

The background of the cover is a photograph of a brick wall on the left, a weathered wooden post in the center, and a patch of green grass with several white snowdrop flowers in the foreground. The text is overlaid on this image.

Senior

Moments

The Newsletter of the Bookham & District

University of the Third Age

Issue 69

February

2021

If you want to get involved in Zoom there are full step by step instructions from Chris Middleton on the website, here are the first two pages

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zoom Installation Instructions

Before starting it is advisable to check that you have an Operating System version equal or later than shown opposite; go to 'Settings' from the bottom LHS Start Button, then 'System', then 'About'. No damage will be done by just looking into Settings.

Windows 10 users should have the latest version because of Microsoft's automatic monthly updating. Other Operating Systems may not be automatically updated.

System requirements

- An internet connection – broadband wired or wireless (3G or 4G/LTE)
- Speakers and a microphone – built-in or USB plug-in or wireless Bluetooth
- A webcam or HD webcam - built-in or USB plug-in
- Or, a HD cam or HD camcorder with video capture card

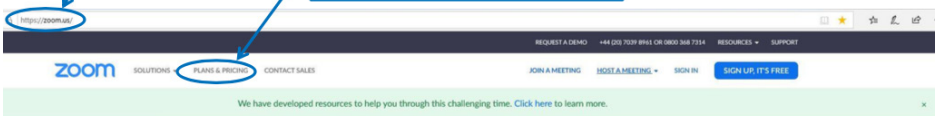
Supported operating systems

- macOS X with macOS 10.7 or later
- Windows 10
Note: For devices running Windows 10, they must run Windows 10 Home, Pro, or Enterprise. S Mode is not supported.
- Windows 8 or 8.1
- Windows 7
- Windows Vista with SP1 or later
- Windows XP with SP3 or later
- Ubuntu 12.04 or higher
- Mint 17.1 or higher
- Red Hat Enterprise Linux 6.4 or higher
- Oracle Linux 6.4 or higher
- CentOS 6.4 or higher
- Fedora 21 or higher

2

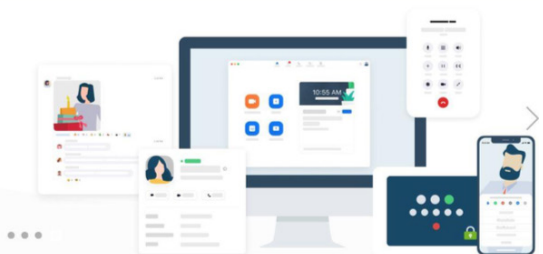
Use Google to find <https://zoom.us> and click on the Plans & Pricing tab.

This will take you to instruction 3.



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Chris Middleton



Bookham and District U3A

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Yet another Senior Moments is being published during lockdown but how long will this continue? While none of us can be sure of how long our freedom and movements will be restricted it is most encouraging to see how resourceful members can be in keeping up with U3A activities.

Our monthly meetings are going to be changed to two a month. That really is good news and as long as I can remember to switch on the link at the appropriate time I am sure I shall enjoy many of them. There are interesting contributions in articles from members in this issue that I hope everyone will enjoy reading.

Chris Middleton's Science and Technology group, also on Zoom, gave very fascinating information on the very important vaccines that will hopefully release us all from the present restrictive situation

One of the minor delights of cold, often drab February is the appearance of snowdrops and I have just learnt recently they are also called Candlemas Bells because they come out early in the month and the feast of Candlemas is 2nd February. The need for contributions for articles from members for Senior Moments has increased considerably during the extended lockdown because there is now much less opportunity to fill gaps and spaces with relevant photographs and while the work of David Middleton, in particular, is very much appreciated I think even his collection of recent photographs of our activities is dwindling. We have the stalwart regular contributions from Anita Laycock including her regular gardening piece. Also Judith Whitter's articles are very much appreciated but there must be others with something to say of interest to members. If you only have an outline of an idea I am very willing to help you convert this into a published article so I shall look forward to receiving your suggestions.

Maurice Baker

Cover photo: snowdrops also called Candlemas bells at St Mary's church West Horsley

Chairman's Report

Dear fellow members,

Firstly, a Happy New Year and a sincere wish that 2021 will be better than its predecessor. As I write this introduction Covid19 cases across the country are continuing to rise, but by the time you read it, the peak should have passed. The vaccines have been approved and are being distributed, and I hope that we will all take up the opportunity to receive the jabs as soon as our age groups are called forward.

