

# COVENTRY SHERBOURNE U3A JANUARY 2021

Check out our website: [u3asites.org.uk/coventry-sherbourne](http://u3asites.org.uk/coventry-sherbourne)

Happy New Year

## Due to Covid, u3a face to face activity is suspended

The New Year is with us and we have said a thankful farewell to what has been a strange and miserable year for everyone. 2021 should be better, with the roll out of the vaccination programme offering the possibility, later in the year, of some return to normality and greater freedom to mix with all of our loved ones.

Last year did teach us to be grateful for small things that we took for granted; a walk in the fresh air, time for hobbies, learning to make the best of things, and just how precious friends and family are. Have a Happy New Year and I hope it is not too long until we can meet again.

Please email your articles for the February edition to me at: [tonessa.makepeace@ntlworld.com](mailto:tonessa.makepeace@ntlworld.com)

Philip and Jill Stebbings celebrated their Diamond Wedding on December 24<sup>th</sup> 2020

I am sure you will join with me and the committee to wish them both heartfelt congratulations.



## **The Boarding of Flight 2021 has been announced...**

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Your luggage should only contain the best souvenirs from 2020...

The bad and sad moments should be left behind

The duration of the flight will be 12 months.

So, tighten your seatbelt

The next stop-overs will be:

**Health, Love, Joy, Harmony, Well-Being and Peace**

The Captain offers you the following menu which will be served during the flight...

A Cocktail of Friendship

A Supreme of Health

A Gratin of Prosperity

A Bowl of Excellent News

A salad of Success

A Cake of Happiness

All accompanied by bursts of laughter...

**Wishing you all an enjoyable trip on board flight 2021**

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Phil wrote:

On Christmas Eve I received a visit from the Queen. I did not actually see Her, but as She had not placed a stamp on the card it must have been hand delivered.

I expect she was passing Coventry on Her way to some other function.

The card was to congratulate Jill and I on 60 years of marriage.

Janet Foot who runs the Craft group in better times is also a serious walker and has sent in this article, which is the first of three. The rest of the series will appear in subsequent newsletters.

### Walking the Pennine Way, by Janet Foot

#### **A walk that, like Topsy, “Just Grew and Grew”.**

Everyone has heard of the satisfaction caused by delayed gratification; well, this is the tale of extremely delayed gratification!

So, when and where did it all begin...

In 1968 I went to Sheffield to train as a teacher and discovered the Peak District. One day I stood at Edale watching a party set out on the then new and much less popular Pennine Way, thinking to myself “One day I would like to do that”. Marriage and family came along and although life got in the way, every time we went to the Peak District there was always that “one day” thought.



We continued to walk whenever possible, but never very far until... In October 2004 on holiday in Dumfries, we went for a walk round Loch Trool. Standing at the far end looking along the Southern Upland Way, we both said, ‘I want to go up there where very few people go.’ Well, the next civilization was 25 miles from that point with only a bothy along the way. We spent the whole journey home discussing how to become fit enough to walk twice as far in a day as we currently were. As a result, a pipe dream became reality!

We spent 2005 increasing our stamina and doing weekend walks, getting used to carrying our kit. We then went to do the Dales Way- which although it was cut short as Derek sprained his ankle – gave us the long-distance path bug.

2006 saw the Dales Way completed and Glyndwr’s Way, after which we felt ready for the BIG One in 2007.

Thwarted again! Derek could not have the three weeks holiday we needed during the school holiday, so we walked Lady Anne’s Way and the Clwydian Way. During the winter we walked the Heart of England Way to keep up our fitness level. Having reached Milford, we decided to link up to Edale before we walked the Pennine Way so we would have walked all the way from home. This proved to be the first ‘Topsy’ decision.



This brought us to 2008, holiday booked early and the start of our adventure proper. During the spring we walked from Milford to Edale and also the West Highland Way. Then in August we finally set off on the Pennine Way. Only forty years after I had first thought about it and in what turned out to be the wettest August on record!

Twenty-one days of pouring rain later we reached Kirk Yetholm and Scotland. What a sense of achievement. We had finally walked the Pennine Way, which was our original goal and in doing so walked from our house to Scotland and also south as far as Bath on the Heart of England and Cotswold Ways.

What to do next? That was yet another ‘Topsy’ moment and the start of another adventure.....



## Lone Fisherman At Hawkesbury

### Junction by Robert Nash

A good friend of mine, Stuart Robertson, sent me this picture, taken in 1976, by Martin Green of the Warwickshire Industrial Archaeology Society.

The location will be familiar to many reading this article as the turnover bridge at the start of the Oxford Canal at Hawkesbury junction. The Greyhound pub is on the left just past the bridge.



