

Sully and District u3a Newsletter Jun 2025



Group News

Planned new Groups

Gill Mathias (Groups Administrator)

Mahjong

About 11 people are interested. There will be a set up meeting in The Woods Room on Tuesday 6th Aug at 12 o'clock to arrange when and where meetings will be held. Anybody who hasn't put their name down will be welcome to join.

Croquet

There are quite a few people interested in joining the Croquet group at Wenvoe Golf Club in their walled garden. If you have not yet expressed an interest in joining, please get in touch with me.

Astronomy

Several people want to form an Astronomy group. At the meeting last week, it was decided to get in touch with the Barry Astronomy Society and see if we could join them as a linked group. They seem happy about this, and David Briggs is the 'runner' between us - at the moment. Any queries, please contact him (or me)

Rummikub

There are only a couple of people who have shown an interest in this game at the moment. It is played with tiles and has similarities with the card game Rummy. Easy to learn, hard to master! it can get quite competitive – like any card game! Again, get in touch with me if you want to give it a go.

PLEASE NOTE THE EMAIL CONTACT FOR GOUPS IS groups@sullyu3a.co.uk

Book Club 2

Book Club 2 has released its summer reading programme:

21 August: Score – Jilly Cooper

We buy our own books and aim to follow a mix of long/short and light/serious titles.

We meet at 10.30 on the third Thursday of each month in the Jubilee Hall at the Old School Sully.

We'd love to welcome new members. Just drop us a line at bookclub2@sullyu3a.co.uk.

Website Update for Groups

Our Web Manager, David, has sent out an online Survey Form to all Group Convenors to update each Group's Webpage. He wishes to express his thanks to all those who have responded so far. They have been notified of their Group's update on our website. If you haven't received a Survey Form, please check your SPAM/JUNK mailbox or contact David through our Website "sully.u3asites.uk" then the CONTACTS page and WEB. Thank you all!

Affinity Partnership

Riviera Travel

Newsletter readers will recall that in January this year we reported receiving a payment from Riviera Travel. We are pleased to say that we have now received another payment from them, this time for £917.82.

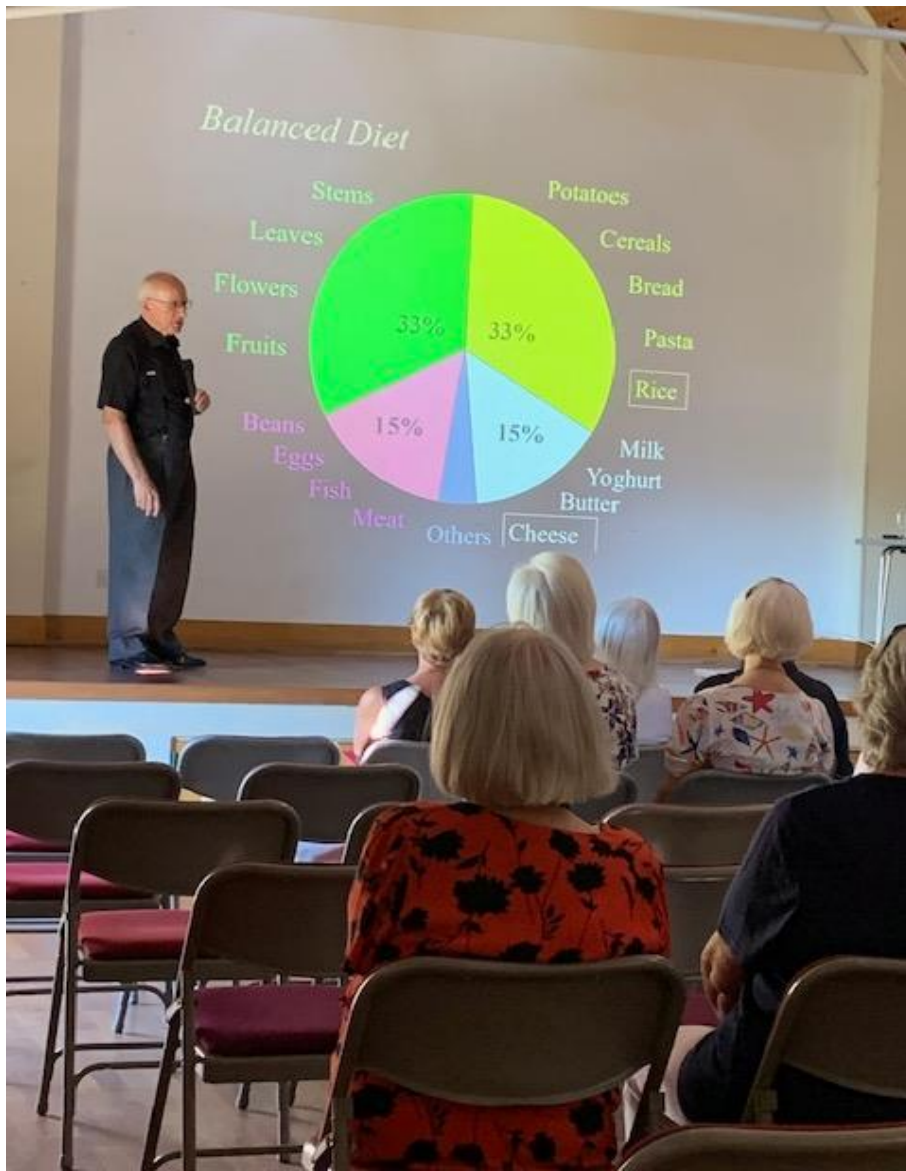
Both these payments were received because two members, Dai Jones and his wife Julie, nominated Sully u3a as an "affinity partner" of the travel company. If members who book holidays with Riviera Travel state at the time of their initial booking that they would like Sully u3a to be their affinity partner, then after completion of the holiday Riviera Travel make the affinity payment to us via the Third Age Trust.