By now I should have handed over to Chris Middleton as your Chairman, but we have delayed the Annual General Meeting for a few months due to the prevailing conditions. Thank you for supporting the proposals to amend our procedures for this year; it will allow us to hold a virtual AGM and we will let you know the details as soon as they are finalised.

Looking back, it has been a remarkable time to be involved with our U3A. I started with the Silver Anniversary celebration – which was a great success and brought so many of us together during the day and at the evening's party in the Old Barn Hall. And the final year has been almost the complete opposite, with social distancing and no monthly meetings for us to meet and socialise together. Thankfully we have embraced technology and Zoom has allowed us to meet virtually, both for interest groups and for our programme of monthly speakers.

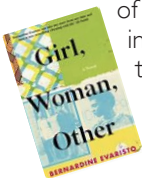
The variety of talks has been excellent and we will be increasing the number of events over the next few months. This has only been achieved by the hard work of our committee members. They have all worked tirelessly to keep our U3A active and to keep you all informed and involved. I hope you appreciate everything they have achieved.

I wish you well, keep safe and keep in contact with your family and friends. Looking forward to seeing you all again – in person - as soon as we can. Best wishes



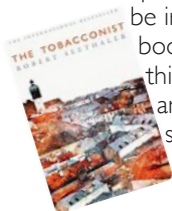
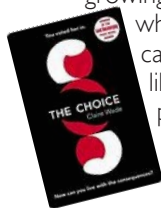
Book Group 2

2020 started normally for Book Group 2 with a January meal at the Onslow Arms, but after the next two monthly meetings of course Covid stopped us meeting in each others' homes. We rapidly had to learn how to use Zoom for virtual meetings for the rest of the year, apart from September when it was a treat for 5 of us to meet in Janet's garden. Some months we each discussed a book we had read, but mostly we continued to read a set of books, whether printed



Book Title	Author	Style	Content	Good Read	Range
Girl, Woman, Other	Bernadine Evaristo	6. 9	7. 3	7	2-10
White Teeth	Zadie Smith	7. 9	8	7. 8	4-9
The Choice	Claire Wade	2. 8	2. 8	2. 3	0-7
A Rising Man	Abir Mukherjee	6. 4	6. 4	6. 6	6-8
Wakenhyrst	Michelle Paver	7	7. 3	7. 3	5-9
My Brilliant Friend	Elena Ferrante	7	8	8	6-9
The Casual Vacancy	J. K. Rowling	7	6. 3	6. 8	3-9
The Tobacconist	Robert Seethaler	6. 9	7. 6	7	4-9

copies or e-books. The library was able to take orders for sets of books again from September, which made it easier. This is how we voted on the group books: The most popular book this year was My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante, a translated Italian novel about the relationship between two girls growing up in 1950s Naples, in a district where expectations were low and casual violence was the norm. We liked it for the atmosphere and the portrayal of the two main characters rather than the plot. It was more like a string of situations and ended with a cliff-hanger as it was the first of a quartet of novels. Sometimes it can be irritating to find that the end of a book is left open for a sequel but in this case it felt appropriate as part of an ongoing intense friendship with shifts in dominance, admiration, jealousy and rivalry. Some of



us were keen to read the sequel. The book with the widest range of votes was Girl, Woman, Other by Bernadine Evaristo. This was a Booker prizewinning novel about twelve inter-connected women who had a variety of roots in black culture, and a variety of sexual and gender issues. It made some of us feel 'old and out of touch' with such aspects of modern Britain but most of us found the interweaving of the stories very clever. We liked the great variety in the ages,



backgrounds and views of the characters and the way you saw them change their opinions in reaction to their experiences. Without spelling it out, this book certainly demonstrated that people who look similar because of their racial



background can be very different from each other. An easier read was J.K. Rowling's Casual Vacancy. There was a lot of humour in this account of an election to replace a parish councillor but as it covered numerous social issues, such as domestic abuse, bullying, self-harm and drug addiction, some people marked it down saying it was 'like a soap opera'. As we all take it in turns to choose a book we usually have a good variety each year. We are looking forward to when we can discuss our choices in person again in 2021. We have room for one more member so if you are interested in joining us at 2.30 pm on the second Thursday of each month please contact me for more information.

