

DONCASTER

u3a

Registered Charity No. 1074577

February - March 2021

From the Chair



Happy New Year to you all and I hope you had a good Christmas. It is such a shame that we were unable to have our usual festive general meeting, but those of us fortunate enough to have access to Zoom were able to get together for a Christmas “do” online with music and singing and readings and poems. I thoroughly enjoyed it and I am sure a good time was had by all. I must say a big thank-you to those involved. Clearly, we have a fair amount of talent in our ranks.

I must also give a big thank-you to all those who have kept the spirit of our U3A alive during the past year. Not only committee members and helpers, but all of those who have been keeping in touch with their group members by email, phone and of course Zoom. It is very encouraging that most of our group leaders are chomping at the bit, desperate to start up again as soon as possible.

As I write this the country is going into another lockdown and we are all being asked to stay at home again. It is a very trying time for us all but at least the immunization program is up and running so, if all goes to plan, many of us will be offered our vaccinations soon. I know some people are a bit wary of it but personally I cannot wait. It is one of the few advantages of being over 70 I suppose.

With good fortune and a fair wind, we may see a return to normality later this year. One thing that has become clear is that members who have attended our Zoom groups have continued to benefit from the companionship and camaraderie in a way that would have been impossible even a couple of years back. One of my biggest regrets is that more members did not take the opportunity of the help with Zoom, that we on the committee have been offering. I had never heard of Zoom a year ago, but now I would not want to be without it. I meet friends and family on it regularly without any fear of catching even a cold. Mind you I can't wait to play with the grandchildren again! Seeing them from a distance or on a screen is just not the same as crawling around with them on the carpet!

Discussion of the “new normal” that we keep hearing about has led the committee to look at our constitution again with a view to modernizing it. I have been chairing a sub-committee over the last few months and we will be publishing our results soon. In the next month or so we expect to make it available to members to take a look at and will be asking for approval of the changes. This will then be put to the vote before seeking approval from the Charity Commission.

I wish all of you the best for 2021 and look forward to better times when we can all get together again. In the meantime, if any of you have been enjoying any new and exciting activities that we could utilize for new U3A groups, please let me know.

Chris Woolven

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

Please be aware that most of the items in the newsletter were written before the latest lockdown came into force. When planning group activities please adhere to the new lockdown restrictions/rules. If unsure about restrictions go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

Coronavirus Doncaster: Update

Dr Rupert Suckling is the Director of Public Health in Doncaster. You can subscribe to his updates from Doncaster Council. Go to:

<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/health-wellbeing/covid-19-weekly-data-report>

or go to: <https://www.doncaster.gov.uk> and type in 'Dr Rupert Suckling updates' in the search box.

Local Covid Data / Video updates / FAQ / Other information

It is with great sadness that I have to mention the loss of a few local businesses.

- A local bra shop has gone bust.
- A mining company has gone under.
- A manufacturer of food blenders has gone into liquidation.
- A dog kennels has had to call in the retrievers.
- An origami book company has folded.
- An aerial installation company has had to call in the receivers.
- A key company has gone into lockdown.
- A watchsmith has wound down and called time.
- An Iceland store has had its assets frozen.
- A shoe factory has been soled and employees given the boot.
- The Heinz factory has been canned as they couldn't ketchup with orders.
- A tarmac company has reached the end of the road.
- The bread company has run out of dough.
- The laundrette has been taken to the cleaners.
- And finally, the AA Recovery Service are on their way to breaking down.



Submitted by Jess Parkinson

(An old Two Ronnie's sketch that someone posted on Facebook).

In Memory of Vera Smith

As reported in the Doncaster Free Press, Vera, a retired school teacher and long time member of the DU3A, has recently died.

Vera participated in several U3A group activities over the years. One was Memorabilia, and another one was Living History, to which she contributed many interesting written accounts of how life was lived in the past.

Although she had difficulty in physically attending the U3A meetings for this past eighteen months, Vera still kept up her membership and read the newsletter with interest. This was brought to my attention when Vera took the trouble to congratulate me on an article I had written in the newsletter.

Vera will be sadly missed by all who knew her, and is a sad loss to the DU3A community.

We send our belated, and sincere condolences to Vera's family.

