

# COVENTRY SHERBOURNE U3A MAY 2021

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

[See our list of diary dates for meetings & activities](#)

## u3a Day -Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

### **A request from your Chairman, Bill Day:**

It is less than a month before the first national u3a Day on Wednesday 2nd June and all around the country local u3a's will be holding events to raise our profile. We shall be holding a recruitment event at **Caludon Castle Park**, close to Wyken Community Centre and we really need your help.

All that we are asking is for members to take it in turns to attend the park for about an hour between 9.30am and 4.30pm, in socially distanced groups of 2 or 3. The idea is that you keep an eye on the notices that we will have set up, hand out leaflets and answer any questions from older people who are not in fulltime employment and might be interested in joining us.

It is by attracting new members that we can keep the membership costs down and offer more interest groups, so it benefits us all. If you are able to help, please get in touch so that we can add you to the rota.

Anne Tithecott is co-ordinating the volunteer rota, so if you can spare an hour to chat with potential members (or know of anyone who may be interested in joining). Please phone Anne.

**We have introduced more events to our programme as restrictions start to lift, including:**

**All Our Yesterdays group, meeting on Monday 17th May 2021 at 2.00p.m. at 94 Sullivan Road CV67JS.** This month's subject is "Friends" as well as a review of our work so far. We are hoping to meet in Marion Hodgkins' garden for this meeting, so you may need to wrap up warm!

Please phone Marion.

Dates for your diary:

Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>Snapchat</b> - A friendly chat on Zoom about favourite photos. All are welcome. You can send a snapshot in advance to Mike Copeland.	2pm
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>Mini History Talk</b> - My Special Year - 1944, by Robert Nash on Zoom.	2pm
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>All Our Yesterdays</b> – contact Marion Hodgkins.	2pm
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> May	<b>Short Walk</b> – Sowe Valley Footpath. Meet at Caludon Castle Park	10.30am
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>Getting to Know Our Ancestors</b> – The theme of this Zoom discussion is "Cousins".	10.30am
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June	<b>u3a Day</b> at Caludon Park – volunteers urgently needed, please contact Anne Tithecott	9.30am – 4.30pm

NB – Invitations to Zoom events will be sent to all members' email addresses (unless otherwise stated).

Short Walk – it is anticipated that restrictions on numbers meeting outdoors will have eased, although social distancing will be observed. Contact Bill.

**[Julie Neale, living on the outskirts of Coventry, reveals her unusual hobby:](#)**

I should like to introduce you to my flock of pedigree Hebridean sheep. If you have never seen



a Hebridean sheep before, they are small, flighty black sheep with horns. My husband calls them “the goats”! They are a primitive breed of sheep who originated from the island of St Kilda in the Outer Hebrides.

I was first introduced to the breed by my neighbour who had purchased 3 of them to eat down the grass and the brambles in the ‘Daffodil Field’. As its name suggests every year this small paddock is covered in wild daffodils and is looked after by the Wildlife Trust. The sheep come off the field in December every year to allow the daffodils to come through and they are reintroduced in the spring to keep the grass and the weeds down.

After meeting and liking her sheep, I went to the Rare & Traditional Breed Show & Sale, which is held at Melton Mowbray in September every year, to learn more about the breed and to talk to the different breeders. I came away deciding that I definitely wanted some and by the end of the year I had acquired a couple of April born lambs, Spearmint and Sweet Basil. They are now 11 years old, still going strong and enjoying a well-earned retirement eating the grass.

By the following autumn, the time had come to breed from my girls and I borrowed a Hebridean ram lamb named Ronasvoe McMor to put in and hopefully mate with them. He stayed with us for a couple of months before being returned to his owner, who later showed him extremely successfully and he went on to become a breed champion.

Spring came and on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2011 Spearmint gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl, who I named Adam (he had to be named Adam, did he not, him being the first?) and April, followed a couple of weeks later by Aaron and Annie. Hebridean lambs are tiny compared to commercial sheep and are very, very cute when they are born. I decided there and then that I could not part with them and I still have all 4 of them, the girls having given birth to numerous sets of twins since, with Annie having a set of triplets one year (see first photo). Obviously, I could not keep Adam and Aaron entire, and I have kept them as wethers (castrated

males) who are companions to my ram when he is not with his ladies. Since then, my flock has grown quite a lot and I now have a ram called Lanfrey, 12 ewes (4 of whom should be having lambs in a couple of weeks’ time), 6 ewe lambs from last year, some of whom will hopefully be going to new homes in the autumn with a couple kept back in my flock for breeding. I have also got another wether called Ernie\*.



