



The 30th Issue feels like a milestone which should be celebrated and, luckily, we finally have much to celebrate.

At last, some groups have been able to re-start. Unfortunately, not those meeting in people's homes but with some community halls re-opening it is now possible for others to get going. The heart-warming experience of those in the walking group is a good incentive for others to follow suit where they can. I received 1 photo in response to our



request for photos of what you've been up to during lock-down. It's from Alison Walesby whose hobby is stained glass, this beautiful lantern took about 3 weeks to make.

Unfortunately, everyone else seems to have been too shy! It reminds me of the words of Marianne Williamson in her poem, Our Greatest Fear. The Lunch Club have shown their poetic side once again and most of their poems are here, along with some ideas from Archaeology and a soothing suggestion from Singing Together. My thanks go to all contributors, helping to keep us all in touch and reminding us that our U3A is still very much alive and kicking!



From the Chair

Dear Members

When I wrote for Update in June, I was hoping that some form of normality might have returned for us as a U3A. As of now, I cannot see monthly meetings starting again for some time and that includes our long overdue AGM. Consideration was given to holding a Zoom AGM but it was felt that this would exclude many members from participating, so for the time being the committee has agreed to continue in post. I appreciate this is not in line with our constitution but reflects the current Covid situation. We will be thinking about how this issue can be resolved safely. Please contact me or a committee member if you have concerns about this or any other related issues or suggestions on how we could proceed.

On a happier note some groups are beginning to meet again, with those meeting outdoors leading the way and those in community halls now following. All groups will have completed a risk assessment in line with both government and U3A advice. If as a group leader you think you would like to start up again and can do so safely please use the Risk Assessment form which is in word on the website under Downloads.

It has not been an easy time for any of us but I would like to thank Emma for keeping everyone in touch and Paul, Roger and Joyce, ably assisted by Sue Grierson for obtaining refunds and reimbursing everyone for the cancelled trips. We had so much to look forward to at the beginning of March and all being well we will do so again.

Louise Keeling



Membership Joyce Winwood

Thank you to those 196 members who, in good faith, have renewed their membership this year. To honour and respect that you have paid your fee in full (and received little since March) the Committee has decided not to reduce the joining sum this year, as was our usual custom from October, but to keep it the same throughout the year.

You will be aware that several Interest Groups are starting up again and for that reason we have a message for those who have not renewed as yet. **You will need to do so before joining your group.** Only four people have let me know they will not be renewing their membership, so I take that as a good sign that you have delayed because circumstances were so uncertain or because you simply forgot. Our insurance only covers those who are members, so you will not be able to attend groups unless you have renewed your membership. Please consider doing so as soon as possible, thank you.

A renewal form can be downloaded from our website and returned with a cheque to my home address which is on the form, or bank transfer can be done via our Treasurer, Roger Coates.

We appreciate that things are moving slowly but hope you feel the time is right to revisit those Interest Groups and meet with friends again so we can Laugh and Learn together. If COVID has taught us anything it has been to value family, friends and community, we look forward to seeing you all again.

Remember: you must renew your membership, if you haven't already done so, before re-joining your group/s.

News from the Groups



Archaeology

As we have been unable to meet as a group, the only way of keeping an interest in Archaeology has been through the media.

There was an online Festival of Archaeology from 11th to 19 July 2020 which included live talks and digital tours. The second part of the festival is from 24th October to 1st November 2020.

<https://festival.archaeologyuk.org/find>

There have been some interesting programmes on the television. Bettany Hughes recently did a fascinating series titled 'A Greek Odyssey'. She followed the journey of the mythical Odysseus as he travelled home from Troy to Ithaca. The programmes were part travel, part myth and archaeology. It was on Channel 5 and is available on catch-up.

Only this week there was information on the BBC about the origin of the sarsen stones at Stonehenge. The seven metre high sarsens have been traced to an area near Marlborough. The smaller bluestones were traced to the Preseli Hills in Wales some time ago.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-53580339>

As for the future, we hope that Gloucester Civic Trust is able to hold its History Festival and Heritage Open Days in some form this September. Details will be on their website in due course.

