We are already well into the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness and yet the U3A year has scarcely begun and I’m afraid that this month’s programme is also going to be disrupted by the Workers’ Day and the General Election. At a committee meeting after the AGM, the office bearers for 2019 were elected. They are:

Chairman  Michael Lond
Vice-Chairman  Christo Vlok
Secretary  David Yuill
Treasurer  Grant Carnell

Judy Yuill has formally taken up the role of Membership Secretary which involves managing the data base of members and sending out the monthly newsletter and course calendar as well as ad hoc notices. Lynette Timme will continue to plan the monthly programme, Brenda Hardy to co-ordinate outings and Brian Hardy to manage the monthly Film Club meetings. I have taken over the writing of the newsletter.

And now to our May programme.

THE CELTS
We continue, and conclude, our three-part series. Anthropologist Professor Alice Roberts and archaeologist Neil Oliver discover that key battles between the Celts and the Romans over the best part of 500 years constituted a fight for two very different forms of civilisation - a fight that came to define the world we live in today. This pivotal time is recreated with vivid reconstructions in which we meet some famous ancient leaders

Episode 2: Rise and fall  Monday 6 May
The Celtic tribes turned from traders into professional warriors, mercenaries and conquerors, spreading over most of Europe and even Galatia, in Asia Minor. The Celtic culture and military technology were far from the naked savages they are usually depicted, as shown by the La Tène finds near lake Geneva, which also prove their dark, bloodily cruel side. But the rebuilt Rome, which unlike the Celts was the very model of unified order, quickly subjugated Iberia and southern France and its armies under Julius Caesar went on to conquer Gaul, despite its being united in defence by the equally gifted warrior-king Vercingetorix who challenged Caesar in the epic battle of Alesia that would shape the future of Europe.

Episode 3: Boudicca and the Celts’ last stand  Monday 13 May
The Roman army then turned its attention to an island of rich resources, powerful tribes and druids and advanced military equipment - Britain. This episode tells the story of the Celts’ last stand against the Roman army - a revolt led by another great leader, the warrior queen Boudicca

ARMCHAIR TRAVEL:  MYANMAR  Wednesday 15 May
Duncan and Annette Campbell spent three weeks travelling around central and southern Myanmar. The first ten days combined birding with a cultural focus, taking them northwards up through the middle of the country from Yangon to Mandalay. In the second part of the trip they joined a river cruise which slowly made its way down the Irrawaddy, stopping at several towns and villages on the way.

Their illustrated talk will give an overview of their travels in this complex and predominantly Buddhist country. This will include life on and around Inle Lake and along the banks for the Irrawaddy with colourful markets, crop growing and local crafts. There will of course be numerous pagodas and a few Buddhas which range in size from no more than a few inches high to the spectacular - up to 77m long!
Originally from Cape Town, Duncan was a life-long employee of Anglo American, first as an exploration and mine geologist in Namibia, then joining the Mineral Resource Evaluation team. Annette was born in Zimbabwe but grew up in the Cape where she qualified as a teacher. She spent two years in Israel teaching the children of South African engineers working on a project there. Duncan met Annette in Oranjemund in Namibia and have since lived in Kimberley, Klerksdorp and Jo’burg before spending three years in Chile. In between they had a year in France where Duncan studied at the Paris School of Mines. After Chile he was posted to London in 2001 and left Anglo’s employ in 2010. Duncan and Annette have always wanted to travel in their retirement and are slowly working their way through their bucket list.

They emphasise that they are by no means particularly knowledgeable about any of the countries that they visit - but are simply interested tourists who try to encapsulate as much of the country as possible in the time that they have available.

**DYNASTIES**

Produced by the BBC Natural History Unit and narrated by Sir David Attenborough, this series features five vulnerable or endangered species known to form enduring populations: chimpanzee, emperor penguin, lion, tiger and African wild dog. This month we will see the first two episodes.

**Episode 1: Chimpanzee**  
*Monday 20 May*

In Senegal, west Africa, lives a group of chimpanzees led by an alpha male named David. He has already been alpha for three years - a time at which leaders here are usually overthrown. To make matters worse, David has no allies - no-one to help him defend his leadership. As the dry season sets in, the group is forced closer together to survive. But David is now surrounded by rivals who all want his crown and are prepared to kill him for it.

David faces brutal battles, has his world engulfed in flames and has to pull off an extraordinary act of deception. In a story of power and politics, can David overcome the threats to his leadership and hold on to the alpha position long enough to sire a possible heir to his throne?

**Episode 2: Emperor**  
*Monday 27 May*

Emperor penguins gather in Atka Bay, on the coast of Antarctica, after three months of feeding at sea. They arrive as the water freezes over and all the other Antarctic animals have left the continent for the relative safety of the sea. The penguins have come here to raise the next generation in their imperial dynasty. But to do so they will have to work together to keep themselves and their chicks alive through the coming winter - the coldest and cruellest on earth.

**PRIVATE LIFE OF A MASTERPIECE: LITTLE DANCER BY EDGAR DEGAS**  
*Wednesday 22 May*

This is one of a series of BBC documentaries on significant works of art, many of which we have shown. It demonstrates how Degas broke every rule in the book to create his modern masterpiece and also tells the poignant life story of the sculpture’s model. The statue of the young girl in a real ballet dress is often seen today just as a pretty image of dancer making one of the classic moves of ballet. But to the people who first saw the statue when it was unveiled it was a dangerous, even disgraceful, portrayal of a degenerate girl little more than a whore. The programme reveals the story of the real woman whom Degas used as a model and includes revelations about how the statue was actually made.
FILM CLUB: BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY

Monday 27 May at 19:00

_Bohemian Rhapsody_ is a foot-stomping celebration of *Queen*, their music and their extraordinary lead singer *Freddie Mercury*. Freddie defied stereotypes and shattered convention to become one of the most beloved entertainers on the planet. The film traces the meteoric rise of the band through their iconic songs and revolutionary sound. At the *Live Aid* concert, and while bravely facing a recent AIDS diagnosis, Freddie leads the band in one of the greatest performances in the history of rock music. Freddie Mercury is played by Rami Malek who won the 2019 Oscar, as well as the Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild and BAFTA awards for Best Actor. The film garnered many other awards, including three more Oscars.

### SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP MEETINGS

**Science Group**

The Science Group meets every second Thursday afternoon at 15.00, and all are welcome, no scientific background needed. There is no pre-set programme. The group discusses matters of scientific interest raised by its members. If you are interested, contact Henry Timme (044 535 9041 or 078 877 5829) who will confirm the topic, venue and date of next meeting.

**Mah Jong**

Mah Jong players convene every Friday at 13.30 in the small FGV dining room. Lyndsey Wright is the coordinator. Her phone number is 044 533 3528. Please remember to wear your U3A membership badge.

**Italian Conversation Group**, coordinated by Brenda Hardy, meets each Tuesday at 10.00 at Brenda’s home, 12, Challenge Drive. Her phone number is 076 144 3352.

The **French Conversation Group** meets each Friday at 10:00. For further information, please contact Merle Decot (044 533 5879).

### MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

Would any member who has not renewed his/her subscription for 2019, please do so as soon as possible either by EFT or in cash at any U3A meeting. We normally close the renewals list at the end of March but because of all the disruption we will only do so this year at the end of May.

We look forward to seeing you at the meetings this month.

Michael Lond
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