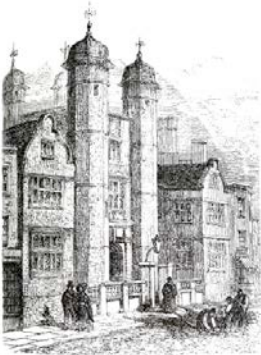


Anne Eagle



Riot and Disorder in Guildford

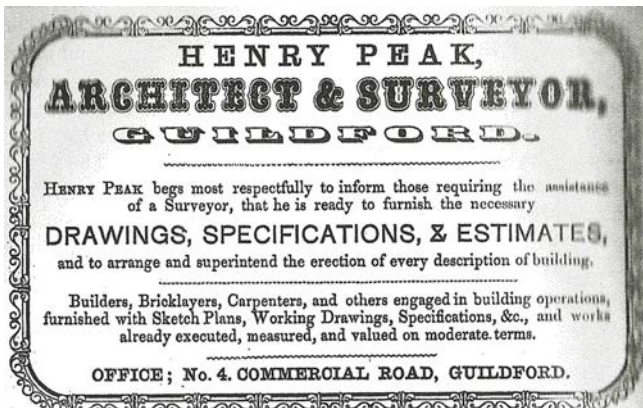
During lockdown I decided to delve more deeply into the riotous behaviour of various gangs from Guildford during the 19th century. The Fifth of November has been celebrated with bonfires, fireworks and effigies of Guy Fawkes in ways that can be both lively and weird. Of all the celebrations that have taken place over the last four centuries, however, those in Victorian Guildford must rank amongst the strangest. Henry Peak came to live in Guildford in 1851. Aged 19 he had left his parents in London to pursue



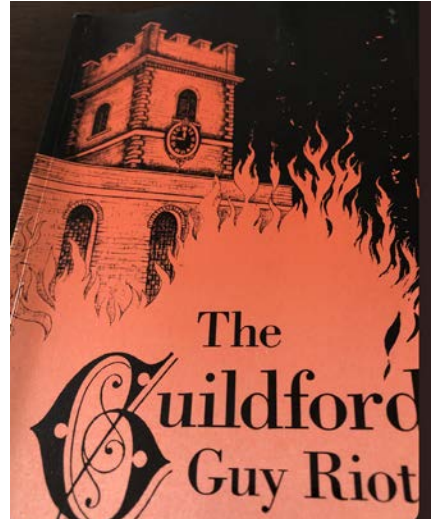
Abbot's Hospital Guildford

a career as an architect and surveyor. We are extremely lucky that in later life he wrote his Diaries and he gives a vivid account of what he saw after he left his office to return to his lodgings. He left the Portsmouth Road and upon

crossing the bridge was surprised to see in the distance at the steps in the roadway opposite Holy Trinity Church that a great fire was burning, brilliantly lighting up all around and the whole town was as if in a state of siege. Every shop window not protected with shutters, and other exposed glass on the ground floor was boarded up, and wet straw and manure heaped to prevent the



penetration of fireworks. These were formidable and dangerous being immense squibs 12 or 15 inches in length and 1½ and 2 inches in diameter. They were loaded mainly with gunpowder and heavily



rammed; their force of explosion when discharged was tremendous. He saw several attain a great height and some entered the upper windows of the houses. There was danger to life and limb and also of fire to the buildings. Henry Peak had letters to post, but curiosity drew him closer towards the fire where a lawless crowd had gathered. The chiefs were dressed in various costumes and were members of the 'Guy's Society'

an organised body defying the police and officials of the town. The Guy's gave orders to the mob by means of a horn when the Guys and their followers would go forth and plunder then return laden with pales



of fences, gates, doors and anything else they could find to cast upon the fire with shouting and noisy demonstrations. This had all the hallmarks of a protest, but it was in fact how Guildfordians celebrated Bonfire Night. For many this was the most exciting part of the year. One regular



P. C. Davis

participant was John Mason a local born and brought up in Guildford as were his father and grandfather. Along with other local boys he had spent the autumn evenings of his childhood making squibs in the cellar of a house in Mount Street. They clubbed together to purchase gunpowder from the gunpowder works at

