

Meeting 16/12/2015

We had 12 members (and 6 apologies) at our special Seasonal meeting on 16th December.

Many thanks to everyone for providing a varied selection of 'Goodies' for our afternoon treat and particularly those behind the counter serving the tea and coffee. I've attached a couple of pics for your interest (original email).

The plans for the day were marred somewhat because the hall internet connection was down. Subsequent investigation suggests that it was the local exchange rather than the hall per se that was at fault. Nevertheless, we all enjoyed ourselves making good use of the opportunity to socialise in what was a very convivial atmosphere.

Agony Corner:

We reviewed the points raised at the last meeting before moving onto some new items.

1) During the month, one of our members had been troubled by emails from 'MyPC Backup' threatening, apparently, to delete their files if they did not subscribe.

- *"Your MyPC Backup file protection license has now fully expired, leaving your important documents exposed and vulnerable to fatal hard drive failure, harmful viruses and even accidental deletion. As mentioned previously I am unable to extend your free license any further but I do urgently want to help prevent your files from being deleted..... if we do not see any attempt from you to protect your important files they will be deleted from our servers".*
- Research shows that this is a well known troublesome company. You may or may not have downloaded their software and/or you may or may not have set up a back up to their servers.

What they are threatening is to delete any backups you (may) have on their servers, *not* from your PC.

- here's a forum piece from Malware Bytes which describes how to remove the programme if it is on your PC with the help of Antimalware Bytes and ADW Cleaner, both of which we have often discussed <https://malwaretips.com/blogs/mypc-backup-virus-removal/>.
- Regarding the nuisance emails, ignore any requests to pay up, however small, and don't take the 'unsubscribe' route. The easiest way to deal with these is to block the sender in Gmail, and here are the instructions for this <https://support.google.com/mail/answer/8151?hl=en> and they will automatically go into the spam folder.

2) 'I've received a warning that any machine running AVG could be infected by malicious code.....'

- Apparently this happened earlier in the year and AVG posted a fix within two days.
- The same vulnerabilities were also identified in McAfee and Kaspersky who also posted quick fixes.

- The lesson here is that you should always make sure that which ever virus security programme you run, that it is set to 'auto up date' then you can be sure you have the latest protection.

3) 'I have too many old addressees in the 'To' section when I want to send a new email (Gmail). How do I get rid of the ones I don't want?'

- The list is generated from you own Contacts or Address book created when you set up Gmail plus new contacts created whenever you send an email to a new person.
- To easily remove the unwanted ones you need to go to your main 'Contacts' list:-
 - Open Gmail as normal
 - Go to red 'Mail' top LHS. Click down arrow then click 'Contacts'
 - Opens list of all contacts. This comprises those you've added and anyone you've ever sent an email to.
 - Tick the box on the LHS of the list of those you wish to permanently delete (as many as you like throughout the whole list).
 - Then go to the down arrow on the 'More' box above. Click 'Delete contacts'
 - QED. The contacts have gone and will not now appear in the 'To' section when you wish to send a new email.

4) 'I have recently lost the ability to access my Yahoo email messages'....

- I get the message 'No internet connection' although I definitely do have one.
- I've tried every browser, Chrome, IE, Opera etc all to no avail.
- I've done a complete Win 7 reinstall and the problem is still there so the problem must clearly be with Yahoo and not my machine.
- There is much discussion on Yahoo forums but no definitive help.
- I can, however, access all the emails on my iPad and phone. *Is this a clue??*
- *Post meeting. I'm pleased to say that I have resolved the problem with Yahoo mail. It turned out to be a conflict between Yahoo mail and my Avast free virus software; having switched to Avira the problem has now been resolved!*

Topic for the Day:

Our plan was '**A fun party session**' and to take a look at what we all enjoy doing on our computers and/or tablets, it being online games, favourite web sites, You Tube videos or whatever time waster takes your fancy. Unfortunately this was not entirely possible.

We were able to play around with **2048** from the Portable Apps suite discussed at the last meeting. This is a very famous and addictive game which is freely available on all platforms and yet, surprisingly, very few of our members had heard of it previously.

Many ideas and suggestions brought to the meeting were described and discussed, but as all were entirely dependent on internet access we had no opportunity to explore any of them.

I've prepared a list, with links, of some that I was going to introduce and added other suggestions brought to the meeting. <https://u3astowmarket.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/christmas-fun.pdf>. We have, in the past, had sessions on 'our favourite websites' so perhaps we could use this list as a basis of revisiting this topic in the coming year?

Computer help for Absolute Beginners:

Our Chairman, Bryan Hilton, has long felt that there is a need for a resource in Stowmarket U3A for absolute beginners. Even though we, as a group, always welcome members of any ability there may still be those who are too nervous to make the first step.

At today's meeting we discussed this at length with many useful views being put forward. Initially, we thought that a special session of our normal meeting open to beginners who wanted to know more would be the way to start, but this was eventually discounted in favour of a more targeted approach. Nowadays, many older peoples' introduction to the technological age may not be the traditional learn 'how to use a PC' (the route that most of us are familiar with) but rather straight onto a tablet to perform several specific tasks.

On this topic and whilst researching my notes I came across this organisation who are being promoted by AgeUK <http://www.breezie.com/>. It's worthwhile watching their video to see what it's all about <http://www.breezie.com/video105350823/>

For traditional learning some issues that would have to be addressed are:-

- What equipment would be used?
 - Other than the projector and PA system, our U3A does not own any technical equipment.
 - It may be, in these days of 'upgrades', that some redundant PCs and lap tops could be donated, but
 - Who would store and look after them? Where would they eventually be set up?
- Where would the meetings be held?
 - Our present BVH would be ideal as most of the Stowmarket alternatives are much more expensive, although a Scout Hall in Stowmarket was mentioned.
- Most importantly, are we looking at a new Absolute Beginners Group and if so who would run it?
 - Whilst several members are happy to assist others into the world of computing, no one present was prepared to head up a permanent beginners group, and anyway
 - At this stage there are too many unknowns for any final decision to be made.

We conclude that the best way forward would be to start with a special one off meeting where a few of us could have one to one discussions with potential learners - David, John H, Ann and I volunteered. I will prepare a suitable notice for publication in the January Newsletter (consulting with others in the meantime for the exact wording).

Next Meeting:

Date: **Wednesday 13th January – 1.30 pm at Bacton Village Hall**

Topic for the day: We look forward to Ann Williams giving us 'An introduction to researching your Family History on the Internet'.