

COVENTRY SHERBOURNE U3A JUNE 2021

Check out our website: u3asites.org.uk/coventry-sherbourne

[For details of our activities see Diary Dates or our website.](#)

As Coronavirus restrictions ease, we are resuming outside activities and with caution up to 6 may gather indoors. We are looking forward to a time when it is deemed safe to relax the remaining rules and we feel able to all get together for our monthly general meetings.

The extended newsletter, which was conceived as a tonic during some very dark times, will no longer be needed. It has been an interesting journey to witness the newsletter's development from humble beginnings to a publication which every month is packed with articles from our members and sometimes from guest contributors. I hope that you have enjoyed reading it or submitting articles for publication as much as I have enjoyed getting it together every month.

A big thank you to all who have contributed and to Bill Day, who has cast an eye over the newsletter and done his best to amend obvious errors.

The July edition maybe the last one published in the current format for a while, [should things soon return to \(the new\) normal](#), so let us make it a good one! All contributions, on any topic, will be gratefully received.

Take care and stay safe. Ness, Editor

Please send your contribution for the July edition to Ness.

Diary Dates for June

Invitations for Zoom meetings will be sent to the email addresses of all members 1 or 2 days in advance.

Monday 7 th at 2pm	Snapchat – a friendly chat on Zoom. All are welcome. You can send a snapshot in advance to Mike Copeland.
Tuesday 8 th at 2pm	Book Lovers reading group. Contact Dorothy Mayo
Wednesday 9 th at 11am	Coffee in the Park – at Caludon Castle Park. All members and prospective members' welcome. Bring a flask and a garden chair if you wish.
Thursday 10 th at 10.30am	Mini History talk on Zoom by Bill Day: Mons 1914...so it begins.
Thursday 24 th at 10.30am	Short Walk – along a further stretch of the Sowe Valley Footpath [rescheduled from May]. Meet at Caludon Castle Park (car park). Contact Bill Day for information.
Wednesday 30 th at 10.30am	Getting to Know Our Ancestors - The theme of this Zoom family history discussion is "Research Brick Walls".

[Janet Foot is starting her craft group again.](#)

Monday 12th July at 2.00pm subject Cascade Cards Contact Janet Foot



u3a day June 2nd, 2021

A group of hardy volunteers gathered in Caludon park to celebrate the first national u3a day.

A steering committee had been set up to coordinate this event and what a good job they did decorating the basketball courts with posters showing all the different activities that our u3a does, when the covid restrictions are lifted.

Handing leaflets to try and increase our membership, explaining the ethos of u3a to live, learn and laugh aimed at people in their third age, retired or semi-retired.



If you didn't make it to the park and you know of anyone who would be interested in joining, go to the website.

I would like to thank all volunteers, and especially Anne Tithecott, Marion Hodgkins, Ann Webb, Jenny Smith and Eileen Wallis, the steering committee, they did a wonderful job.



OUR CITY RESTRUCTURE

By Val Marchi, Women's Research Group [Coventry]

In an edition of the Coventry Evening Telegraph a couple of weeks ago I read with interest an article on the rush to complete the restructuring of the city centre in readiness for 'her' year as The City of Culture. This made me think back to my school days, as the centre was then taking shape after its destruction during the war years. Bomb sites were slowly disappearing as were some of the old streets to make way for our traffic free precinct with its flower beds, seats and fountains and clear view towards the historic St. Michael's Cathedral Spire and ruins to be connected to Coventry's New Cathedral which was consecrated in 1962.



Who can remember the elephant on top of the tall pole at the left-hand junction with the precinct and Broadgate? It was the popular meeting place for anyone 'going to town' I am sure it is still there if your eyesight is good enough It was a very convenient meeting place as many of the bus routes started and finished around the Broadgate grassed island with Lady Godiva sitting proudly side saddle on her horse in the centre.

The Wimpy Bar opened at the start of the lower precinct (later to become the Circular Café and popularly referred to as 'The Circ'). The Pancake Parlour at the top of the slope on the right-hand side was always my favourite with its high bar stools and coffee in tall glasses with mountains of cream on top. The left hand turns down Market Way between British Home Stores and Woolworths (sigh!) and past the turning for the circular market took you past a little jetty on the left-hand side where Canadian Furs were located. Who can remember the delightful smell from the Kongoni Coffee Shop? It was worth a trip to town to just walk past and sniff. Market Way then lead on to The Bird Cage and The City Arcade which seemed so up market back then. The first Chinese Restaurant I can remember was on the left and they did Businessmen's Lunches at bargain prices.

