



Deeping St. James

Issue No. 209

# The Deepings u3a

Reg. Charity No: 1166782

## NEWSLETTER

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Market Deeping

FEBRUARY 2021

### AN HISTORIC OCCASION!

On Monday, 18 January 2021, your Committee held it's first virtual meeting via Google Meet (and thanks to David Scott even your editor was persuaded to embrace the 'new technology' and take part!) Now its your turn! Lyall, our Speaker Finder, has arranged for an on line talk to be available on Monday, 15 February, our usual meeting day. It is easy to access – see full details already circulated separately.

No access to on line items? —Bet your grandchildren would help if they have an Ipad or Tablet!



### Chairman's Reflections



I am usually sat in front of this computer, praying for inspiration, at least a week before the newsletter deadline, but due to a series of other priorities, yesterday was my first opportunity, and the deadline was only two days away! But it wasn't to be. I had five phone calls yesterday, and they absorbed 4½ hours of my creative time, so I gave up when it was time to get tea underway, with barely a sentence composed! It caused me to reflect that a hidden effect of this Covid thing is an increased tendency to rambling –verbal not the walking type! We all enjoy telephone contact in these days of isolation, but they do tend to go on, and afterwards we wonder what on earth we found to talk about for all that time!

I have to plead guilty as charged, because it takes two to make a conversation last. A good example comes to mind. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January I was walking, or rather sloshing and sliding, with one of my walking chums, in the saturated countryside. I can't remember what started it, but we noted that a very rare event had occurred the previous evening, just after 8.20 pm. We had lived through the 21<sup>st</sup> second of the 21<sup>st</sup> hour of the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the 21<sup>st</sup> century! Only a very small handful of people alive on Earth at that time will experience another coincidence of this type, as the next one will be about 100 years away, just after 9.20 pm on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2122 (the 22<sup>nd</sup> second of the 22<sup>nd</sup> hour of the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century)! Although this coincidence must have been occurring since the 1<sup>st</sup> century, it won't have been fully recognised as such until conventions of time and date recording were adopted. For instance it wouldn't have worked in the 13<sup>th</sup> century unless the 24 hour clock had been adopted (the 13<sup>th</sup> second of the ??? hour of the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the 13<sup>th</sup> century). If you are following this discussion, and haven't nodded off yet, you will realise that, unless we move from our use of a 24 hour clock, then this coincidence will occur for the last time in 2324 (the 24<sup>th</sup> second of the 24<sup>th</sup> hour of the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the 24<sup>th</sup> century)!

We then fell to trying to work out when calendar months were first established, and when the 24 hour clock was introduced, but thankfully the walk was not long enough to come to any conclusions! However, this rambling conversation was very stimulating and welcomed, and took our minds off the awful conditions underfoot.

Another amazing coincidence occurred that evening – as I was relaxing over my dinner, one of the presenters of the "One Show" made a brief reference to this chronological coincidence.

As I write this, a two day tantalising glimpse of the coming of spring is slipping back into another cold spell. But there are at least some hopeful signs appearing. The hellebores in my garden are only about eight inches tall, but are covered in large buds that are on the point of bursting. Snowdrops and crocuses are in flower, and bulbs are emerging all over the place, even some areas that I remember planting them in! The vaccination effort is at last picking up speed in our area, giving hope that we will soon begin the slow and careful return to something approaching normality. We must be patient, and continue to take the wise precautions needed to keep ourselves and our friends safe and well.

Carry on rambling!  
*Garth*, Chairman

**When we go into another lock down just train all the Amazon delivery drivers to give the vaccine. Entire population immunised by Saturday. Wednesday if you've got Prime.**



*The snowdrop, in purest white arraie,*

*First rears her hedde on Candlemas daie.*

*While the Crocus hastens to the shrine of*

*Primrose lone on St Valentine.' -*

(An excerpt from an Old English floral calendar dating back to the 19th century).  
Thanks to Anne Burton for photo.

