

### **A Message from the Chair**

I hope you have had a peaceful and happy Christmas in spite of the restrictions. The committee join me in wishing you a Happy New Year. We fervently hope that 2021 will bring us nearer to being able to meet again.

Please take care.

With warmest wishes,

*Chris Plant*



### **Capturing Memories**

#### **A New Exciting Project**

Everyone's story is unique and our times have seen enormous change and opportunity as well, for some, a sense of loss of the country and values of our youth. Those early years in which we grew up, worked and had our families are of fascination even if the younger generation don't yet appreciate it! We have all surely wished that we had had those conversations with our own, older generation before they were lost? I am therefore engaging participants in the u3a project 'Capturing Memories', that is, it involves 'curating' memories focusing on weekly themes: childhood memories, the early years, home life in the 40s/50s; working life; bringing up baby (childcare in the 40s/50s); recalled history of our former generations.

Weekly Zoom conversations would be perfect, but we could also communicate via Skype or even on the phone. The plan is that the end product will be a digital copy produced with scanned-in photos and images from the internet that could be reproduced as hard copy in a booklet.

Please contact me [rosinapullman@aol.com](mailto:rosinapullman@aol.com) or ring 01233 840 024 for an initial chat. When you reply, please let me know whether you have access to Zoom for a one-to-one. With your permission, recorded aspects of your memories will be shared with other members of our u3a. Looking forward to talking with you.

*Rosina Pullman*



### **Neuropathy**

Are there any members suffering from neuropathy who would be interested in joining a self-help group? If so, David Stretch would love to start this on Zoom. He is a sufferer himself and would like to offer this support to others. If you are interested, contact: [b9jds@icloud.com](mailto:b9jds@icloud.com) and start to share the load a little.



### **Gift Ideas**

Have you struggled with presents this year? It's a bit late to ask or to come up with good ideas, but you might want to make a note of this one.

After much thought I decided to send a family of six a book hamper, reflecting their interests and ages. It was such a success that we replicated it for another person who is also delighted.

Waterstones might even market the idea as they were very interested when I told them about it. Just remember, you heard it here first!

## Random Thoughts

- The world has turned upside down. Old folk are sneaking out of the house and their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors!
- This morning I saw a neighbour talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I came to my house and told my dog . . . he had a good laugh.
- I never thought the comment, 'I wouldn't touch him/her with a 6-foot pole' would become a national policy, but here we are.
- Never in a million years could I have imagined I would go up to a bank teller with a mask on and ask for money.

Jocelyn Thomson



## This Month's Quiz

The answers are all forenames.

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Plain-spoken (5)                    | 11. Patron saint of travellers (11) |
| 2. Two magpies (3)                     | 12. Daybreak (4)                    |
| 3. Knife (7)                           | 13. Haystack (4)                    |
| 4. High street saint (7)               | 14. April in Paris (5)              |
| 5. Scottish peak (3)                   | 15. Daily round (5)                 |
| 6. Apparently, the happiest person (6) | 16. She falls in Africa (8)         |
| 7. Welsh port (5)                      | 17. Goddess of the hunt (5)         |
| 8. Savings plan (5)                    | 18. City in Italy (8)               |
| 9. Exist as a chiming object (6)       | 19. Colour of the rainbow (6)       |
| 10. Stirred rice (4)                   | 20. Brain teaser (5)                |

Submitted by Janet McBride



### Answers to last month's quiz

1. Chinon. 2. Vouvray. 3. Rioja. 4. Chianti. 5. Graves.  
6. Petit Verdot. 7. Blue Nun. 8. Valpolicello. 9. Nuit St Georges. 10. Pinot.



## Book Review

### *Empire of the Summer Moon*, by S. C. Gwynne

Subtitled 'Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanche Tribe', this is a factual and well-researched, gripping story. It spans the history of the conquest of the American West, the Civil War, political intrigue, betrayal, and savagery on all sides. All of which is well known, but perhaps less well known is the extraordinary and poignant story of Quanah Parker, the last chief of the Comanche Tribe and of his white mother, Cynthia Ann Parker. She was captured at the age of nine, married a chief of the Comanche Tribe, was tracked down years later and eventually rescued, with tragic consequences. His father killed in the 'rescue' battle, twelve-year-old Quanah escaped, but without parents and of mixed race, he was an outcast fending for himself. The author charts his rise against all odds to become, at an early age, chief of the Comanche Tribe, through to the tribe's final defeat, driven on to a reservation. Here he spent the rest of his life, honoured and respected by white settlers, Indians and Government alike. As his mother before him, he had to adapt to another way of life and culture. He took her surname but never saw her again.

I found this a haunting and memorable book, not only for its historical accuracy but for the age-old nature/nurture debate, the complexity of humankind, differing cultures, and a reason to inspect our own values.