*The first lamb of 2021*

Spearmint and Basil’s descendants are now in flocks all over England and Wales; I have also successfully shown some of them, as have some of the people who have bought them from me and I have accumulated a good number of rosettes.

Folk ask why I like my little black sheep so much and my reply is that it is because they all have their own individual personalities and they are all characters. Spearmint is the matriarch of the flock and is always at the front of the queue for food, whereas Aaron is very timid. To round them all up I only have to go into the field and call them; there is a stampede and they are all round me, though if I have a stranger with me they will not come near. They are a hardy, tough breed of sheep, as they have to be coming from the Hebrides. They have to be shorn every year and they also make for very good eating Harrods stock them in their butchers



**Rita Heal describes a holiday with a difference that she enjoyed last year, between lockdowns:**



Last July/August 2020, after ease of lockdown, my brother Steve and friend Sue hired a narrowboat called "Grebe" for a week from Willow Wren at Rugby Wharf, from where we started our journey. The weather was very kind and we decided on the route Rugby to Snarestone, as there was only one lock to manoeuvre.

Our first stop was Stretton where we moored for the night. Sleeping was not too easy in a bunk bed.

Next we made our way to The Lime Kiln on the A5 for a stop for coffee. Then to Sutton stop where we were able to enjoy a very welcome drink and meal outside at the lovely pub "Greyhound". The following morning was our first attempt at working a lock - not too bad! Then on to Trinity Marina, Hinckley, but no pub was available, so cooking was the order of the day.



The slow pace of the boat with the peace and quiet of the canal is very enjoyable, and of course the fresh air.

We were now on the Ashby canal which is quite narrow and passing boats was a little trickier.

Our next stop was Stoke Golding, near the site of the 1485 Battle of Bosworth, where Richard III was defeated by Henry Tudor. Next was Congerstone, another small village, where we moored for the night.



Then we moved on to Sutton Cheney Wharf and the Battlefield Visitor Centre. Our next mooring was Shackerstone, after visiting Shenton Battlefield Railway.

At Snarestone tunnel we turned round for our journey back. This is the point where the canal finishes, as it needs to be cleared of debris. This work is being carried out by volunteers.

What an experience, one which I can definitely recommend, although I must say I did not steer the boat!





## My Allotment Diary for April (and very early May), by Ann Karabinas:

Well, Everyone, earlier in April I thought I would be reporting that there was no progress on the growing front in the Shakespeare Gardens Allotment, BUT we were very pleased, and relieved when the broad beans started to emerge late in the month.



The photo shows how they were looking on the 27th of April. There has been further progress since it rained. This is the bed we grew mainly to provide seeds for next year. I planted 2 seeds at each station and true to form, when you are expecting something not to go well, they've all come up. The other broad bean beds show similar results.

As it has been so dry there is still no sign of the parsley, I planted in this allotment or the spinach John planted in the home allotment.



We do like to grow climbing peas; however, we have found it much more successful to start the seeds in lengths of guttering. This was because we lost most of the seeds to mice. I have started 3 different types: Shiraz, (top) a climbing mangetout type with lovely purple pods (these turn green on cooking), this is new to us, but the best germinator so far; Oregon Sugar Pod (middle) another mangetout, but with green pods which proved very successful last year and Sugar Snap (bottom) which wasn't very good last year and this year isn't germinating very well, more of these seeds have rotted than the other two combined so I won't be growing them again.

We went up to the Shakespeare Street allotment today, 2<sup>nd</sup> May, for John to plant and earth up 4 rows of potatoes. He plants this way to reduce the risk of frost damage as it takes longer for the potatoes to emerge and the likelihood of frost has lessened.

I went to plant the parsnips. The bed was already prepared, I thought, but I saw bindweed so decided to go over it again and found more bindweed, couch grass plus loads more stones which I removed. It's not much good growing parsnips where there are lots of stones as the parsnip will divide to grow around the stone, so most of the root is then unusable.

Anyway we managed to get both jobs done before the weather turns wetter again.

The meadow side of the Shakespeare Street allotment continues to look lovely.



One of the small cherry trees has been a mass of blossom for most of April and as we move into May the Apple and Quince trees are now coming into blossom.



The cowslips and bluebells are out.

In the photo you can see that the bees have been helping the cowslips mix it with local primulas that they are closely related to as we have a considerable number of red and orange ones in amongst the normal yellow type.

In March, the Committee challenged members to take part in our Writing Project on the subject of "Home". The limited response was disappointing, but thank you to those members who rose to that challenge. Look out for their work in our special Literary Supplement, which will be out very soon.