# NEWS

## U3A WEDNESDAY GARDENING GROUP



We thought you may like to see some signs of Spring coming, albeit slowly! It may also remind you of the time when we could visit different gardens. It almost seems like a former life, doesn't it?

Following the sad news of Josie's death, we were able to take a bunch of garden hellebores to the undertaker on behalf of the Group.

Jean and I both trust that you are all keeping well and hopefully getting vaccinated!  
Report: JANE COOKE

Group Leaders: JEAN FOSTER / JANE COOKE

## U3A GOOD FOOD GROUP

Eight of us met for lunch on Zoom. We chose an American/Tex/Mex theme and ordered something suitable from our respective supermarket delivery.

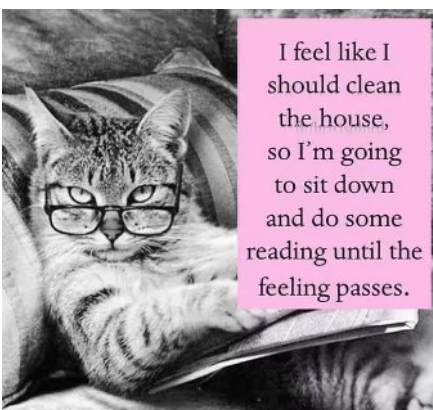


Google pic

There were two versions of a mixed bean chilli, a Mexican inspired tray bake, a chicken and quinoa, BBQ chicken with sweet potato hash and beef with root vegetable mash. All found them tasty.

For the second time we selected from the fairly wide range of Gu desserts, so we could each try something different and they come in individual portions. We decided that Zillionaire's Cheesecake was named because there was a layer of 'gold' in it!

Report: SHEILA MCGURK  
Group Leader: KATHLEEN TANNER



I feel like I should clean the house, so I'm going to sit down and do some reading until the feeling passes.

**This is purely to fill an awkward space and thanks to Anne Burton for sending it.**

**I admit it reflects the feelings I often get myself these days!**  
Ann

## Committee Members 2019/2020

Garth Perry	Chairman
Ann Parkes	Secretary
Anne Burton	Treasurer
Liz Noble	Membership Secretary
Phil Jones	Deputy Groups Co-ordinator
Kath Allen	Vote of Thanks Organiser
Lyllal Seale	Speaker Finder (Co-opted)
Ann Holmes	Newsletter Editor (Co-opted)
David Scott	Newsletter Distribution/ Webmaster

## U3A THURSDAY GARDENING GROUP

Obviously, the current restrictions have prevented the Thursday Garden Group from heading out in search of snowdrops or from meeting in the home of Margaret and David Scott for our traditional annual quiz, but that doesn't mean we can't still be gardening. This month I'm delighted to share a couple of tips from group member Roy Pettitt who always has fantastic results from his fruit trees. Roy says:

Looking after fruit trees during February:

1. Prune apple and pear trees by cutting out dead wood and inward growing branches. Note! stone fruits (peaches, plums, cherries etc) must NOT be pruned until the sap starts to rise in spring.

2. Carry out a winter wash of all fruit trees to help remove over wintering pests.

3. Apply a slow release fertiliser around the base of all trees during the middle of February.

Hopefully, carrying out the above should help produce good crop during the summer.

Thanks Roy.

LINDA HILL  
Group Leader



## U3A JAZZ, SWING AND BIG BAND GROUP

This month's programme was compiled by our Group Leader, Phil Jones. It was another 'Virtual' meeting but we are all connected for awhile with the music.



### The Concert

Phil has chosen some really upbeat music this month and his selection began with 'Over The Rainbow' this time from Cleo Laine and Tubby Hayes. Bud Freeman and Alex Welsh gave us 'I Got Rhythm' followed by Eddie Condon who was a leading figure in Chicago Jazz, playing banjo, piano and also doing vocals. Walter Purf 'Foots' Thomas born in 1907 played 'The Bottle's Empty' an intriguing title, and then Jimmy Deuchar gave out with 'Swingin' in Studio Two'.

'Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone' from Archie Semple, and 'Hiawatha Rag' also came from Archie Semple, led into Stephen Grappelli with Diz Disley and a Jazz favourite, 'Satin Doll'. 'Cannonball' came from John Dankworth, later - Sir John Dankworth. Bobby Gordon and Dave McKenna were on a 'Slow Boat to China' and Chris Barber offered 'All Of Me'. Acker Bilk played 'Creole Jazz'; the Firehouse Five Plus Two gave us 'Yes Sir! That's My Baby'. (Where does he find them?) Our 'Virtual' Concert closed with Thomas Jefferson, (not the original one) and 'When You're Smiling'. A nice cheerful old song and hopefully we all were.

We had lots of interesting facts from Phil about these musicians and their various skills and some of the more obscure groups add to the interest of listening to their music. Phil always puts together a varied and challenging, in some cases, selection of music and for all his hard work the group would like to say how much we appreciate this. Thanks Phil and for getting our copies out to us once again so that we can share the music.

The Group Leaders are asking for members to put together the new programme and should have received a form on which to select a date and let us know. So far we have January, now done, and Anne Jones has chosen April so please think about this for the coming year.  
Report: ANNE JONES

Group Leaders: PHIL JONES / ANNE JONES

## U3A ART APPRECIATION GROUP (February report)

### RENE MAGRITTE 1898 -1967

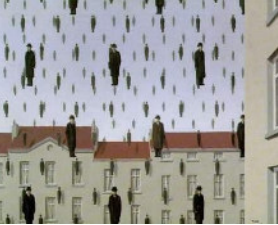
Renee Magritte was a Belgian artist who specialized in the surreal. Normal objects in weird places.

Pipes, apples, sea birds clocks or candles appeared in otherwise straight forward paintings. His unusual style grabbed people's attention, just like adverts do today.



Try this yourself. Pick an everyday object and place it in an unusual setting. A Rubber Duck from the bathroom in a tree. They would cause amusement and your neighbours would be baffled!!

Is it raining men?



Magritte was born in 1898 to a wealthy manufacturing father. In 1912 his mother was found drowned in the River Sambre. She had committed suicide and the family was publicly humiliated because of it. Although he tried studying at the Academie des Beaux –Art he left because he thought it a waste.

Following his exit from school, his paintings reflected cubism and he was influenced by Picasso. He married in 1922 and did various jobs, including painting cabbage patterns on wall paper. It was during this time he realised that surrealism was what he wanted to concentrate on.



He managed to survive WW2 and lived in Belgium during this time. He supported himself by painting fakes of Van Gogh, Picasso and Cezanne.

His brother, Paul Magritte, carried on with this fakery after Rene's death.

SANDRA JONES  
Group Leader

## U3A FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

The Family History Group's January meeting via Zoom saw 10 of us getting together.

The facts and figures of the 2021 Census to be held on the 21 March 2021 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were presented to the Group with some surprises for us all. Scotland has cancelled theirs until March 2022 and Republic of Ireland to April 2022.

The cost of £1 billion, the 35,000 field staff recruited, the new questions asked and how it has been six years in the planning were just some of those facts. The 2021 is to be the first online census, but paper questionnaires will be available if requested. Normally the censuses we look at are over 100 years old due to confidentiality rules.

Peg followed with a talk on "Nonconformists" or sometimes known as "Other Denominations". Where can you find that elusive ancestor whose birth, marriage or death cannot be found? She told us of the history and many places we should search for the records of Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Jews, Mormons and Moravians just to name a few, but unfortunately due to not everything being online and closures it will be in the future.

We followed up by planning the February meeting of us all giving a short talk about one of our interesting ancestors who has a story to tell. February Zoom Meeting to be 8th February 2021.