Chilworth. This extraordinary

behaviour was handed down from father to son. He inherited his father's carpentry business and the responsibility of barricading vulnerable properties on the Fifth and removing the protection the following day! Some gangs came from Aldershot camp and at the White Lion pub and elsewhere every man had a bag with his disguise and a supply of fireworks tucked up his blouse. Nobody knew which way they would come until they heard the deep throated war cry of "Phill-a-loo Muster!" After only a few minutes the fire in front of Holy Trinity church was lit and the church stood out in bright red. The front of Abbott's hospital

glittered with the reflection from the open casement windows where the inmates peered out from a safe distance. Boys climbed the stone balustrade and twined their bodies round the iron arch over the entrance gate. The churchyard was a sanctuary by common consent for women and children and hardly a squib or cracker went in that direction. Not everyone shared their enthusiasm and the *Sussex Advertiser* wrote a scathing review criticising the event. The

authorities only had three policemen under their command and given the strong support

for the bonfire it was difficult to decide the best course of action. It was only after a few more decades did this annual unruly disorder gradually die out.

Anita Laycock



Holy Trinity Church



Science & Technology on Zoom

Our Science & Technology 2 interest group would like to think they were the first off the starting grid, or at least very near the first, in transferring to Zoom based monthly meetings once COVID-19 started to impact our lives. We tried to dovetail our Powerpoint based presentations, each researched by one of the group members, into the 40-minute session time available in basic Zoom. However often we rolled across into another



40-minute session. At the end of March 2020 the group took its first steps by sharing a presentation on what lies below the North Sea,

other than fish and submarines. They looked at how the pioneer oil companies in the 1970s have moved away to be largely replaced by a multitude of lesser known companies operating nearly 300 offshore oil and gas production facilities in the UK sector and 85 such facilities in the Norwegian sector. They looked at the different fixed, floating and subsea facilities and how they are interconnected by pipelines for collecting and exporting product back to shore. Then attention moved to the more recent development of wind power which is currently concentrated in the southern North Sea and to the east of the Firth of Forth. Finally, we were interested to learn about the numerous electricity interconnectors between the UK and continental Europe and the more recent emergence of internet specific cabling connecting us to the world via the sea. Next we looked to the Moon and were reminded of the intensely competitive race between the USSR's Luna program and the USA's Ranger and Apollo missions culminating in the moon landings between 1969 and

1972. There were no moon shots from 1977 until 1990 after which Japan, China, Israel, India and the European Space Agency followed the USA in various lunar missions exploring the moon's surface with a possible



view to another period of manned missions. Japan mapped the entire lunar surface in 2007. Both the USA and

India confirmed the presence of water ice in the lunar south pole area. Israel has the unfortunate title of being the moon's first major polluter as its Beresheet mission crashed into the moon releasing water bears (tardigrades up to 1.5mm long). China has been steadily increasing its space capability in parallel with these developments, so that in 2003 it became only the third nation to launch a human into space. Since then it has been performing numerous test missions with the goal of creating a manned space station. Finally, we looked at the USA's renewed interest in returning to manned moon landings under its Artemis program with the use of commercial rocket propulsion pioneered



by funding from the likes of Jeff Bezos (Amazon) and Elon Musk (Tesla). Later in the summer we 'dug' into fungi and found out how vital they are to our lives. Moulds, yeasts and mushrooms are the mainstay of this part of the natural world. Without fungi we wouldn't have wine, beer, yoghurt, antibiotics, fertilisers and much more. Fungal spore germination develops mycelium which are vital in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems for their role in the decomposition of plant material. Mycelium blocks are light, strong and able to float so that they



are seeing uses particularly in insulation, sound proofing and packaging. Mycelium bricks are creating new architectural possibilities, whilst you can now have mycelium 'leather' shoes and clothes. So interesting are mycelia that it has inspired one Group member to research the role of mycelium in engineering, which no doubt he will present to us in due course. More recently we learnt about the hydrogen economy and how many technologists believe it should complement and moderate society's current obsession with renewable sources of electricity, as it could be a catalyst for decarbonising the UK energy systems. Fuel cell technology has already shown advantages over



batteries with faster refuelling times and greater efficiency in buses, trains and ferries. Using existing gas