On two occasions in the past year, Mr and Mrs Jones took advantage of this arrangement when they booked their holidays. They did not deal with the u3a. They simply registered their desire with Riviera Travel at the time of booking the cruises.

For other members interested, details can be found by looking on the Riviera Travel website under the heading Affinity Partnerships. Additionally, Dai Jones is happy to talk to anyone about how to do the same as he did, which he describes as very straightforward. Long-term members of Sully u3a will know Dai as a previous chairperson. You can get in touch with him by emailing him on holidays@sullyu3a.co.uk

These donations mean that Sully u3a's Social Development fund has now risen above £2000 again.

Speakers Report



Atoms, Nutrition and Life by Professor Robert Pickard – Report by Norma Johnson

An enthusiastic and warm welcome was given to Prof Robert Pickard who gave an interesting and light-hearted talk using a power point presentation with text, photographs and charts to the Sully u3a meeting on the 10th of July. Robert has previously given talks on Honeybees as well as the relationship between Shakespeare and Science.

Robert introduced himself to the group outlining his education and keen interest in the scientific world of Biology, human nutrition and Neurobiology. He told us that when studying as an undergraduate in college he sat in the same chair as Charles Darwin had previously sat in to write his research on evolution. This was very special to Professor Pickard and one of the highlights of his time at university.

Prof Pickard took us on a journey back in time and into deep space for the start of his talk on life and the making of a universe and that there are four forces that are essential for its creation. The ‘mother’ force is gravity, and the other three comprise of exploding stars, strong nuclear force and electromagnetic force. He talked to the group about the development of the universe and played a video of two black holes merging into one. Robert explained that our sun is ever expanding and will eventually swallow up all the surrounding planets and everything in its path – it’s the same with humans, as the population grows and develops over time, we will eventually destroy everything too.

He explained to the audience that atoms are the basic building blocks of all matter, including living organisms and the nutrients they need to survive. Atoms combine to form molecules, including the essential biological macromolecules like carbohydrates, lipids and proteins, which make up the nutrients we consume. These molecules are vital for providing energy and building materials for cells, supporting growth, and maintaining life. The average number of atoms in the human body is 40. Prof Pickard told us that we share 80% of our genes with cows, pigs and sheep but perhaps what is most surprising, we share 60% of our genes with honeybees.

The talk moved on to calories, food intake, insulin production and weight loss medication and how they affect the body functioning. He gave us examples of the number of calories in certain foods and how we burn them off by undertaking a variety of everyday activities. Robert talked about fasting and how that can help lose weight. He demonstrated this with pie charts to show which type of food is good or not so good for us and emphasised that we should try and consume everything in moderation which is particularly important for the over 60s!!

We were told that climate change is a continuous cycle and that alligator fossils have been found in the River Thames and reindeer fossils in Ruislip which suggests we have evolved from a tropical climate to an ice age over the course of time. He also said that it is not how intelligent or how strong we are but according to Darwin's research in his book On The Origin of Species, it is how well we adapt to these changes that is key for our survival!!

Next month's speaker

The speaker for next month on the 14th of August at the Sully u3a is Marion Davies - Did Jane Austen Actually Say That?

Membership Reminder

As you are aware most of our communication is via email so if you change your email details, please let me know.

Also please remember to update me with your new address if you move house so I can ensure you receive the u3a matters magazine and any other correspondence.

u3a Matters Magazine

If you would like to receive the magazine, please let me know.

If you are already receiving the magazine and do not want it anymore then please let me know.

PLEASE NOTE THE EMAIL CONTACT FOR MEMBERSHIP OR MAGAZINE CHANGES IS

membership@sullyu3a.co.uk

Security Update

As we are sure you are all aware, there are an awful lot of security threats out there, from hackers, to scammers, to identity thieves, malware and much more. To reduce the opportunity for such unwelcome attention, we have decided to stop publicising our u3a contact email addresses on our website. Instead, we will be utilising a function that is already in place. This means that we encourage contact via the inbuilt forms on the website, which you may already have seen and used.

Don't forget to visit our website to access these forms and other UpToDate news, just follow:

[Sully](#) (Place cursor over link and press Ctrl + Click to follow the link)

The Silver Line Helpline volunteers

Message received by our website to newsletter. From Rebecca Ridley at (rebecca.ridley@ageuk.org.uk)

Hello,

My name is Becca and I am the National Manager of The Silver Line Helpline, a national Age UK service set up to alleviate loneliness in older people by providing conversation and friendship over the phone.