<https://www.gloucestercivictrust.org/glouces-ter-events/>

Alison Walesby



Bridge for All

After a very busy time over the winter months, when our group saw an increase in players at all levels, from complete beginners upwards, and we regularly had four or even five tables going, we were suddenly brought to a halt when the reality of the Covid pandemic became apparent. Our last meeting in the Methodist Church Hall was on March 5. After that, and especially once the full lockdown forced the closure of community facilities and restrictions on private meetings, we had to find other ways of keeping up our Bridge. Two groups of four have been playing regularly on-line and others made do with a more solitary solution via an online teaching website.

But none of this compares with a real live game, and thank goodness we can now look forward to a return to the Methodist Hall which is able to offer a Covid-secure venue. The additional precautions needed to play Bridge safely within government guidelines took some thought and preparation, but we are confident enough to start meeting again on August 20. Numbers will have to be limited to meet social distancing requirements and quite a few of the group feel it is too risky for them to return just yet but enough of us are prepared to give it a go.

Please look at our Bridge group web page on the Churchdown U3A website for more details about how we propose to play Covid-secure Bridge and up-to-date reports on our progress.

Emma Fletcher



Italian Group John Hawkswell

Our group used to meet weekly at the Caffe and Vino in Tewkesbury where the Italian speaking staff guided our conversation sessions. The cafe was closed of course during the restrictions but we continued weekly meetings via Zoom video link during this time. Of course, we missed the café atmosphere and the friendly staff not to mention the coffee. Although second best these Zoom meetings proved surprisingly entertaining. As the weeks passed, we noted that our hair grew longer and thicker (or at least those lucky enough to have some) but it allowed us to stay in touch. The conversation is mainly in Italian but sometimes we lapse into English.

We continue to have different weekly themes and recently someone suggested a play reading would be worth trying and a bit of a novelty. Unfortunately, we could not find anything suitable so like a lot of people at the moment we improvised and penned our own play.

We read through the play at the last Zoom meeting and it provided plenty of entertainment and revealed some surprising thespian talents within the Group. The play is entitled "There are no flies on that one". Davide Ventola, who runs the Caffe & Vino, was kind enough to review the play and make corrections to the Italian. He has suggested that once things become more normal, we perform the play live at the Caffe & Vino. I am sure we will rise to the challenge hence the attached poster.

However, since this was written 6 of us have now met for a long-awaited lunch at our beloved Caffe e Vino.



And finally,..... When my wife caught me taking this photograph of our empty wheelbarrow, she thought I might be suffering from a case of *lockdownitis* and perhaps needed some vitamin supplements. But hopefully you can appreciate the resemblance of this puddle to the map of Italy even if the island of Sicily has somehow disappeared. When I saw the shape made by the rain I had to share it with the members of our Italian group. You understand don't you.....



Lunch Group Robbie Philip

The last outing of the Lunch Group seems such a long time ago and it is. Our last outing was in February and, as I remember, we had a very nice lunch at the Rose Tree Farm restaurant in Quedgley. Our next outing is??? You tell me. I am writing this at the end of July and I have no inkling at this time if we will even have a Christmas lunch outing this year. The main thing is that we all keep safe.

In trying to keep our Group together as we weren't lunching once a month, I started a weekly Ramblings Blog which tells the ups and downs of the Philip household during Lockdown, now on number 18. To my delight a number of the group members respond with news of what they have been up to. What has really risen to the top is the number of very talented poets we have in the Group. Stuart Turnbull and Jenny Cotton are regular weekly contributors and Joan Akturk is not far behind. Their poems are all very topical and things that we all can relate to.

Goodness knows when we will all be gathered together again but, in the meantime, please everyone take care and as Vera Lynne (not Webley) would say 'We'll meet again some sunny day' even if it is in the middle of December.



Petanque Louise Keeling

Back in March we were all looking forward, weather permitting, to using our new piste and then Covid struck! The CCA closed and we were all self-isolating. The good news is the CCA has reopened and as long as there is not another lock down, as I write, the group is meeting again.

Thanks should go to Alan Drinkwater, a local builder, who kindly took it upon himself with the permission of the CCA to provide the new

area. It is not solely for our use but we feel a certain ownership of it.

We no longer provide boules for general use but if interested come and find out more.