infrastructure, hydrogen could provide a safe and reliable source of energy for heating, lighting and appliances, where retrofit for electrification could prove costly. However, hydrogen adoption requires increasing demand to bring costs lower in parallel with appropriate infrastructure to get it from source to the end user. There is a glimmer of hope that government policy is changing to better balance renewables with hydrogen usage, but as we know, the government has had other concerns on its plate; yes, the COVID-19 pandemic and all its health and economic consequences for individuals and society. So it was no surprise that the best attended presentation in 2020 covered developments in COVID-19 vaccines. No doubt by the time you read this article, the situation will have moved on, but at the time of writing in November there are 330 potential vaccines at varying

stages of development across the world. In early October 2020 there were just nine potential vaccines that had reached large human trials to determine effectiveness and safety. Then a month later three vaccine developers were claiming over 90% effectiveness based on preliminary data. They were progressing rapidly with their research evidence for



submission to regulators, seeking their approval to start mass vaccination programmes. Meanwhile we learnt how a virus multiplies inside living host cells and the various ways scientists design a vaccine to fight the virus. Whilst the ideal vaccine should provide a strong antibody response and prevent infection in most people for a long period of time, we might have to accept a lesser effectiveness that only reduces severe symptoms in some people for a shorter period of time so requiring multiple doses. Other considerations relate to ease of manufacturing in quantity and the ability to store without sophisticated and costly environments such as very low temperature. Scientists in China have gone for minimal genetic complexity so that trials could start quickly, but the process involves handling large amounts of infectious virus before it is killed. A safer option avoiding any infectious virus is called the non-replicating viral vector approach which uses a weakened common cold virus from chimpanzees, genetically changed so that it cannot grow in humans. Finally, we looked at some potential treatments which at the very least could reduce symptoms. In the real world our group is full and limited by the size of member's living rooms. However, if these are the sort of subjects that interest you, for as long as the interest group is on Zoom, you will be welcome to join us. Just make contact with the group administrator

Chris Middleton



Our U3A



NEEDS YOU
To Volunteer

When we all joined the U3A, we made a commitment to uphold the guiding principles of the U3A movement, one of which is to recognise that we are a self-help group in which volunteering is essential for the organisation to function.

We now have a need for new volunteers to support the committee in running our activities. A number of the current committee are retiring soon, having served for several years. So we need some new committee members to continue offering the range of activities you all enjoy and potentially to contribute new ideas.

Could you make a bigger contribution to our U3A? If so, please let any current member of the committee know. Alternatively, do you know another member who you think could do a really good job on the committee?

We have potential vacancies across a variety of roles on the committee and some positions are more urgent than others. So please talk to any member of the current committee to find out more as we try and match your interests, skills and capabilities with the roles. Role descriptions are on our website.

If you are concerned about the level of commitment required, please talk to any committee member so that they can describe their experience.

Our contact details are on the website and in this Senior Moments.

From your Management Committee

Vegetable Gardening Group – Painshill Park virtual visit

We were taken on a virtual guided tour of Painshill Park, a landscape garden

include the magnificent Temple of Bacchus, a Doric temple with a superb frieze, commanding panoramic views over the Surrey countryside towards the North Downs. The Gothic temple



in Cobham, beautifully restored to present the original vision of its 18th Century creator, Charles Hamilton. An English landscape garden, replicating nature at its best and drawing in the surrounding countryside to add to the stunning views, it was designed as a pictorial circuit garden with vistas appearing around each corner, framed by trees and arches to create 'living paintings'. Garden features draw the eye, and these reflect Hamilton's passion for antiquities, classical architecture, art and design, using themes, ideas and artefacts collected on his Grand Tours of Europe. These

and the Turkish tent, both beautiful in themselves, each present a wonderful view down the Serpentine lake from opposite ends, and in the middle is the unique and delightful Crystal Grotto, evoking a Mediterranean cave with crunchy shells underfoot and sparkling stalactites overhead. Other features include the ruined abbey, perfectly reflected in the mirror-like lake, and the mausoleum designed as a ruined triumphal Roman arch. Three attractive bridges, two of them in the Palladian style, link the islands. Hamilton used different plantings to evoke different moods and the western half of the garden is wilder, with rough woodland tracks leading to the waterwheel, through the Alpine Valley to the Gothic Tower and, perched high on tree stumps, the Hermitage, a perfect place for calm reflection. As gardeners, we were very interested to learn about Hamilton's plantings. He was



a pioneer in introducing 'exotic' trees, shrubs and flowers, many of which were



sourced from America via a farmer who collected seeds from different natural



environments and sent 100 in a box for five guineas. Hamilton used one of his walled gardens as a nursery for the seedlings before planting them out in

