

Reminder, Next Meeting Wednesday 21st December 2016, not the 14th.

Hello Everyone

For our meeting on 9th November we had 11 members attending and 4 apologies. This was the first held under our new name and at the new start time of 2.00 pm.

In the light of the new start time and reduced hire cost of the hall, now £12.00 from £15.00, it was decided that we would have a fixed cost of £1.50 pp rather than variable by number. This means that we need just 8 to break even, but hopefully have several more each time which should give us a float to cover the cost of heating when required and a contribution towards the cost of refreshments.

Agony Corner:

We reviewed questions from the last meeting with some matters arising

2) 'I have a 10 year old HP flatbed scanner attached to an XP system where it's always worked.....etc..'

- Our member did purchase a new flatbed scanner, EPSON V370 Perfection which in addition to documents/photos will scan slides and negatives in varying sizes. Here's a link to the PC World description <http://tinyurl.com/gof2sas>
- John Hasletine brought along his own slide and 35 mm negative scanner and demonstrated its use on a laptop. It's typical of the kind of free standing purpose built scanner now available for between £40.00 and £60.00. There are 2 or 3 of this type listed on this page of the '7dayshop' site, <http://tinyurl.com/il6b9n2>

5) 'How do I transfer photos from my smart phone to my PC?.....'

- A comprehensive answer was given in the last email, but further discussion suggested that perhaps, from the options given, the easiest way to transfer and access photos would be to set up a Google Photos account and sync the phones on your phone. All your pictures will be automatically uploaded to the cloud and available on any device to view, or download and edit as required.

Extra: 'How can you tell if you've got the Anniversary Update?.....'

- A pdf attachment to the last email gave a graphical way to check for this.
- This then developed into another discussion as to why Windows 10 will often not install/update but rather gets fixed in a loop without progressing.
- As discussed before, this happens to some people and others not at all. Many factors seem to be involved.
- In the last resort, it's probably better to do a 'clean install' (after backing up your data files) of Windows 10. This Microsoft site tells you how <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/software-download/windows10startfresh> and there's more help elsewhere on the web (just Google it).

New items....

1) 'Related to the above... I had all the problems described above, trying multiple ways to upgrade. I had to resort to a MS help desk on the other side of the world.....'

- After much investigation it transpires that my keyboard is 'scrambled' and characters entered don't equate to those on the screen.
- I've checked in 'Settings' but my configuration is checked as UK English?

- Suggest, experimentally, to try setting up as US keyboard.....?

2) 'We've discussed many times the importance of carrying out regular security checks with, say, Malwarebytes Antimalware and ADW Cleaner (now owned by Malwarebytes). A recent experience suggests that even this may not be enough.....!'

- There seemed to be some suspicious activity on my machine so I decided to run the Malwarebytes programme but this gave the all clear, no malware found.
- I then tried to run ADW Cleaner but I found that the Windows permission to launch panel was hidden behind the Explorer window which I couldn't close down.
- I forced a shut down of Explorer using the task manager and then had access to the ADW launcher – however, nothing happened. Something was stopping it from launching.
- I downloaded a fresh ADW exe file but got the same result.
- I had one more tool to use, Adware Removal Tool (<http://www.techsupportall.com/adware-removal-tool/>). This did run and detected 14 (!) threats with the 'Trotux' browser hijacker the main culprit. I followed the instructions and cleaned the machine.
- Decided to try ADW Cleaner again. This did run this time and found yet another well-known threat, ask.com
- All this goes to prove that we need to be very vigilant and be aware that sophisticated Trojans and browser hijackers can subvert even the most well known and respected security tools.

3) 'I have a strong Wifi signal from my router but when I boot up my laptop it won't connect to the internet before I go through the troubleshooting routine. I then get the message 'Resetting the Network Adapter' and then connection is fine. How can I stop this happening?'

- Our original thought was that there may be some local electrical interference but as the lap top is close to the router that seems unlikely.
- A Google search on the phrase 'Resetting network adapter' brings up a whole host of answers and suggestions, most of which are very complicated.
- There are many reports about this happening after a Windows 10 update which leaves the Wireless adapter needing update. If this is a factor, there may be some answers on this Microsoft site <http://tinyurl.com/hfb6we8>
- If the laptop is semi-permanently near the router you could try hard wire connection with an Ethernet cable?
- Does this only happen on you home network or can you laptop not see any Wifi wherever you are?

4) 'I regularly get a pop-up saying 'To complete Windows 10 update install the latest version of Avast Antivirus'. I don't have Avast on my machine and never have. How do I stop this happening?'

- This is almost certainly some malicious adware and if you followed it you would probably finish up with a load of PuPs on your machine.
- Suggest you run the suite of anti malware programmes as detailed in (2) above. Hopefully one of these will remove the threat.