The fisherman is one of Coventry's famous sportsmen, namely George Cole. He played for Coventry RFC for almost 20 seasons. He started out as a scrum half and then went to full back where his prodigious kicking landed him 2,848 points from 452 appearances. In addition, he added 539 points from 87 games for Warwickshire, where he often played with Martin Green, who played for Moseley.

The mystery was why he was never capped for England. This was especially strange as in his era of the 1950s, 60s and early 70s as an effective goal kicker in the number 15 shirt was a rarity.



Note the terrible state of the towpath in 1976 compared to this image taken in 2017.

## The Editor's New Year Challenge

What would you like 2021 to bring? My challenge to you is to sum up in 5 words your wishes for 2021. My words are:  
**Hope, Hugs, Vaccination, Meetings, Laugh**

Chris Porch: **Health, Happiness, Holidays, Certainty, Entertainment**

Anne Tithecott: **Freedoms, Meetings, Spontaneity, Laughter, Pubs**

Now it is up to you e-mail me with your 5 words at [tonessa.makepeace@ntlworld.com](mailto:tonessa.makepeace@ntlworld.com)

Thank you to Mavis Cook for sending this in:

**2021 ....**

When Corona is a beer again  
When Donald is only a duck  
When tiers sit on cake  
And when bubbles only exist in champagne

### A post Brexit puzzle from Anne Tithecott

Now that the U.K. has left the E.U., some European foods will be spelt differently! Can you work out the English words?

1. Apmgqqylr =croissant
2. Ngxxy =
3. Cbyk afccqc =
4. Pqgmrrm =
5. Jyqyelc =
6. Nycjyy =
7. Dmlbsc =
8. Qrmjjcl =
9. Qnyefcrrg =
10. Ynnjc qrpsbcj =

## Ordinary Seaman Just Nuisance RN by Bill Day

On 25<sup>th</sup> August 1939 Ordinary Seaman Just Nuisance was enlisted into the Royal Navy.

Although this naval rating's name seems unusual, the location was Simon's Town, South Africa and things are somewhat different there, aren't they? In this case, the recruit was a 7 year old massive Great Dane! While visiting South Africa, I came across a statue honouring this intriguing seafarer and I was prompted to find out more.

Nuisance, as he later became known, was brought as a pup to the town by his owner, who came to run the United Service Institute near the Royal Navy base named HMS Afrikander. Nuisance had grown used to "babysitting" within his family and was soon to be performing a similar role for grown men. At first, sailors who frequented the Institute while ashore were asked to help out by taking the friendly canine for a walk, but before long he was leading the navy men on his expeditions around Simon's Town. Nuisance became extremely popular with the sailors and he developed an affinity with people in naval uniform, becoming a familiar sight as he cadged food at every opportunity. In his eyes, nowhere was out of bounds as he escorted drunken sailors from the pub or from the train station back onto their ships, often making himself comfortable, by stretching out across the top of the gangplank – a Nuisance indeed!



*Statue of Nuisance and Simon's Town Harbour*

Nuisance was very gentle with people, but would intervene if he came across two sailors "squaring up" when drink got the better of them. His peacemaking technique was to place his front paws on the shoulders or chest of one of the protagonists, so that he rested on them at almost two metres tall, looking them in their eyes and

letting them savour his doggy breath. Needless to say, the sailors soon calmed down! However, he would not tolerate mascot dogs from visiting ships who innocently invaded his territory and the intruders suffered the terrible consequences.

The enormous Great Dane was a frequent train passenger and would sometimes accompany sailors who were on shore leave as far as Cape Town, 22 miles away. Even when the ticket inspector ejected him for travelling in contravention of the rules and without a ticket, Nuisance would either catch the next train, walk to the next station or simply jump through the glassless "windows" of the more basic rolling stock at the rear of the train and resume his position on the wooden bench of the carriage. Attempts by the sailors to conceal the huge dog were usually doomed to failure, and offers made by his human companions to buy a ticket were spurned by the inspector. An additional benefit of Nuisance's train trips was the possibilities for cadging morsels of food from many passengers while he moved through the carriages. A successful trawl through the train added up to a substantial meal for Nuisance.

Eventually exasperated railway officials insisted that Nuisance's owner should keep the dog under control, pay his fares or have him put down. This incensed the naval community who had developed great affection for the Great Dane and letters expressing concern were written to the local RN Commander, who came up with a solution. Nuisance was enlisted into the Royal Navy, as it was considered that this would be good for morale and additionally, enlisted men were entitled to free rail travel. His first name was given as "Just", his trade was "Bonecrusher" and his religion "Scrounger", but this was later changed to "Canine Divinity League (Anti-Vivisection)". Nuisance signed his papers with a paw mark. Ordinary Seaman Just Nuisance was later promoted to Able Seaman to entitle him to free rations.