the landscape, where a number of them can still be seen today over 200 years later, notably giant cedars, swamp cypresses, a red oak and a cork oak. Wherever possible, during restoration the park has been re-planted with the same species that Hamilton would have used. The walled garden is still productive



today, serving both as a nursery and a kitchen garden for Painshill Park's café. Orchard fruits are blended with botanicals from around the park to create a special gin which is available in the Painshill shop, along with sparkling wine from Painshill's vineyard. We were pleased to hear that Painshill Park had been able to re-open to visitors from late May, offering a peaceful uncrowded space for people of all ages to stroll and enjoy the beautiful landscape. Members can enter freely at any time, with timed slots available for day visitors to book. Several of our group have visited the park since being reminded of this treasure on our doorstep. The online tour was presented by our member Michelle Howes, who volunteers at Painshill Park and is happy to share the presentation with any other groups who would be interested.

Michelle Howes

Photography's major changes since its invention

Photography has had momentous changes from time to time since its invention in the early part of the 19th century. It was in 1839 that William Fox Talbot invented photography in Laycock



Fox Talbot's first photo at Laycock Abbey

Abbey, where he lived. At about the same time Louis Daguerre made a similar discovery in France but

whereas his invention produced a single image on a metal plate, Fox Talbot produced a negative from which any number of positive images could be produced. In those early days producing a photograph was quite a complicated undertaking. The substrate on which the image was to be



5 different photos used to produce this in 1858 and no Photoshop in sight!

produced had first to be coated with a light sensitive solution and kept wet while it was exposed in the camera to produce the image. Cameras of course had been in use for centuries before this. There is evidence to show that Leonardo da Vinci in the 1460s was aware of cameras and many artists over the centuries have used the camera obscura that projects an image from a lens onto, usually a white surface, to help, particularly in portrait painting, very accurately to locate the exact position of the eyes nose and mouth that is essential

in portrait painting if an accurate likeness needs to be achieved. The camera was fine for looking at images but it was never possible to capture the image permanently until photography in the 1830s David Hockney explains the artists use of the camera obscura and the similar camera lucida (basically a prism on a stick) in his book *Secret Knowledge*. There are places where camera obscura's can still be seen and used. Near the Clifton suspension bridge is one and once at the Photographic museum in Bradford has them placed to look out over the city.

Dry plate

The first significant change in photography was the introduction of dry plate and film. Dry plate meant photographs could be taken without having a darkroom and chemicals close by and of course film meant that the light sensitive material could be rolled up making it far more convenient to use. The use of dry film in place of glass meant that the whole system became much more portable.

Film

Kodak, a leader at this time, produced the box camera with a film inside and the instruction 'You take the photos we do the rest' they then processed the film, produced the prints and sent the camera back with a new film installed. There were significant photographers who thought this was all a very retrograde step and even Charles Dodgson apparently gave up photography rather than use any form of dry plate. I also remember in the early 1950s industrial photographers who resorted to wet plate when top quality sharp photographs were required. Plate cameras were used to produce high quality photographs using whole plate 8.5x6.5, 10x8 and even 15x12 all inches, of course. Most prints in the early days were produced by contact printing



Lewis Carroll's photo of Alice Liddell



Portable photography 1850 style

between the glass negative and the light sensitive paper. With the move to film and smaller size cameras, the negatives produced by taking a photograph were enlarged through a lens with a light source behind it to produce a positive print of theoretically any size. Photography in the late 1800s became very popular with amongst other uses, visiting cards being produced for personal use. Many Victorian photographers produced outstanding work that is still admired today. In the 1970s I had an elderly neighbour

in Fetcham, Frederick Evans, who was the son of Frederick Evans (1853-1943) a very famous photographer and nearly all his photography was taken with a 15x12 inch camera and he specialised in English Cathedrals and one famous picture he took in Wells Cathedral had the title of Sea of Steps. His son, who had no

interest in photography told me he used to accompany his father to an assignment in a cathedral but his father sometimes just looked round and said the light would be much better at a different time of the year so they would go away and come back months later to setup the camera when the light was right. It didn't matter too much if people were walking about because the exposures were so long movement was not recorded while the exposure was being made. He did take portrait photographs as well and his Aubrey Beardsley is rightly