5) 'I have always been able to sync my PC pictures with my iPad but recently I've been getting a message that 'Synchronisation has failed' but it still works with my iPod'. There may be a connection with the last software update (9.345) on the iPad?

- iTunes may be at the root of this problem as this issue has been reported elsewhere. There may be an explanation/solution on this web site <http://tinyurl.com/pb9rnyg>
- It's always possible of course to use alternative synching with the likes of Google Photos or Microsoft One Drive.

6) 'I am having problems with my BT Wifi connection. It keeps dropping out but then I find that I can easily connect to a strong local BT-Fon (free to BT subscribers) signal. BT have provided a replacement router but I'm still having the same problem?'

- This leads to the inevitable conclusion that the phone line (either inside or outside your property) is the problem. The fact that the BT-Fon signal is always stronger than your own BT connection also supports this theory.
- Suggest you get back onto BT and ask them to put the problem over to Open Reach.

Topic for the Day:

We looked at '**Free photo manipulation programmes**' – and questioned the need for the very expensive and difficult to learn Photoshop? We compared the features of several programmes, some of which have 'one click – fix all' solutions.

We experimented with several free programmes and compared ease of use (intuitive or difficult) and any special features that they may have.

- **Adobe PhotoShop Express**, <http://www.photoshop.com/products/photoshopexpress> (free when you sign in with an Adobe ID – easy to get)
 - A few basic tools and an effective 'quick fix' makes this a useful programme available to install on your Windows PC, Android phone/tablet or from the Apple App store – just select the download option.
- **iPiccy**, all on line <http://ipiccy.com/> and via Chrome web store.
 - Ignore 'sign in' and 'local storage'. Upload picture and edit online. Many useful tools (including Quick Fix) to explore and use.
- **Faststone Image Viewer**, download safely from <https://ninite.com/>. Under 'Imaging' tick the box(es) then download the installer. Run the installer after download..
 - A personal favourite which has virtually all the function of an expensive photo editor with the exception of 'Layers'.
 - We looked at and experimented with the range of tools. Very easy to use in 'Full screen mode' with all tools becoming visible when the mouse pointer hovers over the sides of the picture.
 - An unusual feature is found under File\Print\Design and Print. You need to experiment to appreciate the value of this – we prepared a collage by adding multiple images, resizing and moving around until we were happy with the result. Background colour and text can be added as required and the whole can be saved as a complete picture.
- **Irfan View**, download from Ninite as above. Another popular programme which can handle almost any graphic format plus many audio and video formats.
 - I use it as my default picture viewer and any time I want to resize or rename a group of pictures
 - It's possible to put together a very acceptable slide show in less than a minute which is saved as an exe file and can be viewed on any PC without the Irfan View programme.
 - Whilst limited compared to other programmes there's a very acceptable list of editing tools – we looked at a few
- **Paint.net**, download from Ninite as above. Developed by the team who created the original 'Windows Paint', this is an exceptional programme which looks and performs like Adobe Photoshop Elements.
- **Google Photos** – access from your Google account or the app from the Chrome browser.
 - The tools are basic but could serve the purpose for many people, the 'Auto Fix' being very useful.

- As mentioned above, it's easy to sync your smart phone pictures with Google Photos and then download and save to your PC.
- **Pixlr Editor Online**, <https://pixlr.com/editor/> or add to Chrome from the web store <http://tinyurl.com/9jp44gw> . Very comprehensive online editor, again with functionality similar to Elements.
- **Pixlr Express**, <https://pixlr.com/express/> , a useful variant on the above which uses icons rather than menus to access the tools. We looked at the Collage option accessed from the introductory splash screen. Again, you need to play around with it to assess its potential.
- **Google Picasa 3**, <https://picasa.google.co.uk/>
 - Whilst no longer officially supported by Google, this is still the programme of choice for many people.
 - We've had quite a few sessions over the years on Picasa 3 and on this occasion we looked at the range of editing tools available and experimented again with the collage function.
- **Windows Photos**. We didn't look at this but it's automatically installed with Windows 10 and has some useful gallery viewing options and some basic editing tools. Worth a look.

Next Meeting:

Date: Wednesday 21st December (Not 14th which has been appropriated for the U3A Xmas Lunch at the Cedars) – **2.00 pm at Bacton Village Hall**

We've decide to repeat last December's event in that that this meeting will be a little different from the norm. In the spirit of the season we will make it a fun party session and take look at what we all enjoy doing on our computers and/or tablets/phones, being it online games, favourite web sites, You Tube videos or what ever time wasters takes your fancy.

Bring along your ideas, gadgets you'd like to show off or perhaps some links to sites on a USB that we can all enjoy on the projector.

Members are invited to bring along a plate of any kind of festive fare so we have a nice variety to share around and keep the party going (the attached pictures show what a treat we had last year – *original email only*).