the new Leisure Centre, Chiltern Avenue, Amersham. Some Chalfont members have now joined Chiltern U3A and are enjoying the weekly meetings – Tuesday at 12 noon.

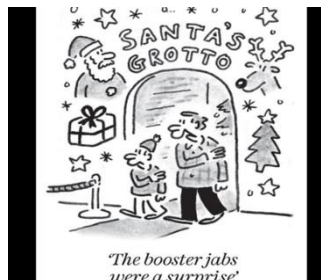


Now over to our Members' Musings ...



Well, I remember one Christmas Eve while in London I saw a busker with a dog. The dog was playing the trumpet. I was amazed. The busker told me he had trained him to play on the tube and he was a very quick learner. He went from Barking to Tooting in 15 minutes! **Derek Russell**

There was an extraordinarily rich man who was extremely ill, and he said to his wife when I die, I want all my wealth put into my coffin with me.' Of course,, she agreed. Well, he did die, and the wife's friends said to her 'did you do as he requested?'. Yes of course I did she said, 'I wrote a cheque'!! **Yvonne Jarman**



The above caption came from the Daily Telegraph and was sent in by **Lin Rowland**.



These last 4 Christmas jokes came from crackers!

Q. What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?
A. Tinsillitis!



Q. What did the stamp say to the Christmas card?
A. Stick with me and we'll go places!



Q. Why is it getting harder to buy Advent calendars?
A. Because their days are numbered!



Q. How did Mary and Joseph know that Jesus was 7lb 6oz when he was born?
A. They had a weigh in a manager!

Christmas Day- anon

Joe and Marie always remembered Christmas Day with joy. They had, along with their children, a day full of well-established family traditions. The children would bring their stockings into bed with them and open each present, one by one. It was such fun seeing the looks on their faces as they delved deeply into the stockings to see what would come out next. It didn't matter if some of the items were predictable like toothbrushes, soap, and flannels. There was always the odd surprise, even a chocolate orange, their favourite. And woe betides Father Christmas if there wasn't a satsuma in the toe of the stocking.

They would have a light breakfast, perhaps something a little special like a boiled egg and then off to church for the family service. Joe and Marie always let the children open just one present before they went to church. The reason for this was that one year the vicar had walked down the aisle asking the children what Father Christmas had brought them. It was embarrassing for Joe and Marie's children to have nothing to show. So, after that, they could open just one present. Then they could proudly show the vicar.

After church, they would walk home, and Joe would make coffee and open the special Christmas biscuits. Meanwhile Marie would organise the distribution of the presents from under the tree, the children putting them in piles in front of everyone. There was always the odd occasion when a label had fallen off and Marie would have to squeeze and shake a present before it was added to the right pile.

Then the fun would start, the grand opening of the presents. The whoops of delight, the odd disappointment when something wasn't quite the right size, and the sheer satisfaction of the children getting just what they'd hoped. Marie would be madly writing down a list to make sure that the right relative was thanked, and Joe would fight a losing battle trying to collect all the wrapping into a large bin bag. It always ended too quickly, but the excitement would settle for a time until the Christmas meal was served.

The next tradition was the Christmas walk, but before that there was the fairy castle. The fairy castle stood proudly on the sideboard, looking resplendent with its cotton wool snow and its closed, cardboard portcullis at the front. The oldest child would carefully open the portcullis to sadly reveal an empty box.

"Never mind there is always next year," Joe and Marie would say in unison.

The family would then prepare themselves for the traditional walk, whatever the weather. They would don warm clothes and usually wellington boots. It tended to be muddy at this time of year, so best be prepared. Every year, after a minute or two of the walk, Joe would realise that he had forgotten his gloves and have to go back to the house. When they returned from the walk, the portcullis on the fairy castle was strangely closed. Perhaps the fairies had been after all. Then the youngest child would open the portcullis and mysteriously there would be small presents inside. Sometimes even tickets for the pantomime.

They would get home as dusk fell. Joe and Marie would have a warming cup of tea, while the children played with their new presents.

Not long afterwards, once it was dark and the candles lit, the meal would be served. Crackers would be pulled; jokes would be told and the brussel sprouts would be pushed to the side of the children's plates.

Eventually the well-fed and happy children would go to bed. Marie and Joe would watch 'It's a Wonderful Life' cuddled up together on the sofa. Marie would often have a glass of sherry, quite possibly her first and last for the year. Joe would indulge in his rare treat, a gin mixed with two parts vermouth.

This year everything was different.

It was the first time they had been alone at Christmas.