If we turned right from the precinct down Smithford Way we came to the Locarno Ballroom accessed from a glass tower by stairs. Although opened strictly as a black suit and tie traditional ballroom in 1960 it soon found it had to move with the times and cater for all age groups in timed

sessions. It had a luxurious lady's powder room fitted out in red and gold with tinted mirrors, dainty scented soaps and boxes of tissues dotted around. It provided entertainment in the centre of Coventry for many age groups but sadly declined in the 1970's being taken over, after a fire, by Tiffany's until May 1981 when it closed its doors for the last time.

The Belgrade Theatre opened in the early 60's and I remember marching down with a school party occupying the back two rows' downstairs to watch our French teacher in a production of Ruddigore much to our enjoyment. He looked hilarious.

Can you remember Ray's Bar in the Hotel Leofric (famous for his cocktails) and the wonderful dinner dances there? Many famous guests stayed there while performing at the Coventry Theatre and often had their hair styled at Mary Hobley's salon in Broadgate House (later to become Paul's when Mary retired) Evidently the Bridge restaurant used to provide her clients with coffee, tea and sandwiches until the salon opened its own expresso bar.

Hertford Street also became pedestrianised, and Habitat had a store below the old post office and before Sellrights Bridal shop on the left. There were some lovely shops down there and I always thought that was one of the planners' better projects.

When we think back to how lively our city used to be then and what we have lost in the way of shops and entertainment it is very hard to visualise the future planned for the centre. We wait with bated breath!

How about running a competition ‘who can remember the most shops we have lost or ‘our favourite shops?’ I will start you off with Dolcis Shoes. Kendalls in Broadgate. Werfs in Market Way.

Why not give this recipe a try for an indulgent treat?

Gin and Tonic Batter

This is an indulgent treat which is easy to prepare. It is ideal when combined with mackerel and a luxurious treat in banana fritters or with cauliflower. If you do not like gin, it can be left out. This recipe makes enough for 2 people.

Ingredients

125 grams plain flour

20mls of Gin

375 mls tonic

1 egg

Method

Put flour in a bowl.

Beat in the egg.

Add the gin, keep beating.

Gradually add the tonic, beating until smooth.

Heat a deep-frying pan or chip pan [if using a chip pan, take out the basket]. About 4 cms of oil is ideal - measure up the side of your pan. The oil needs to be very hot - check this with a small piece of bread - if it turns golden it is hot enough!

Dip whatever you are frying in the batter. When covered, add to the hot oil. Then when golden brown, turn over using tongs and do the other side. Drain on kitchen paper.

The batter is crispy, and the gin and tonic adds an extra dimension to the taste. I love banana fritters with golden syrup or honey, especially with ice cream. Healthy eating can wait for another day, as this is definitely an indulgence.

Another of our family favourites is mackerel, de-boned, which takes about 4 minutes. While fruit is ready when the batter turns golden.



**OLD AGE COMES AT A
BAD TIME!
WHEN YOU FINALLY
KNOW EVERYTHING,
YOU START TO FORGET
EVERYTHING YOU KNOW.**

A further extract from Joseph Connell's book, **"A Childhood in the 1940's"**

He was the original life and soul of the party. When any group of friends and family got together, I would be sent to make an immediate instrumental booking. (*Away to number 36 and see if Alf is in*). For a formal street party or function, Alf would have been booked early to ensure availability.

Alf was our accordion man. I'm not sure where they have all disappeared to, but an accordion was a mobile piano, strapped to the chest of the performer, and operated by

air pressure using a bellows system. Practically every street seemed to have its local accordionist. Like the larger mammals they could on occasion be found in groups, squeezing, and bobbing away like demented Panasonic bunnies.

They supported the singsongs. No sheet music was needed; Alf seemed to know every song requested. As an instrument, the accordion required undoubted skill and dexterity; perhaps this is why it is now a rarity. Today people now prefer music on tap, with the added advantage that the skill level is lower.