famous but there were other great Victorian portrait photographers and chief among them was Julia Margaret Cameron who not only photographed many famous people but also took very good photographs. Lewis Carroll or to use his real name Charles Dodgson was a very accomplished photographer and had rooms in Christ Church College Oxford where he lived as a professor of mathematics, he specially set out a studio and darkroom processing rooms. Francis Frith (1822-1898) went around the country photographing English towns and there is an extensive collection to his name. Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) was a very distinguished American Photographer who took many artistic pictures and was the husband of the artist Georgia O'Keeffe Paul Strand (1890-1976) and Edward Weston (1886-1958) and later Ansel Adams (1902-1984) were American photographers famous in their day and still very much respected for their fine work.



Ansel Adams landscape

35mm film

An important photography break through came in the 1920s when Oscar Barnack (1879-1936) produced a camera that used the film being used to make movies—35mm. He worked at the time for the Leitz optical company and the camera was called the Leica. It was very small, produced an image 24x36mm. It became very famous as a news photographer's camera. One of the most well known users was Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004) who always tried to take photos without being noticed and his mantra was The Decisive Moment. He worked almost exclusively in Black and white and produced many stunning and memorable photographs. I first became interested in photography in the early 1950s and used my



Leica original



Henri Cartier-Bresson a decisive moment

I first became interested in photography in the early 1950s and used my Mother's Box Brownie to take my first photos. When I learnt how to process negatives and then make positive prints I became almost completely enthralled with the process. One of the most thrilling experiences for a young curious mind is to see an image appear and develop in a dish being gently rocked from side to side in a developer solution. Colour photography was a way to produce a photograph even closer to real life and I have even indulged in stereo photography that is almost as old as photography itself. In fact Charles Wheatstone (1802-1875) drew images that could be viewed as stereoscopic. He is of course far more famous for the electrical Wheatstone bridge which is used to measure an unknown electrical resistance. Extremely realistic though stereo photography is, perhaps because there is no movement it does not quite achieve the realism in portraits that often appear more like waxworks.



Box Brownie

My interest in photography dwindled in the 1970s partly because processing was of necessity so formulaic. It had to be to achieve consistent colour reliability. I did process colour film both negative/positive and reversal transparencies but

there was none of the thrill of seeing a black and white image develop in a dish as it was being rocked, just absolute strict control of time and temperature during the whole process was necessary to achieve consistent colour. I did use the Cibachrome process for a while in a drum and this made some very good and stable colour prints. I also had colour negatives processed professionally to give consistent results and then enlarged the images onto paper and processed them in a drum. In the late 1980s after I had taken up computer processing of documents and spreadsheets and then discovered Adobe Photoshop and learnt how to process digital images.

Digital photography

I came across digital photo processing in the form of Adobe Photoshop where an image could be processed with all the

attributes of a film image but without altering the original and each of the individual processing steps could be reversed or modified as required. This changed my whole approach to photography and I first had as many colour negative and positive images transferred to CDs as I could afford, then I bought my first digital camera, a Nikon with less than 1,000 pixels. I later progressed to a Canon, and Olympus and eventually a LUMIX mirror less camera that all did fine work but since my computing involvement, after I retired from full time employment, moved to Apple Macintosh initially so that I could access my fairly extensive music CD collection but I also found this system handled the large photographic images far better than Windows PC without the constant crashing of the system that was so normal during that time. Many photographers, at this time, regretted the move away from film and resorted to all sorts of claims for the superiority of film over digital and many of them had serious objections to any type of computer processing of photographic images with particular objection to images that had been 'Photoshopped'. Even members of the Royal Photographic Society would frequently proclaim they did all their processing 'in camera'. Of course outlandish Photoshop manipulation was about and much of it was fairly objectionable, but I have always tried to use Photoshop in such a way to improve an image without showing that any manipulation had been carried out. It was always an aim to improve the picture and yes this did mean adding a sky or even a person into a group but never in a way that made it appear this was not what the camera could have seen.

Smartphone cameras

In the last few years, first with the iPhone 6 and now with the iPhone 11 Pro I have been moving away from 'proper' cameras to taking all my photographs on my Smartphone. There are several



Lumix Mirrorless Zoom lens



Original taken Canon digital in Lake District—overcast sky



High Dynamic Range processed photograph. This is what I actually saw and not what the camera chose to show as the record of the overcast landscape.