The previous January, they had 'downsized' to a smaller house. At the same time, their old dog had suddenly died. They thought about replacing him, but there was so much to do with the new house, they were just too busy. Their only son had moved to live in Australia. They missed the grandchildren enormously. The four-year-old was enjoying his nursery school and the seven-year-old had settled in well to her new school in the suburbs of Sydney. They had all spoken on WhatsApp late on Christmas Eve. It was early morning over there, so at least they could wish them a merry Christmas at the right time.

Their daughter and her family had taken a last-minute flight to Sharm El Sheikh. They couldn't begrudge them a break in the sun as they had worked hard all year.

So, it was just the two of them.

They broke with tradition by going to the midnight service at the church in the village. It was quite well done they thought. Very atmospheric and the choir sang well, but it wasn't quite the same as the family service.

It meant on Christmas morning they had no reason to get out of the house like they used to do. They thought about a walk, but it looked chilly, and they weren't quite in the mood. They hadn't even brought the fairy castle down from the loft. They had a couple of drinks, opened a present each and sat down for their Christmas lunch at about one-o'clock. There was no point in waiting until it was dark. With just the two of them, they could have the small crown roast at any time.

After lunch, Joe opened a bottle of port and was about to pour himself a glass when the doorbell rang.

"Strange, on Christmas Day," said Marie, hardly moving.

"I'll go," said Joe and he made his way slowly to the front door.

When he opened the door, it was a revelation. He couldn't believe who was there.

The seven year old raced into the house and ran around exploring every room with gusto. The four year old toddled in more slowly and took his time looking with interest at the wrapping paper still on the floor. They even had their own meals. It was perfect.

The lady from the Rescue Trust said it was very unprecedented to deliver on Christmas Day, but their children had organised the vetting. As they had a dog before, the manager had approved. The seven year old was a border collie; intelligent, lively, and content with one good walk a day. The four year old was a mixture of everything; loveable, alert and always ready for a cuddle.

Joe and Marie soon put on their wellingtons.

It was the best Christmas walk they had ever had.



Finally, a real-life tail to put a smile on your face from Tony Micallef.

There was a helpful, enthusiastic Birdwatcher that liked to deliver newsletters, raffle tickets etc. for charities. Having just one letter left to deliver and after a very wet morning, the sun was shining and so it was a great idea to have a walk to deliver this one remaining item. This seemed an ideal opportunity for his lovely wife to join him, rather than staying cooped up indoors all day.

They trundled along the Lower Road, to find the house in GX. They thought at first the house was in Rouse Court as the address read 4, Lower Road, Chalfont St. Peter, Gerrards Cross, SL9 0AB. The conundrum being 4, Lower Road, CSP did not exist, and the post code should be SL9 9AB. A bright idea, check it out on Google Maps. Google has to be right, and sure as eggs are eggs, the cursor appears near Rouse Court. They get to Rouse Court, which has 4 houses numbered 1 thru 4 and they all have names, but not one matches the name on the envelope. So, they retrace their footsteps, and for sure, in the belief that they had got it right from Google they had walked past the target house and placed the envelope in the black mailbox by the dark, high gates next to the footpath.

Now the adventure begins! Tony has the bright idea of walking home via Chalfont Park. Like any good birdwatcher he had packed his binoculars in his backpack. Imelda doesn't think it is a good idea as it would probably be very muddy after the rain! Tony responds at least we can walk to the bridge. So, off they go. walking past Castlemans Farm. They get to the bridge and over Tony goes. Here he is looking for the Grey Wagtail, and as luck happens, he spots it flit from the nearside to the far side bank. Wagging its tail as it lands. Then suddenly it and its mate fly off. Tony heads back to Imelda who was still at the bridge and tells her it is that muddy and the ground is covered by a thick layer of leaves. So off they go.

When they got to a clearing on the bank Tony moves to the bank to get a better look. Now he cannot quite see what he is looking for, so forgetting where he is, he moves a couple of steps closer. A big mistake!! One step, two steps and wow!!! No land only water, and he fall straight in. Fortunately, no harm done except to his pride. He is soaked through, and somehow managed to avoid dunking his head in the water. He quickly gets to his feet and Imelda gives him a help out of the river, as it is about knee deep, and there is a sheer side to the bank. Surprisingly, the water doesn't feel cold, but now he has soggy walk home. He could feel the water in his shoes but did not take them off for fear of not getting them on again. It did get a little cooler as they got closer to home, but it was a back door entry for Tony, and a hot shower.

A little later Claire arrives home, and asks dad why he was in his pyjamas? Tony replies nonchalantly, "I fell in the lake at Chalfont Park." A slight pause and then fits of laughter. Well as Tony always says, "he is only here, because he makes people laugh!" Looks like the only casualty is my mobile phone! It was due to be replaced, in a couple of months. So, can I survive without a mobile? Landline calls for the moment!

Answers to Cryptic Conundrums



SUPER BOWL
VICARAGE
PAW PAW

