

10th May, 2020

Dear Friend,

Not so much news for you today.

First things first, I must report some bad news.

Sadly, one of our members, Norma Gledhill, passed away recently. She probably was a victim of Covid-19. Many of you will be aware that Norma had been hospitalised for quite a long time, and had recently been discharged into a care home. On behalf of Ayr U3A members, we sent a card to her family.

Here is a recap of what is or isn't happening.

Some of this will be the same as I put in the last newsletter since there really hasn't been much change.

Annual General Meeting.

It will be our AGM on **Thursday, May 21st** at 2pm via Zoom.

We would be grateful if you could join us for this meeting. It shouldn't take very long, but assuming that there are enough people 'in attendance', it will facilitate the functioning of the organisation.

You should have already received copies of the paperwork. There will be another formal notification in a few days time along with any amendments that might have been made to the Agenda.

You will also receive a Zoom link.

Membership.

Amazingly, our membership now stands at 143. We have lost only 16 members in the new financial year.

I think that is amazing considering the current position of meetings in this era of Coronavirus. We have had several new members since the start of April.

There are still several lapsed members that I haven't heard from despite my nagging. (Perhaps that is the problem!). If you aware of someone who is having problems with email etc. who may still wish to be a member, please let me know. There is only so much I can do with emails and text messages.

Monthly Meetings are currently discontinued. Our last one was in February.

Quiz Night.

In the pre-coronavirus era, we had a Quiz night once a month, which took place in a local pub/restaurant. As well as the quiz, members could get together for a pre-quiz meal.

NOW, we're having the **Quizzes every Monday evening** at 7pm courtesy of Zoom. There will be a quiz this coming Monday at 7pm. The Quizmaster will be Ian Matheson.

Groups using Zoom are gradually increasing in number.

They include:

- **Philosophy,**

- **French Conversation.** On Tuesdays, this group now splits into four, to have a conversations based on some thoughtful questions provided by Moira.
- **Spanish Group** are continuing to meet using Zoom.
- **News Review Group** have just decided to become virtual too! They are meeting weekly on Thursdays. 10.30 - 12.30. Contact Ritchie Ross via the envelope symbol for more information.
- **Book Group.** Their next meeting will on May 12th. They plan to discuss "Virginia Woolf" by Alexandra Harris.
- **Backgammon.** Our regular weekly face-to-face meetings have been replaced with online backgammon sessions accompanied with 'Zoom' video conferencing to enable our usual (friendly) banter to continue.
- **Art Appreciation** have a "Show and Tell" Zoom meeting coming up on May 14th at 10am. The topic is "The Art Hanging on my Wall".
- **The 'Outings'** group have been watching National Theatre at Home productions. This week's production is 'Antony and Cleopatra'. Unfortunately, the Friday morning discussion meetings haven't been as popular as we had hoped. I think that many are watching them on a different day, because of the 8pm clapping ritual! (In our house, we have to console the dog who is still being terrified by the 8pm fireworks.)
The next NT play will be '**Barber Shop Chronicles**', which is streaming from 7pm Thursday, **14th May until 21st May**. It is billed as a 'never-before-seen archive recording of Innuia Ellam' smash-hit play, about the places where banter is barbed, and the truth is telling! From the **21st May** they are showing '**A Streetcar Named Desire**' which stars Gillian Anderson as Blanche DuBois.
- **Family Social History** had a very successful meeting on April 30th talking about the **Ayrshire Tattie Harvest**. It was based on an exhibition that had been planned to take place in Girvan. Instead South Ayrshire Council put the exhibition on-line and it generated lots of discussion. (If you wish to look at the website yourselves, here it is! <https://southayrshirehistory.wordpress.com/2020/04/08/theres-nothing-quite-like-an-ayrshire-tattie/>) During that meeting, it became obvious that we had all had completely different experiences of school while growing up, so the next subject for discussion is "Schools". The Zoom meeting will be on **Thursday, 28th May** at 2pm. - If you wish to join in, please let Morag know by clicking on the Envelope Symbol on the Family Social History Group page on the AyrU3A.com website.
- The **Bakery group** have had their first meeting on Zoom.
- **The "Sharp Pencils"**, our creative writing group is now functioning. Lorraine will add a new project website once a week. Dip in and out and have a browse and see if any tickle your imaginations. Prompts and projects are only set to help to inspire you and to start you off with some ideas on where to begin - it's NOT homework; they are some creative prompts to wake your imagination and to see where your words take you.

Some of our members have commented that the Zoom tutorial on the Zoom website is very useful.

If you are worried about using Zoom, then I would say - **GIVE IT A GO!**

It's really not difficult to join in, and then once you are able to talk to the rest of us, we can try to guide you through the rest of the basics.

If you are interested in joining in with any of these group meetings, then please contact the Group Leader (via the Envelope Icon on the Group pages of the Ayr U3A website. ayru3a.com)

Have you run out of books to read?

For all you desperate readers who need more books, Phyllis has found a new app for you.

It's called "**Libby, by Overdrive**".

Sign in to multiple libraries, with one or more cards for each

*library. Download **books** and **audiobooks** for offline reading, or stream them to save space. If you prefer reading on your Kindle, **Libby** can send your library **books** to it.*

You will need to be a member of your local library. You can log in to the library, and borrow/read books on line. For South Ayrshire you just need your library card number and PIN. If you don't have a PIN, contact carnegie.library@south-ayrshire.gov.uk I know that not all of you live in South Ayrshire, but I have every reason to believe that the App works for other libraries too.

If you find it useful, can you let me know?

As I said before, there really isn't much news to report.

Please, please, please can you keep me in the loop with events so that I can inform the masses? Also, can I beg **Group Facilitators** to keep their page on the website up to date?

If you have any brilliant ideas on how to keep the ethos of U3A alive in Ayrshire, then please let us know. It looks like it will be some time before we will be able to get together in the same physical space. And will our meeting places still exist?

We'll just have to wait and see!

There may be some of you that would like to receive phone calls to relieve the monotony. We all care for each other, but we probably suffer from a reluctance to contact others out of the blue. And yet, I know, that many people would find a phone call very helpful. Think about it. Phone calls don't need to be from a Committee Member. We're all in this together.

Enough from me for the time being.

I hope you are all keeping well, and that you haven't gone stir-crazy with the Lockdown. Those of you that I see on Zoom, look as if you are all doing fine.

If there is anything that Ayr U3A can do to help any of you, please get in touch. I think you know how by now.

DON'T FORGET THE A.G.M.!

Best wishes,

Muriel Downie,
Membership Secretary,
Ayr U3A.