This was achieved by capturing the scene in RAW format (that contains so much more information than jpg) then Photoshop processing using selected actions to achieve the best result from the original photograph

advantages. It's much smaller than a regular camera. The technology has been improved so much that, for example, you no longer need to bother about white balance. This is corrected, no matter where you take your photos or how mixed the light might be and Apple's iPhones have the added extra that the camera settings can be set to take short movie videos with every photograph that not only is very pleasing on many occasions, but also allows you to select from the frames taken the one to be the primary and this of course is a great help in group shots particularly where someone may have blinked, for example. The iPhone 11 Pro has three lenses and in practice they work just like one single zoom lens. The only time I now resort to my mirrorless camera is for telephoto shots, but even here there are some interesting examples of telephoto attachments

for smartphone cameras. Many more people are now taking photos, using their phone cameras and I find it amusing to see people in Art galleries taking photos and selfies and hardly bothering to look at the paintings. I did see one selfie taken by a girl in America where she was involved in a slight airplane incident that she knew would be reported on the evening news so she sent the selfie to her parents to show that she was unhurt. I also



liked the use of the selfie camera on a stick in the BBC TV Four series winter walks in January 2021. Although I take all my photographs in colour and have done so for the past 40 or more years I still find the photographer's work I appreciate the most are Ansel Adams and Henri Cartier-Bresson who both worked almost exclusively in black and white and only very rarely in

colour. Colour images can very easily and accurately be converted into black and white, but converting monochrome images into colour is a very different story. Is my liking for black and white photography because while I strive for realism it is always beyond reach, no matter how accurate the colours or stereoscopic the scene, the appreciation of black and white images requires a degree of mental agility, that is probably unconscious during the actual viewing?

Maurice Baker

Zoom during lockdown

During the current Lockdown many organisations have resorted to Zoom meetings where groups of people can meet through their computers and have discussions, demonstrations and talks without having to consider face masks, social distancing or hand washing. It generally works well and there is also the added advantage that no travelling whatever is involved. Another advantage is that each video image has the name attached. My main problem is remembering to attend. In former times with specific face to face meetings on pre-arranged days my memory helped to keep me up to date and attending generally on time, but with virtual Zoom meetings I too frequently forget or even arrive rather late. I can and should make a diary entry with an alarm to help, but so far I just haven't managed to set this up. One person I know who does remedial reading with a small group of children in various houses has found Zoom meetings a vast improvement because all the individual contacts can still be maintained



with every participant and at the end of the meeting there is no journey home



with a drive back across town, just say goodbye and shut the computer down. I might even consider joining a wine tasting group because it would involve no driving, but I lead a photography group where we mainly talk about various photographic matters in a relaxed and informal way and consequently the members of this group have expressed the opinion that this would not work well as a Zoom meeting so we shall not meet again until we have all been vaccinated. The same applies to the Art Appreciation 3 group where in normal times we have a different presentation each time in member's homes and quite a bit of free discussion so hopefully sometime in 2021 we shall be able to get together again.

This Christmas when we all had to operate on a strict lockdown, Kathleen and I spent our first Christmas alone together



meal. Pacific Coast time meant it was 10 o'clock in the morning near the start of Christmas Day while we were at 6pm relaxing towards the end of the day. Zoom meetings are relatively easy to setup and if only a few people are involved and the meeting is for less than 40 minutes there is no cost to pay. Full instructions on setting up a Zoom meeting are shown in this edition of Senior Moments and you can also find extensive instructions on the Bookham U3A website. Maurice Baker

in 61 years without any family involvement whatever. While we enjoy each other's company and always find plenty to do and talk about, this presented no serious problems to us, but our children all missed the family get together until our youngest daughter who lives near Manchester and was very sorry not to be able to come and stay with us, suggested we should have a Zoom meeting at around 11 o'clock on Christmas morning, when we usually open our presents, together with our other daughter who lives alone in Wimbledon. I suggested the time should be changed to much later in the day so that our family in San Francisco could join in and so at 6pm (I didn't forget the appointment this time) there we all were and we chatted away for over 30 minutes before our son and family in San Francisco had to leave to get started on preparing their main



All the photos are from the January 21 monthly Zoom meeting on my monitor



"It's been a strange Year"

Roger Mendham photo High Clandon Vineyard during their Art and Sculpture in the Vineyard event last year.