Sets can often be found in charity shops and no particular skills are needed. Please read the risk assessment form first which is on the Petanque page on our website or the copy at the CCA. For the latest photos of our group please see the Welcome Page as well as the Petanque page.



Yoga Sue Grierson

Our two Yoga groups had been flourishing with both groups at about maximum capacity which was great. I think we were the last group standing in March, meeting on Fridays, but finally had to admit defeat when Boris had to put us all in lock-down. For a few weeks I put a 'Pose of the Week' on the web-site along with taking the opportunity to delve into the history and philosophy of Yoga. It's all still there if you're interested to find out a bit more about it. When one of our members tentatively asked if I would consider doing a Zoom session, I put it to the group and after a couple of weeks of getting used to the technology, those who wished to give it a go settled into a regular, weekly practice, with the main focus on breathing and meditation.

However, we're now looking forward to meeting in our lovely hall again, albeit with reduced numbers and restrictions in place. It's not easy working through the guidelines and advice, drawing up a risk assessment and making sure we all stay safe but I am sure it's worth it, having experienced the joy of meeting up again with the walking group which was the first of our groups to re-start.



Singing Together

Alan Winwood

Unfortunately, the news regarding any choral activity both professional and amateur is not encouraging. The government guidelines are for no singing in large groups for the foreseeable future.

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Chorus, of which I am a member, had a wonderful programme of events to celebrate the orchestras centenary which have all now turned to dust including a tour to Salzburg this month and to America in November.

However, choral singers are indefatigable individuals and each week we have a chorus zoom session where we have over 70 members (spread over multiple computer/iPad screens) tuning in for some on-line sustenance. The session lasts for about an hour and is a mix of conversation and presentations, always ending with a choral piece to sing in our own homes.

One such piece I would recommend to U3A members who relish a little island of calm at sometime during the day is **Ave Verum Corus** by William Byrd. It's a beautiful, simple piece for unaccompanied four-part choir. It lasts just over four minutes and is best enjoyed with a glass of whatever you enjoy sitting in your favourite chair. You can find it on YouTube. The first one you can follow with the music just follow this link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2ckGcpx6xl>

The second one is a video of a French Singing group.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioBgfmgRLUE>

Both these links are on the Singing for Pleasure page on the web site and can also be found on Spotify, Apple Music or Amazon music. Enjoy.



Walking group

Mary White

After seeking confirmation from U3A Head Office that outdoor activities would be covered by insurance from July 4th, provided that a risk assessment form was completed and current government guidelines were complied with, an email was sent out to members to assess the desire to recommence our walking programme.

A positive response was received and so Paul and myself planned some walks, initially starting close to Churchdown. Walkers were informed of the guidelines and the requirement for risk assessments.

The first walk was on July 14th from Brickhampton Golf Club to Priors Norton and was enjoyed by 10 people. A total of 6 walks are planned before the end of August (see website for details) and more for September.

The feelings of being able to walk in the group again are best summed up by two members, Jane and Sylvia:

“So pleased to able to meet up with friends I haven’t seen before lockdown. It felt safe and such a privilege to resume an activity that I enjoy very much. I do walk on my own but it’s so much better with other people. “

“It was great to hear that we could restart the U3A walking group, I have missed walking with friends. It was lovely to meet up with people we hadn’t seen for many weeks, and hear how they had dealt with lockdown and the gradual relaxation of rules. Our first rest stop was extended because we were having a good chinwag. Good weather helps and we’ve been lucky so far. Many more walks to look forward to this year!”

And here are the poems:

What to Do?

Stuck at home bored,
 alone with my thoughts my mind begins to wander
 What to do, where to go I ponder.
 Maybe I could make a move
 I doubt the family would approve.

North, South, East or West the choice is mine
 To live beside the sea would be divine ***
 Which one, where, I can go anywhere
 Oh, how I wish I could just be there.
 Lots to think about, my mind's in a whirl
 Covid 19 has caused this turmoil.
 So many friends to leave behind
 So too, new horizons to find.

I've dreamt it, slept on it, talked about it
 Perhaps I should just get on with it.
 I'll go and have a look around
 It maybe my dreams will run aground.

Churchdown may not be so bad after all,
 I've lived here 50 years all told.
 Sometimes better the devil you know
 And just let your hopes and dreams flow.