JEAN BRENNAND  
Group Leader

## U3A "LISTENING TO MUSIC" GROUP

*Music for the New Year, conducted by Daniel Barenboim*



Our Listening to Music Group enjoyed their own Vienna New Year's Day Concert, thanks to Terry Noble, who once again gave us a 'Virtual' event, as usual delivering a copy to the members too. The Strauss Family predominate this event, as expected.

The programme began with Johann Strauss II with four pieces - 'Marchen aus dem Orient', 'Fairy Tales from the Orient', 'The Gypsy Baron, The Overture', 'Entrance March' and the 'Treasurer Waltz'. Then we heard 'The Spanish Waltz' by Josef Hellmesburger II, a member of a Viennese musical family, later a conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic, followed by one of the Strauss family, of course this time Johann Strauss I, and the 'Zampa Gallop'. Strauss II gave us 'The 'Alexandrin Polka', and 'Thunder and Lightning' Donner and Blitzen.).

Josef Strauss, a younger brother of Johann II and not as well known gave us 'Sphären Klänge' (Music of the Spheres). We had another of his compositions 'Abschiedssinfonie' (Farewell Symphony Op. 45, Finale) but then we were back with the Strauss elder and 'Hooray for Hungary'. It is with the Josef Haydn 'Farewell Symphony' that members of the Orchestra begin to leave the rostrum as instructed by the composer. First it's the Oboe and second Horn, then bassoon, second Oboe and so on. This causes a great deal of laughter in the audience and confusion from the conductor. Two muted violins are all that remain. This has become an annual tradition.

Then came the Encores:

Johann Strauss II with 'So angstlich sind wir nicht!' (We're not worried), 'Neujahrsgruß' (New Year Greeting) and naturally we heard 'An der schönen, blauen Donau', (By The Beautiful Blue Danube). And no prizes for the closing item, the very popular 'Radetzky March' with audience participation encouraged.

It was a great way to start our musical New Year so thank you Terry for all your hard work in putting this collection together.

Jim Pringle will be selecting music for our next event and we look forward to that. The group is hoping that other members will offer suggestions for future programmes and to get in touch with our group leaders.  
Report: ANNE JONES

Group Leaders: TERRY NOBLE / JIM PRINGLE

## U3A HISTORY GROUP (February report)

### Folk Lore;

*When the cat lies in the sun in February  
She will creep behind the stove in March*

*Of all the months of the year  
Curse a fair February*



The flower called the snowdrop appears in February and is the symbol of hope. (Bring them on in abundance this year, I say). According to legend, the snowdrop became a symbol of hope when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. When Eve was about to give up hope that the cold winters would never end, an angel appeared. She transformed some of the snowflakes into snowdrops, proving that the winters do eventually give way to the spring.

### Mysterious footprints

8<sup>th</sup> February 1855. Heavy snow blanketed the countryside and small villages of southern Devon. People huddled in their homes overnight but when first light came and windows were cleared, there were footprints. Thousands of mystery footprints! They were in the shape of a cloven hoof but they moved in single file. They went on for hundreds of miles, even going on to roof tops. At first, people were intrigued but then became frightened as they thought it was the work of the devil. The London newspapers published the story and experts investigated the footprints before the snow melted. Nobody could offer any satisfactory solution to the mystery.

SANDRA JONES  
Group Leader

## RAILWAYS: the beginning of a lifelong interest - by Eddie Adams

From a very early age I can remember the fascination that I had with railways. It all started with a long trip when I was about 4, in 1950, from Cornwall to Shoreham by Sea in West Sussex. My mother and I were visiting family friends and it was decided that we would go on ahead, with my father joining us in his car a week later. We lived in the East of Cornwall at a place called Launceston. This trip must have been a great adventure for me. What I remember most was trains passing us at speed in the opposite direction. The bump as the wind hit the side of the train just transfixed me. I was probably very disappointed that my father was driving up, as that meant that he would drive us home.