Nuisance never went to sea, although on more than one occasion he was smuggled onto planes hunting for enemy submarines. His official duties included fund raising and raising morale. A seaman was allocated to Nuisance to ensure he was regularly groomed and to prepare him for appearing at parades wearing his seaman's hat. He also famously 'got married' as a money raising stunt for war funds! However, he still found time to get up to mischief and his RN Conduct sheet, now on display in Simon's Town Museum, recorded just 3 of his misdemeanours and the subsequent punishments, which included "Deprived of bones for 7 days".

Nuisance picked up an injury, apparently by jumping from a moving lorry and landing badly. This caused thrombosis, which gradually paralysed him, so on 1 January 1944 he was discharged from the Navy. His condition continued to deteriorate, and 3 months later he was put down by a vet. He was buried with full naval honours, including a gun salute and the playing of the "Last Post". A simple granite headstone marks his grave and a statue was erected on Simon's Town's sea front to commemorate the life of this truly extraordinary seaman.

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Our regular contributor, Joe Connell, wishes a Happy New Year to all his friends in the Coventry Sherbourne u3a. This month we have a further extract from his book "A Childhood in the 1940s".

### Make Do and Mend

To my sons it's PacMan, but to me it's the Utility Mark. As soon as all the fathers were in military uniform, 'them in power' commenced, for economic reasons, a programme to effectively put civilians into uniform. To control manufacturing cost and purchase price the CC41 logo was created to cover a range of utility clothing. A utility style garment was easy to identify, and today would be heralded as a minimalist fashion.

Men's shirts lost their tails; trouser pockets almost disappeared; double-breasted jackets became collector's items; and pleats in ladies' skirts were reduced to a token appearance. In a dramatic bid to forestall MFI, a range of utility furniture was later announced.

The first effect of this programme was an upsurge in domestic skills. Not since Victorian days had society contained so many dress makers, and almost every house in the street had a Singer sewing machine. The most common design, treadle powered, could swing down and away when not in use; and when covered by a hinged flap, produced a stylish workstation for small boys working artistically on bus ticket rolls.

Fortunately, society had not yet decided that teen years should be the fulcrum point of direction and behaviour. Most items of clothing were patched, maybe dyed a different colour, and would be passed on to another family level. Girls' dresses could be 'run up' (how easy that sounds) on the sewing machine, and most households had a lending library of sewing and knitting patterns. I can still see Mum now, giant pair of scissors and a mouth full of pins.

A chap's clothes however were usually hand-me-downs, which meant that youths of eighteen years old could be seen wearing a strange form of baggy shorts, topped by a jumper knitted from available balls of coloured wool. In later years I would have died rather than be seen in public dressed like that - strange, that it is now high fashion for the same age group...

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## Virtual AGM

**Our virtual AGM will take place on 4<sup>th</sup> February and final meeting documents and voting information will be sent out in the last week of January.**

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### **We Would Like To See Your Lockdown Projects**

As we are now locked down again and spirits may be a little low, perhaps we could motivate each other a little by sharing what we have been up to since last March. Do you have any photos of art, craft or DIY projects, or maybe some creative writing that you could share with other members via our media platforms?

All contributions to Mike Copeland at: [covsherbweb@hotmail.com](mailto:covsherbweb@hotmail.com)

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**Finally, what you've all been waiting for, the answers to Anne Tithecott's Christmas Quiz which appeared in the December Newsletter**

### **Round 1 - Christmas Facts**

1. Egg nog
2. Mistletoe
3. Jingle Bells
4. Turkey
5. Norway
6. Tom Smith, a C19 London sweet shop owner
7. King George VI in 1932
8. Oliver Cromwell
9. Canada
10. Holland
11. 1843
12. Saturnalia
13. Germany
14. Mexico
15. KFC

### **Round 2 - General Knowledge**

1. Bonnie and Clyde
2. Amsterdam
3. Almonds
4. Fencing
5. Canada
6. Laika
7. Slate
8. Coach
9. Zeppelin
10. Vincent Van Gogh
11. Summer Holiday
12. Potato

### **Round 3 - Christmas Entertainment**

1. James Stewart
2. Cupid
3. Nutcracker
4. Ebenezer
5. Macys
6. 364, if all the gifts in each verse are added together.
7. Home Alone 2
8. The Grinch
9. White Christmas by Bing Crosby in 1947
10. Rudolph
11. Tiny Tim, "Christmas Carol"
12. Flesh, wine, and pine logs

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**A big thank you to Anne and all our contributors! Without your articles and photos, our newsletter wouldn't be possible.**