*** Having seen recent photos of South coast beaches perhaps not!

Jenny Cotton



Plock Court near Churchdown

Photo: Pam Bryant

March to May 2020

It's something that I've just given a thought,
 It's a matter which is deserving of our support,
 In truth, it's an action that I'd always disliked,
 Most folk that I know, I believe, tend to think
 alike,
 I'm sure that it is something that has become
 familiar to you,
 We are now all so happy and eager to join a
 queue!

The Supermarket, Garden Centre, even the
 Doc,
 They've laid down sticky tape to mark the spot,
 We can chat, making small talk and discuss our
 lot,
 But we must social distance as we shuffle like
 robots,
 Have you noticed the faces, some are rather
 glum,
 Oh, I'm so thankful that we've had weeks of
 SUN!

What can we say about the British weather,
 It's been mocked and joked about, well,
 forever,
 But look what it's done when we've been in
 need,
 It's changed completely and been our friend
 indeed,
 The damp and rain seem a thing of the past,
 But I still have a question, how long will it last?

It's been such a long time since we met for
 lunch,
 In fact it was the week of the Cheltenham
 Races,
 Robbie, in searching for a venue away from the
 fray,
 Had made all kinds of enquiries and tried
 interesting places,
 He came up with Quedgeley - The Rose Tree
 Farm,
 We did not expect a bug from Wuhan to do so
 much harm!

Stuart Turnbull

Nature to the Rescue

Take a walk round my garden and you may see
 Families of rabbits roaming free
 Roe deer do sometimes make an appearance
 They are very shy and soon make clearance

If you are about sometime near dawn
 You may be lucky and see a fawn
 Frogs, toads, and newts by the brook
 Can be seen if you know just where to look

Crafty squirrels steal from the birds
 Dig holes in my lawn and make me curse
 Four of them chasing round like madmen (or
 women)
 I only wish I knew how to get rid of them

A fox comes nightly and leaves in a hurry
 After eating leftovers, including hot curry
 But he leaves me a mess (age) so I know he has
 been
 I must try to avoid it -as long as it's seen
 Badgers once visited, a great pleasure to see
 But sadly, no more due to Bovine TB

Rodents of all kinds, mice, moles, voles and
 unfortunately rats
 And also at dusk I'm visited by bats
 Species of birds, too many to name, tits, crows
 finches galore
 Friendly robins and cheeky jackdaws

Birds of prey are sometimes sighted
 A kite flew by which made me delighted (not
 the paper type)
 So lockdown and corona virus can go to the
 Devil
 I shall enjoy my garden and keep my head level.

Joan Akturk

And finally....

***CONGRATULATIONS to Ann and Tony Knight
 on their Diamond Wedding Anniversary! ***

If you have a significant birthday or anniversary
 coming up before Christmas please let me know.
 I'd love to have a regular 'Celebration' spot.

Current Group List

Please contact the leader if you wish to join a group or for more information go to our web-site:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/churchdown>

Group Coordinator: Jill Bunting jillbunting50@gmail.com

Group	Leader	Telephone
Archaeology	Alison Walesby	01452 713888
Art History/Appreciation	Martin Bowden	01452 854007
Badminton	Eamonn Doherty	07946 341270
Bird Watching	Alan Baxter	01452 856440
Book Club/Literature	Joyce Winwood	01452 715099
Bridge for All	Emma Fletcher	01452 712336
Cookery	Eve Anstis	01242 235833
Crafts	Wendy Martin	01452 714049
Cribbage	Diana Sinden	01452 698713
Gardening	Ann Knight	07770 599744
Garden Visits	Barbara White	07780 986016
Family History	Ruth Phillips	01452 857236
Italian Appreciation	John Hawkswell	01452 730528
Lunch Club	Robbie Philip	01452 715033
Petanque	Louise Keeling	01452 712753
Photography	Ann Knight	07770 599744
Politics	Roger Streatfield	01452 713498
Scrabble	Derek Fisher	01452 713056
Singing Together	Alan Winwood	01452 715099
Table Tennis	Syd Leuillette	01452 857039
Walking	Mary White	07817 007706
Whist	Ann Johnston	Via web page
Yoga	Sue Grierson	01452 857831