The Atlantic Coast Express approaching Padstow

Launceston is a small market town that had two stations. One was the GWR branch line terminus from Plymouth. The other was the Southern Railway station with a connection to Exeter and Waterloo to the east and Padstow to the west. This small network of lines, west of Exeter was somewhat mockingly named the 'Withered Arm'. The train service was sparse and took a long time to reach Padstow from Exeter. Nevertheless, there were two daily direct through trains to London, the Atlantic Coast Express, being one. At every opportunity, I would take myself off to the station to see what was going on. Often it was very quiet, but with a relative working in the goods

office, I always had a means to get behind the scenes, so to speak.

In my teen years, during the summer holidays, a friend and I would buy a weeks rover ticket and travel all over the West Country train spotting. It would take a whole year to save up our pocket money for this ticket, but we took full advantage with very careful planning and much studying of timetables. The trouble was that we were restricted by the poor service to get us back to our home station. Our parents wouldn't hear of us sleeping on the train or even staying at a cheap B & B for a couple of nights.



The last train to Plymouth from Launceston



On the edge of Dartmoor, The snow is getting deep-

The branch line between Launceston and Plymouth was due to close on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1962 and of course there was a great sadness at it's passing. My friend, Richard, and I, and a host of others from the town decided to take that last round trip on this line. We set off just as darkness was falling and snow was beginning to settle. We pulled into Lydford, a station on the edge of Dartmoor, and we were all alarmed at how bad the situation was. We started, but then stopped, for what seemed like hours. Eventually there was a bump and a hesitation before we started to move again. A loud cheer went up from everyone in the coach and we limped all the way into Plymouth, arriving in the early hours of the next day! Daylight brought a realisation that we were stuck in Plymouth with no train to get us home. Conditions had improved and some trains were running again.

We joined a group of our fellow travellers and negotiated with the ticket office to give us tickets for a train to Saltash, from where we would walk the rest of the way home; a distance of about 20 miles. We were a walking group of about a dozen, all from Launceston. Progress was reasonably good although we had wet feet from all the slush.

After about three hours of walking a hearse passed us and must have recognised a member of the group, because it stopped. After much discussion it was agreed that Richard and I would be given a lift home with instructions to telephone key people to arrange lifts to pick up the remainder of the group. Fortunately the hearse was not carrying a coffin, so we weren't in the company of a corpse! By mid afternoon we were home again and able to tell our concerned parents all about our adventure. We were treated something like celebrities as the local paper wanted our story too.

Over the next few years, I tended to lose some of my keen interest in railways. It was at the time that girls became more of a fascination for me. Nevertheless, my interest was re-awakened in my late teens when I got my first job as a bank clerk at Padstow. It meant that I had to get there by train and my digs were directly above the railway terminus. I was in heaven. You can imagine how I felt being awoken by the whistle of the 7.20 departure for Wadebridge! This small fishing town was nothing like it is today. There was no Rick Stein and not nearly as many tourists. I loved it there, but I was soon moved on to St Austell, then to Hayle where the bank was directly below the railway viaduct of the main line to Penzance. However, steam engines, by this time had been withdrawn and replaced by Diesel locomotives. These were not the same at all and held little interest for me, but the concept of railways and rail travel did not die altogether. After a couple of years at Hayle, I applied for a job in London, still with the bank, and was accepted. Here my interest in railways really did have to take fourth place to work, marriage and family life.



The Victoria Bridge on the Severn Valley Railway.

In retirement, I was able to devote much more time to both aspects of my interest in railways. At the same time I became seriously interested in photography and joined the local photographic group of The Deepings U3A. Dave Pendry was a great inspiration and I realised that I could widen my horizons by photographing railway subjects. I joined a couple of groups that specialise in photographing steam engines on heritage lines around the country. We would be about 30 of us in all and the organiser hired a train for a day on one of the many picturesque lines. There would be no

other trains running that day so we had the freedom of the line, so to speak. The train would drop us off in the middle of the countryside alongside the line. It would then reverse and we would position ourselves beside the line and wait for the train to come storming towards us, preferably belching out loads of smoke and steam!