**A further extract from Joseph Connell's book "A 1940's Childhood":**

Winnie would appear first. Plodding round and stopping in a dejected manner. She pulled a two-wheeled wooden trailer on which sat five or six tall silver milk churns. Alongside walked her business partner, Mr Bird, who served the customers. This was our daily milk delivery, before technological advancement and health restrictions.

Mr Bird (obviously there was a first name, but no-one in the street ever called him anything but Mr Bird) used a pint container to scoop out the required amount of milk and empty it into whatever receptacle was provided by the customer. The customer of course had to run out and intercept this rolling enterprise. The delivered amount was then entered into a hard-backed book by Mr Bird, with the shortest length of pencil I have ever seen.

There was no doubt who was the senior partner in this relationship. Should Mr Bird indulge in any unnecessary discussion with a customer ('*me mam says can you put a pint in this?*') then after the obligatory delay Winnie would resume her hardwired program and walk on. Mr Bird would need to scurry after her. He had never been heard to issue any commands to this reliable animal. Our game of Queenio must stop, else Winnie would just walk through us. Should Winnie forget herself, there would be a race between Numbers 35 and 16 to voluntarily clean up the street with shovel and bucket. Civic pride is a wonderful attribute.

On Friday nights Mr Bird re-appeared on his old black bicycle (both chain guard and bicycle clips) with his book, seeking payment. This was not a simple matter, and many houses had a double account, showing weeks behind ('*me mam's not in - she only left two bobs*').

Rumour had it that Winnie was named in honour of Mr Churchill. With shame, I can't remember this service ending. I just became aware that I

hadn't seen Mr Bird for some time. Milk was now collected from the corner shop, in a bottle. It didn't taste the same.

\* \* \*

I would not like to give the impression that as a family we did not support the arts. I myself was quite an adept on the Jew's harp; an instrument which somehow failed to capture the heart of the public. This was eventually confiscated, (yet to be returned), after my sister lost a rather prominent tooth. She herself attended a farrier every Saturday morning for tap dancing lessons.

The centrepiece of our musical soirées was the gramophone. Only adults were allowed to operate this; it was considered to be a piece of furniture. First the horn would be fitted, and a fresh needle inserted; after a few moments of frantic winding (*modest cough*), a record could then be played.

Our collection was quite eclectic. We had three items. A Disney record ('*Heigh Ho*'), with dwarfs; and '*Some Day my Prince will come*', with Snow White); a comedy record ('*Laughing Policeman*'); and a classical record, won in a raffle, ('*Thieving Magpie*'). Needles were hidden away in a small compartment in one corner of the gramophone.

We also supported the pictorial arts. An average programme at the Lyric would involve a feature film, a secondary film, Pathé News, a cartoon, and a trailer for coming attractions. Mum was a St John's Ambulance nurse. Two free seats were reserved for officiating first aiders, and if the film was suitable, we could be co-opted to carry the bag and run urgent messages if necessary. Fortunately for society it never was.

Saturday morning cinema was reserved for children. Three Stooges, Flash Gordon, Bowery Boys, Spider Woman, and endless series of cowboy films. Villains always wore black hats, dusty clothes, and moustaches; goodies wore white hats, immaculate clothes with fringes, and played guitar around the evening campfire. Villains stole any available horse - while goodies attracted their faithful mount with a whistle. Eating arrangements always involved Gabby Hayes and a gypsy caravan.

On the wireless, after minutes of tuning, the wide and varied entertainment could include ITMA; Dick Barton; musical requests for people serving



in Kuala Lumpur; and Children's Hour. I will never lose the memory of those strange noises made by an adult who earned his living standing at a microphone, in role as Larry the Lamb.



**Did you know** the u3a web site is there for you; on it you will find access to events, information, and articles.

You can also sign up for a **free** monthly newsletter. This is delivered to your email address and lets you know what is happening in the wider u3a. It is well worth a read.

Use your browser to get onto the site using this link: [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)

**Third Age Matters magazine** is published five times a year and posted direct to members' homes in an environmentally friendly paper wrapper. It is packed with stories about members and u3a activities, plus celebrity interviews and features on technology, recipes, travel, competitions, and a lively and popular letters section.



It costs £3.10 a year for 5 magazines. If you wish to receive the magazine please phone Marion.

## Answers to last months' quiz from Sue Grute

1 George Washington

2 George Lucas

3 George Harrison

4 George Clooney

5 George Formby

6 George Lazenby

7 George W Bush

8 George Gershwin

9 George Alagiah

10 George Eliot

11 George Best

12 George Mallory

13 George Cohen

14 George Carey

15 George Stephenson

16 George Stubbs

17 George Bernard Shaw

18 George Osborne

19 George Foreman

20 George Orwell

And finally...Please send your contributions to the June edition to Tonessa Makepeace.