Betty Alexander

15-11-20



In Memory of Maisie Green

Mrs. Edith May (Maisie) Green, age 101, died on 31st December 2020.

Maisie was born on the 10th May 1919 in Louth, Lincolnshire, the third of ten children. She moved with her family, aged 8, to Doncaster when her father was transferred to the Doncaster Plant Works.

She was preceded in death by her husband Norman and her nine siblings.

Maisie was a qualified teacher of needlecraft and taught at a number of further education schools in the Doncaster area. She worked tirelessly for Save the Children and gave up her time to help in the charity shop in Scot Lane.

Maisie had been a member of DU3A since it's inauguration and attended many of the groups, still enjoying Memorabilia well into her nineties.

Elisabeth Parker





Best quote for 2020

This is not the year
to get everything you
want. This is the year
to appreciate everything
you have.



Submitted by Mark Frost

★★★★★

I think this is still relevant for 2021 and hereafter.

Television Food

Morning everyone and welcome to the 'BBC Food Appreciation Course'. Let's get started.

When tasting food for the BBC you can't be honest and say things like: well that was nowt to write home about. It was okay but I've tasted better or the potatoes could have done with boiling a bit longer. And whatever you do, do not say - it's just something to get down your neck!

No, no, no, when tasting food on the BBC you need training in how to 'go into a sort of ecstasy' you need to show the audience how really good it is, even if it's only a chip you're tasting.

The aim of this BBC advanced course in the art of physically showing your appreciation of food is to simply up our ratings.

You 'the public' are drafted in to try the food so just remember, saying it's very nice or very good won't do. It's TV, it's fake so every thing has to be absolutely fantastic.

Also keep in mind this is not real life, no toast ever gets burnt no milk boils over; it's a show full stop. So remember, just roll your eyes and do your best to avoid spitting food out: Nigella really hates that.

And finally we want you to practice becoming emotionally overcome during the tasting. Do remember you may be asked to cry again for the camera, if so - just do it.

You can turn the paper over and start now.

Good luck to you all.

*Denis Marsden
Writers group*

GROUPS - UPDATES / NOTICES

INTEREST GROUPS

Contact group leaders to find out if alternative arrangements have been made for meetings.

NB: Please be aware of any new Government guidelines/rules. If any group leader is considering a restart after the current lockdown they must contact the Groups Co-ordinator for advice before doing so.

GENERAL MEETINGS

All face-to-face meetings are cancelled until further notice. The Chair of DU3A will be in touch with you when these meetings start again. Please check your emails as some Virtual General Meetings may be arranged via the web.

GERMAN

The German group has been meeting weekly via zoom reading a detective novel: 'Der Mann ohne Gesicht'.

Attendance is 100 percent nearly every week but we are looking forward to real life meetings in the hopefully not too distant future.

Monica Dawson

PINS AND NEEDLES GROUP

We have not met up at all over the last months. No zooms either, but I have messaged and e-mailed to the group from time to time. I did talk about using WhatsApp but the response was not 100%. Regarding Covid, things still are not looking good so no effort will be made to meet up in January. We have to hope that once many have had the vaccine things will improve. I think its a case of wait and see how things progress.

Anne Windle

FRENCH GROUP 2

Those of us with internet have continued with fortnightly Zoom meetings. We usually do a translation of a French script from various sources.

Jeff Haywood

CROWN GREEN BOWLS

Crown Green Bowls has been one of the least affected of our groups during the pandemic. We were able to enjoy all the elements of our varied weather patterns and carry on almost normally from the middle of August. Being outdoors we were able to follow National Government, British Crown Green Bowling Association, Doncaster MBC, and Haslam Park Bowling Club regulations. Our risk assessment, together with our Track and Trace system, follows National U3A guidelines. We obviously couldn't play in the compulsory lockdown in November but keeping our distance was not a problem, and we all enjoyed being out in the fresh air as a break from domestic chores.

We were without the use of the locked (by DMBC) pavilion. It was an

inconvenience, but it certainly did not deter our members from arriving to do battle. We were restricted to a maximum of six players on the green, but conversion to two sessions meant that no-one needed to be disappointed if more than six people arrived.