There are several very good heritage lines around the country. My personal favourite is the Severn Valley Railway of which I am a part time volunteer. My work is a very boring desk job in the Kidderminster Railway Museum. This museum is part of the SVR and holds a huge photographic archive which is being enlarged all the time. My job is to scan the new pictures coming in and upload them to the database. Other volunteers label, catalogue and enhance them, for sale or for purely historical reasons. Although the work is pretty mundane, some of the subjects are very interesting indeed.

This is only a short recollection of the early days of my interest in railways. I could fill many more pages of memories. In these days of lockdown, I am unable to carry out many of my railway pastimes and so I am building a model railway in 0 gauge. That certainly keeps my interest alive.

EDDIE ADAMS



Sunset on the Gloucs & Warwicks Line.

**CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBES**

*TWO 'RHYMES OF OUR TIMES' illustrating negative and positive thinking:*

What is this life if, full of care,  
 We have too much time  
 to stand and stare?  
 Trapped indoors by Coronavirus  
 Watching life pass by around us.  
 Rain and snow blight the landscape  
 Affecting people's mental state.  
 Our third lockdown within a year  
 Waiting for the job we hold most dear  
 Wearing masks that steam our glasses  
 Unable to smile or make passes  
 Travel plans all put on hold  
 Watching repeats that leave us cold  
 Desperate to hug those we love,  
 And hold as in a velvet glove.  
 A poor life this if, full of care  
 We have too much time to stand and stare.



.....  
 Things to bear in mind during Lockdown  
 Not everything is cancelled  
 Sunshine is not cancelled  
 Relationships are not cancelled  
 Love is not cancelled  
 Care is not cancelled  
 Music is not cancelled  
 Imagination is not cancelled  
 Friendship is not cancelled  
 Spring is not cancelled.

The first was sent by Irene Beeken and I guess was taken from a Newspaper. The second was sent to Enid Withers by her friend and she was so keen to share it with us she paid postage, it being the only way she could get it to me.

**FACE MASK BLUES (NO. 2)**

I'm saving a fortune in lipstick.  
 My Face Cream, unfaceable in its jar.  
 I try not to be egotistic  
 But it's me and I'm no 'Objet d 'Art'!  
 My daughter created a Face Mask  
 So pretty, decorated with flowers  
 But with my large proboscis, a real task  
 and she said it had taken her hours!  
 I don't take it off very often  
 It's a habit that's just become norm...  
 The rules all change so often  
 and meanwhile it keeps my face warm.  
 But early this morning, bare-faced  
 I glanced in my mirror -alas-  
 A face that I didn't recognise .  
 Was that ME in my Looking Glass?



ANNE JONES

**Snowman**

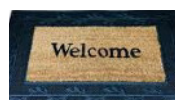
Today I built a snowman  
 Just to prove that I still can.  
 I went out in the chill  
 And all was quiet and still.  
 I'll use moss for eyes and nose,  
 Twigs for arms I suppose.  
 My friends will say I've lost the plot  
 But do I care, no not a jot.  
 I had some fun out in the cold  
 It's what we need or so I'm told.  
 It brought me joy and made me smile  
 And I was happy for a while.



Poem and photo: GILL GODDEN

**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER**

Vivien Hamilton, Market Deeping.



SPACE FOR LABEL



Grateful thanks to David Scott who once again came to my rescue at very short notice (almost instantly!) providing the above photographs to fill a space. The little dog belongs to Esme, Margaret and David's granddaughter.

Please keep sending any items you feel may be of interest to other members. To me this particular issue dose not seem as interesting/inspiring as I hope you have found earlier issues but it is becoming harder each month. However, positive thinking (!) flowers should be starting to appear in gardens again—remember those wonderful pictures we had last year (even in lockdown) well ..... I depend entirely on YOU.

**CLOSING DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: FRIDAY 5TH MARCH 2020**

This really does have to be the final date. The Newsletter is now printed by professional printers and we have to fit in with their time scale so I have no opportunity to slip in late reports—sorry! A