We are always looking for volunteers to take a few calls each week to help be there for lonely and socially isolated older people.

Our volunteers find it an incredibly fulfilling role. It can be done remotely, and full training is given, along with 24 hour support.

If you would like any more information or would be happy for me to send you our leaflet, please let me know via the above email address.

A short story by David Briggs

THE ARRIVAL

by

DAVID BRIGGS

The asteroid eased itself into orbit around the planet and started transmitting. Scientists the world over recovered from the shock and began to interpret the signals before announcing their findings. Politicians soon realised that aliens from another solar system had actually arrived and had requested asylum. The diplomatic lines of communication had never seen such traffic as an extraordinary meeting of the United Nations was called to discuss the world's response to the alien request.

The aliens' long journey had not gone well and their messages showed they were desperate to find a habitable spot on the planet that revolved below them. They had identified several possible areas on the planet that were not used by the indigenous population and asked to be allowed to colonise at least one of them. They promised to respect the territory allocated and not to cross any borders. The assembled politicians concluded that a worldwide referendum should be held to determine their response and so the news was broadcast around the planet.

The campaign lasted about two weeks, which was a relief to the populations of some nations that normally had interminable electioneering from their politicians. The aliens' case touched the hearts of the majority and permission to set up their camp in a moderately sized territory was agreed.

Esme and her daughter Milly lived just a short distance from the border of the territory that had been allocated to the aliens. In common with many of her classmates, Milly had seen the pictures of the aliens and had been shocked by their appearance. They looked totally different from anything she had seen before. As she studied the pictures she noticed that one or two of the aliens looked much smaller than the rest. When she asked her mother about this, the answer gave her some comfort.

‘I expect they are their children.’ her mother told her. ‘You are much smaller than me, aren’t you Milly?’

Milly had to agree, and the more she looked at the pictures of the small aliens, the more she felt sympathy for them. Some of the pictures showed the small aliens in a group. They looked thin and their clothes were old and worn, but the same applied to almost all the bigger aliens as well. They did look in a very sorry state.

‘Mummy?’ asked Milly, one day. ‘Can we make a present for one of their children?’

‘That’s a very good idea!’ said her mother. ‘What kind of present should it be?’

‘Well, none of them seem to have any toys so I thought we could make them some.’ said Milly.

‘Any particular sort of toy?’ asked her mother.

‘I think a nice cuddly toy that looks like me’ said Milly, ‘because long ago you made a toy that I’ve kept for such a long time – and it’s my favourite!’

‘That’s a good idea, Milly!’ said her mother. ‘Tomorrow we’ll go and get all the things we need to make it!’

∞

The following day Esme and Milly got the things they needed for the toy and within a few days a lovely, soft, cuddly toy that looked exactly like Milly, was made. Milly was so proud that she took it to school to show all her classmates. Even her teacher told her it was the best toy she had seen in a very long time.

The day of the alien’s arrival soon came and the whole world watched as a spaceship from the orbiting asteroid broke away and made its fiery descent to the planet below. The ship landed safely in the designated territory, the doors opened and the aliens descended the ramps onto their new world. The adult aliens clasped each other while the children started to run and play around the ship. Within a short time, the adults began unloading things from the ship and laid them on the ground. A camp was beginning to take shape.

Over the next few days the alien's settlement grew. Life on the new planet was becoming routine and the interest from the media faded away. But Milly wanted to meet one of the alien children, to hand over her present.

One day, after school and without telling her mother, she decided to get as near to the border with the alien's territory as she could. Carrying the toy, she made her way through the forest as carefully as she could in the direction of the border until at last she could see it ahead of her. There she waited patiently for what seemed like forever. Just as she was about to give up and go home she saw one of the small aliens coming nearer the border. The little one was collecting stones near the border and when it reached it, it started making small piles of stones into shapes Milly had never seen before.

Slowly and carefully Milly edged nearer to the border until she could see the little alien clearly. Suddenly, the alien child turned and saw Milly. The alien stopped still and lowered its body and stared at Milly for a long time. Milly stared back, but kept as still as possible. Then, slowly and carefully, Milly took the toy in one hand and gently reached across the border to the little alien child. Equally carefully, the child reached out her arm and gently took the toy. The alien child looked at it for a while, then its facial features changed and it squeezed the soft toy to its body. Milly waved the arm she had pushed across the border and the little alien copied her action. Suddenly, the alien child rose up to its full height, moved quickly back towards the rest of the adult aliens. The child went straight to one tall alien, held the toy up with one arm and pointed back towards Milly with the other. Milly was frightened and decided it was better if she left. She carefully slipped back away from the border and went home.

Later, she told her mother about her encounter. Her mother was not too pleased, but deep down she understood.

'Mummy,' asked Milly, as her mother got her into bed, 'what do the aliens call themselves?'

'Humans, Milly dear. They call themselves Humans.'

THE END

That's all for this month folks

Regards,

Paul Lister (Sully u3a Newsletter editor)