Lockdown has, yet again, halted play. We may be allowed (by the British Crown Green Bowling Association) to continue towards the end of February, unless any new tier regulations affect us. Newcomers are always welcome, but please contact me first (my mobile number is on the inside back page).

Some of our group members are still shielding relatives, so to them and all our readers and potential new members, we wish you all a virus-free New Year, and hope that you have an early anti-virus jab to help ease your way towards our new normal, whatever that will be.

George Kirk

COFFEE QUIZ / TENPIN BOWLING

Just to let you know that for the time being there is no planned change with regard to the Tenpin bowling group or the Coffee Quiz group.

Happy New Year

Jane Page and Mike Bowser

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The Digital Photography Group continues to meet come rain or shine via Zoom. We choose a subject for members to photograph for the next couple of meetings. The December project was to show photos you would display in your home. For January we chose pictures taken over the Christmas period.

John Wheeldon

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: 2021-2022

The membership year ends on 31st March 2021. Renewals can be accepted from 10th February either by bank transfer with your name in the reference or by cheque posted to the membership secretary, Christine Curtis, (address on page 26). Membership rates remain the same as last year: £14 for an individual, £24 for a couple sharing an address. Both increase by £4 for posted newsletters. This may well increase next year to cover the increased charges from national office.

Wendy Hattrell

April - May 2021 Newsletter

Articles for the April / May newsletter need to be received by

Wednesday 24th February.

Please send news of group activities, articles, photographs, etc. to

du3newsletterbmt@btinternet.com



Virtual Christmas Performance

On the 21st December we were very lucky to be entertained by members of the Doncaster U3A to a wonderful virtual Christmas show and what a success it was! The variety performance displayed all the latent skills held within the organisation with stunning performances.



Many musicians participated with various instruments, among them a ukulele, saxophone, melodion, and guitar, not to mention the excellent singing. Among them was Chris Woolven strumming the ukulele and ably singing the tune to 'I'm leaning on a lamp post', Vanessa Whaley treating us to some of the traditional Christmas carols on the saxophone, and we were extremely lucky to have the presence of Ian Cross, the son of Marian Cross who played a lovely piece on his guitar. The melodion played by Richard Benson was a real treat where members could wave their handkerchiefs and really get into the party mood. The surprise of the show was Jane Page and Mike Bowser singing 'I got you babe' complete with costume and wigs which was presented excellently.



As if that was not enough of an extravaganza, to make it even more entertaining we also heard John Betjeman's poem 'Christmas' which was very well read by Marian Cross, poetry readings by David Harmer who read one of his own poems, and a recital by Alan Brocklehurst of the poem 'Twas the night before Christmas', which is one of my favourites from when I was a child. George Kirk gave a very entertaining reading of an excerpt about a Messiah Concert. As the show was nearing its end we were presented with a Christmas quiz by Diane Woolven with some interesting and challenging questions and very apt illustrations, and not least the Morris dancing all interspersed with funny Christmas jokes read by Wendy Hattrell.



OUR PERFORMERS



Finally this wonderful extravaganza was completed with Christmas carols led by David Allen and thanks and wishes of a very Happy Christmas and New Year delivered by Chris Woolven completed the event.

For those who missed this wonderful event I would really encourage you to try Zoom as it can deliver wonderful events such as this.

Many thanks to all the participants and well done on such a successful event under quite difficult circumstances.

Christine Curtis



OUR AUDIENCE



Incentive

Using a Stanley knife she expertly popped the back off. Then spins on her chair to get a small battery and carefully inserts it.

Holding it up to the light we both watch the second hand jerk into life.

Job done she says.

How much?

Four pounds.

Ya what!

Well it is guaranteed for five years.

But I wasn't planning on living that long.

She looks at me, she says nothing; I pay.

So that's it, to get my moneys worth I'm burdened with continuing with this farce.

Anyway, I suppose it's an incentive to persevere.

But still, I mean - four pounds!

Denis Marsden
Writers group

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

By Mary Oliver



Submitted by Sally Chamberlain: A client who was having a difficult time gave these words to me many years ago and I hope you all will find them comforting too.

Hopefully this year will eventually be better for everyone.



The **Captain Cook** event for summer 2020 was cancelled. The organisers, Whitby U3A are proposing to hold the event this summer, on Wednesday 23rd and Thursday 24th June 2021.