Constable, 418 pp, + 68 pp notes and bibliography, £10.99. Widely available.

Pat Rose

## Wit on the Wing

### Qantas Airlines

After every flight, Qantas pilots fill out a form, called a 'Gripe Sheet', which tells mechanics about problems with the aircraft. The mechanics correct the problems, document their repairs on the Gripe Sheet and the pilots review them before the next flight. Never let it be said that ground crews lack a sense of humour. Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by Qantas' pilots (marked with a P) and the solutions recorded (marked with an S) by maintenance engineers. By the way, Qantas is the only major airline that has never, ever, had an accident.

### Qantas Airlines: Repair Division

P: Left inside main tyre almost needs replacement.

S: *Almost replaced left inside main tyre.*

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.

S: *Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.*

P: Something loose in cockpit.

S: *Something tightened in cockpit.*

P: Dead bugs on windshield.

S: *Live bugs on back-order.*

P: Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.

S: *Cannot reproduce problem on ground.*

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.

S: *Evidence removed.*

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.

S: *DME volume set to more believable level.*

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.

S: *That's what friction locks are for.*

P: IFF inoperative in OFF mode.

S: *IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.*

P: Suspected crack in windshield.

S: *Suspect you're right.*

P: No. 3 engine missing.

S: *Engine found on right wing after brief search.*

P: Aircraft handles funny.

S: *Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious.*

P: Target radar hums.

S: *Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.*

P: Mouse in cockpit.

S: *Cat installed.*

And we left the best one for last . . .

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel. Sounds like a midget pounding on something with a hammer.

S: *Took hammer away from midget.*

Submitted by Robert Mathews



## More Random Thoughts

- Having plans sounds like a good idea until you have to put on clothes and leave the house.
- It's weird being the same age as old people.
- When I was a kid I wanted to be older; this is not what I expected.
- Life is like a helicopter. I don't know how to operate a helicopter.
- Chocolate is God's way of telling us he likes us a little bit chubby.
- It's probably my age that tricks people into thinking I'm an adult.
- Never sing in the shower! Singing leads to dancing, dancing leads to slipping, and slipping leads to paramedics seeing you naked. So remember—Don't sing!
- I see people about my age mountain climbing; I feel good getting my leg through my underwear without losing my balance!
- If you can't think of a word say 'forgot the English word for it.' That way people will think you're bilingual instead of an idiot.

*Submitted by Janet Scott*



## Mary Chandler

We recently learned, sadly, of the death of Mary Chandler, one of our long-standing members. Her daughter, Judith Gladman, wrote, 'She probably was a member of u3a for longer than many others and we thank the u3a for the fantastic contribution that it made to her life and inspired me to join myself.'



*As a special treat at this challenging time, we are sharing this play written by David Andrews for the Short-story Writing Group run by Mary Telford.*

## Your Panto

### Voting in a Time of COVID

#### A one-act play

*SCENE:* Island in the Pacific Ocean

*CAST:* Man Bidenday

Dame Robinson Trumpsoe

Lots of creatures, birds and bees, etc. (non-speaking)



*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

The time has come for us to check

Who is the greatest chief

Of course I am the one by heck

You know I am no thief.

We'll ask all creatures big and small

To put their mark with hand or paw.

There is no doubt at all I see

That everyone shall vote for me.

*Man Bidentay:*

Okay you're on  
We'll find if you're the paragon  
You think you are, but I think you're wrong  
A lot of the creatures think you pong.  
I will stand and ask the creatures too  
Who they prefer, me or you.  
We shall tell them what we'll do  
They need to choose between us two.

*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

It's great to be president of my island  
I'll rule the place with a great iron hand.  
I'm as clever as any king or queen,  
The greatest leader there's ever been.  
I'll make this land great again,  
Better than the Spanish Main.  
Everyone here will enjoy great wealth  
You will need it to pay for any ill-health.  
My hair is such a great crowning glory  
It stands out proud, like a fairy story.  
My skin glows orange  
Like the setting sun  
I'm afraid I didn't rhyme that one.

*Man Bidentay:*

This place was great before you came  
You're just a great big pantomime dame.  
We had free health  
And reasonable wealth  
You always think about yourself.  
I don't understand  
how you rule the land.  
When all you know  
Is to make a tv show.  
And build a big tall hut  
And talk a lot of smut.  
You've got to go back out to sea  
It's over now twixt you and me.

*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

I send out messages through the wire  
Using Twitter like a bird on a wire.  
It's cheating to rhyme wire with wire  
But my poetry is not to admire.  
I like to abuse  
And not to amuse.  
'cos I've got no funny bones  
And much prefer to throw the stones.

*Man Bidentay:*

You call me sleepy in your posts  
That is one of your many boasts.  
You also claim Kamala's crazy  
Your grasp of reality is getting hazy.  
You should relax and have a laugh  
Try to be like Shakespeare's Falstaff.  
Don't worry about your loss of power  
Have a bath or else a shower.

