

2021 President's Report

It is my privilege, and also obligation, to present the President's Report for 2020 to the membership. At the AGM one year ago we had no idea of the mayhem and heartache that Covid 19 would wreak around the globe. As a small nation of 5 million, surrounded by water, we have been exceptionally lucky in being able to act early and control the spread and consequent deaths related to this virus. Many of us, including myself, have been worried about distant friends and relatives in and around the USA and Europe, whilst becoming almost apologetic over our current covid free state. A friend's son, visiting from Washington DC at Christmas, said that it was like walking around unmasked in Utopia after the wearing a mask for a year, isolating at home, online schooling his children and being constant fear of his family succumbing to the deadly virus.

The virus has affected our organisation's programme in 2020. Lockdown saw the cessation of interest groups and also the monthly meetings in April, May and June. Because of the uncertainty from covid 19 the committee decisions to cancel social events mid year and to shorten Christmas celebrations. Under Level 2 lockdown many interest groups resumed meetings, albeit outside of South Library, which reopened in Level 1. It was a difficult time for us all.

Last year, in addition to monthly meetings, we had 16 interest groups operating. There were four study groups, two of which operated twice a month for half a year. Last year all groups sustained their membership and completed the course. As a result of committee evaluation of the half year option, we decided that this year we will offer four study groups, each group meeting once a month, for the whole year. Organised visits to places of interest were also offered each month last year and it is hoped that a member will offer to continue to organise these interesting events.

We continue our active membership of an ever expanding Canterbury Network. In 2020 the network had 17 affiliated branches of U3A and supported the formation of a new U3A at Darfield(Malvern). South West U3A at Halswell, originally sponsored by Port Hills U3A, continues to grow in numbers and is very active. Port Hills has a current membership of 170, and has continued to see a steady increase in numbers despite Covid. The Canterbury Network Curious Minds Seminar in May was cancelled due to Covid, but hopefully 2021 will see a resumption of this interesting event.

At the time of writing this report, it saddens me that we have no prospective president for 2021. Many people, when they retire from the workforce, also retire from giving service to organisations. To those people I would say please consider whether you should be joining U3A. We are dependent on our membership supporting the organisation by taking an active role at some stage during their involvement with us. Vivienne Boyd and I have both come to

the end of a three year tenure as secretary and president and retain an optimistic that one of our members will step up today to fulfil the role of president. Unless this happens, Port Hills U3A will be no more, despite the commitment and enthusiasm of early founding and current members here today.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of the current committee, especially Vivienne who keeps me focused and sane and Graeme Ell, our treasurer, who consistently manages the accounts and membership. Also a vote of thanks go to all the members who co-ordinate the interest groups. Without your input, the group could not function.

I wish you all well for a prosperous and uneventful 2021

Thank you for listening and I move that this report be accepted.

Wendy Gallagher President