Somehow the atmosphere was better when the music was created by the group itself. Singsongs were mainly choral; any solo performances would come at the end of the evening when the artist was suitably emotional. Every male soloist seemed to have left a girl behind in Ireland at some time.

Other instruments could be brought into play. I'm sure that the army considered skill in spoon playing to be mandatory during the first war, as most old soldiers could rattle a rhythm along with Alf. Children were welcome participants, banging away on anything that looked like a drum.

A regular booking for Alf was the Thursday afternoon old-time dancing in the Hen Lane Community Centre. Ladies dressed up and danced with each other or with older gentlemen, while we sat on the floor and watched. The smell of lavender and the swish of taffeta.

There were of course other types of accordions. A smaller version clipped to each hand and sagged in the middle like an over ripe Christmas decoration, but its sound range was limited, and the

instrument was only favoured by whiskered sailors and Irish folk singers.



Coventry city of Culture

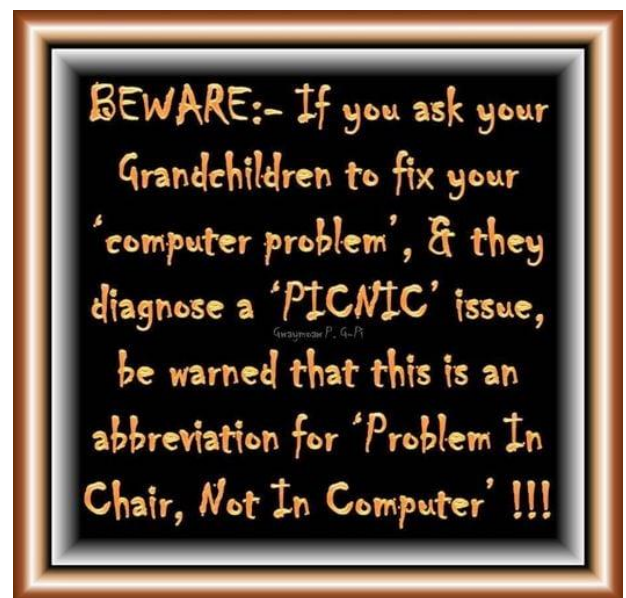
From May 2021 to May 2022 Coventry will be at the heart of a year long spectacular of events, music, dance theatre and exhibitions.

The city won the title in 2017 after showcasing our diversity, innovation, and vibrant youth.

However, there will be events which appeal to all age groups.

For more information go to

www.coventry2021.co.uk



My Allotment Diary for Late May by Ann Karabinas

Hi Everyone, at last some warmer weather which is truly needed.

At the Shakespeare Street Allotment, the broad beans are doing well. The photograph shows the broad bean bed planted for seed alongside the apple tree.

The broad bean bed planted for seeds.



Behind the apple tree is a small bed we planted with parsley, there looks to be a lot of green growing under the netting. Alas, all annual grass, which we have now dug over, weeded and replanted with an Italian parsley, donated by our daughter and described as a strong, flat leafed variety. I hope the description is correct and that it grows.

In front of the apple tree is a comfrey plant which decided to grow there. We left it because the bees love the flowers, and we are not growing anything else there.

A few of the potatoes are beginning to show themselves though not many because it has been so wet and cold. No sign of the parsnips yet, we will give them a few more weeks and then review the situation.

The runner beans planted early in the month have still not come up, I have planted some in pots in case they fail. We have tried various methods in recent years for runner and climbing French beans planting in deep trays, or last year, planting in paper tubes. Both methods rely on getting sufficient heat or the seeds rot. Last year was expensive in terms of paraffin to heat the greenhouse and was not particularly successful. This year we planted directly into the ground.

In the Home allotment we have had a little success:



Here are the mainly Mange Tout peas (Oregon Sugar Pod and Shiraz) planted out and supported by canes and hazel twigs from the Shakespeare Street plot and yes, we still need to use netting to keep off pigeons and squirrels. This is about half of the bed at the house end. I have more planted in guttering in the greenhouse. This gives us successional planting so that we do not get all the crop at once. It is still quite cold in this allotment especially at night. The allotment at the back of us (to the South) is very open and we have had some very cold winds so tender plants must not be put out too early.



These are seedling in the greenhouse. Leeks on the left and courgettes below