*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

It is a shame we don't have women here  
There's only you and me, no one else near.  
Although I'm a dame,  
If only in name.  
I am God's gift to women, they will cheer  
When they see me, of course they will not fear  
I may be sexist and like to leer  
I shall be phenomenal to that sphere  
Of people, they will say hear hear!

*Man Bidentay:*

Is it not true that you are known to fumble  
Among the women's clothes even when they grumble?  
You haven't got their leave to touch their clothes  
For that you certainly deserve a bloody nose.

*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

This place is getting overrun by monkeys  
It was fine when they were employed as flunkies.  
They steal and they thieve  
Without a by your leave.  
I'll get them all  
to build a wall  
It must be over ten feet tall.  
Tall and proud will it stand  
It'll be right across the land.  
The monkeys will be over there  
And we are here, they wouldn't dare  
To come across to eat the fruit  
In case they get the end of the boot.

*Man Bidentay:*

The monkeys should be treated well  
And so should all the creatures  
Upon our island that we dwell  
With all its many features.  
Whether from here or over the water  
They are all important father mother son or daughter.

We need them all to pick the fruit  
Or work in the city and wear a suit.  
Or cook the food or drive the trucks  
In other words your wall sucks.

*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

Global warming has to be nonsense  
It's cold today, it is in conscience.  
We want to make the world more hot  
We'll burn more trees like it or not.  
I don't believe that the sea will rise  
And if it does we can swim, that's enterprise.

*Man Bidenday:*

I see you have left the Paris agreement  
I don't think that is very convenient.  
When I win I will restore hope to the world  
I shall rejoin I am very bold.

*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

You win, haha, please don't make me laugh  
You haven't a chance not even one half!  
Look at you, you're old and grey  
You cannot think you'll win the day.  
You wear a mask  
Are you scared I must ask?  
You stay in your hut  
With the door firmly shut.  
I survived the Chinese lurgy  
I have so much energy.  
Those lines don't scan or rhyme in speech  
And to get well I didn't drink bleach.  
Which I am told will cure us all  
Every one, the short and the tall.

*Man Bidenday:*

Drinking bleach is not advisable  
I think you'll find it makes people dies-able.  
The time has come, we'll get the result  
To whom shall rule our island and exult.  
This night is very exciting  
Lots of waiting and nail biting.

*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

You may as well go home and sleep  
I know I've won, the power I'll keep.

*Man Bidenday:*

I'll stick around and see  
I think it isn't you but me.  
We've a complicated system  
For voting I will list 'em.  
Each group of creatures have some votes  
For you or me even the goats  
When everybody's had a go  
For you or me it's yes or no.  
We'll see how many groups for you  
And for me we'll add them too.  
Then those who got the biggest lot  
Becomes the leader, like it or not.  
The mice have voted all for you  
And the bats, they're crazy too.  
For me are the ants, the birds and the bees  
I'm in the lead haha hehes!!

*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

And now the voting's nearly done  
I've won, I've won, I've won, I've won!!  
You should stop now and cheer for me  
I'm tops again that's clear can't you see.

*Man Bidenday:*

Hang on, hang on, hang on a mo  
There's plenty more of this to go.  
The snakes the toads the bears the fish  
Must have a go before the finish.  
Now that everyone is in  
For me I do declare a win.

*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

You're cheating, yes I'm sure you are  
I'll find you out, I won by far.  
It isn't fair for me to lose  
I'm sure it is for me they'd choose.  
My lawyers they will get me in  
'cos not to win would be a sin.

*Man Bidenday:*

You didn't win and you are out  
Just give up now, you silly lout.

*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

Oh yes I did!

*Man Bidenday:*

Oh no you didn't!



*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

Oh yes I did!

*Man Bidenday:*

Oh no you didn't!

*Audience: All together now—*

Oh no you didn't!

*Dame Robinson Trumpsoe:*

Whatever you say I really won  
I am the best, so is my son.  
I'll stay inside the white hut  
You can't come in, the door is shut.

*Man Bidenday:*

Sorry mate, you've got to go  
You asked them and they all said no.  
You go away and sit and sulk  
You silly thing, you great big hulk.  
And so dear friends we did win through  
It's better times for me and you.  
It's Christmas time, be of good cheer  
Stay safe and wear that mask you hear!  
That man has gone for good we hope  
This is not time to sit and mope.  
Drink up that wine and whisky and beer  
I'm sure we'll all have a great New Year!!



Please keep sending in your items of interest, from a couple of sentences up to 250 words  
to Ursula Steiger [ursulae@btinternet.com](mailto:ursulae@btinternet.com) or [Editor@U3ACanterbury.co.uk](mailto:Editor@U3ACanterbury.co.uk)