Summer Learning Break: The Hawkhills venue has been retained from 26th to 29th July 2021. Details will be published later in the year.

U3A Life in Lockdown

A national film has been produced. It celebrates the wonderful things U3A members up and down the country have been doing in these difficult times. Duration is approximately 7 minutes.

Go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBSfUGiszz0taht>



Photographs taken at the 'Lightopia' Festival of Light at Yorkshire Wildlife Park during the festive season.

Pictures taken by Peter Chubb (Digital Photography group).



Out and about with my camera



Highlights from 2020

Here is our good news from 2020.

Firstly we discovered U3A in January, and joined our first quiz which we enjoyed. Peter started walking cricket which he loves and tells me what a great group they are. Then we sadly went into lockdown.

I happily retired in April after 50 years at work and thoroughly enjoyed spending more time in the garden. The garden is our joy. We particularly enjoyed creating our own Italian style garden.

I started to support young people in schools around career choices on a voluntary basis, sadly that came to an end due to school closures. I now volunteer with B:friend, talking on the phone to those who feel lonely.

I've been watercolour painting and have received requests from our children to paint their pets. I did enter an art competition through U3A.

Peter and I contracted COVID-19 in mid October and our first grandchild Henry was born at the end of October which lifted our spirits no end. We feel very blessed.

Peter was also grateful to be able to grow an abundance of fruit and vegetables at his allotment and share these with neighbours, from a distance!

To end the year we joined the U3A Christmas meeting and enjoyed seeing everyone and singing carols.

We look forward to 2021 and seeing our family and friends, and attending U3A groups once again.

Anona and Peter Hermes



2020 has been a strange year for some people...especially those living alone. I have managed to keep sane due to being allowed to go out walking throughout this awful pandemic and taking my partner's daughter's dogs out. My favourite places to go walking are Spurn Point, Cusworth Hall, Sprotbrough Flash and Potteric Carr nature reserve, although I'm not allowed to take the dogs to Potteric Carr. I have also taken up cycling...but have put the cycle away throughout the winter months.



If anyone fancies going out walking please let me know (social distancing to be maintained at all times).

Hoping that we all have a better 2021.

Brian Good



2020 Bah Humbug!

Having spent, like a lot of other people, time alone this year, in the warmer months I did spend time in the garden observing the butterflies and bees frequent visits to my buddleia at the front of my bungalow. I very often dashed in doors to collect my camera, only to find when I got back outside they had all flown away..... but did manage to snap a few.



Peacock Butterfly

In the evenings I did come out into the back garden which is a communal affair really but I appear to be the person that uses it the most. I sat very quietly waiting for the bats to appear. Quite often whilst sat, a pair of hedgehogs would amble along, much to my joy. I could only sit and watch as they shuffled in the grass and leaves for juicy worms and such. No good trying to creep in for my camera as I knew they would shoot off. I did get to watch them frequently. They seemed to be really late in closing down and going to sleep. All to do with climate change I would imagine. I did converse with my family members about the comings and goings, and this Christmas I have a lovely array of hedgehog items.



Hedge hog pot stands



Hedgehog cushion

Anne Windle

Something strange

Early on this year I noticed that something strange filled a space between branches in my Choisya and found the strange object (photo) and thought it was made by bees but asking a neighbour who keeps them found it was a 'wasps nest'! It was so beautiful and incredibly well made that I took the following photos and hoped to keep it. It might have been of interest to children in an infants school but haven't one nearby!

Marian Cross



Parker and the Spirit of Christmas

Since I retired and the children have their own busy lives with their families Christmas is different for us these days. We would get invited to one family celebration and alternate each year. Parker, my husband, driver, cook and bottle washer is unfortunately still employed. I refer to his job as a hobby that generates my holiday money. He leaves the house for work and comes home totally unstressed? Parker's real job is keeping me in the manner to which I am accustomed. Sadly he is not a social creature and it has taken years of training to get him to speak to people about anything other than pigeons.

The eldest son's wife is French and the youngest son's wife comes from Salford, poles apart and very different. Fortunately they live in different areas of England so we do not have to see either that often thus Parker can tolerate 3 days of Turkey, Tinsel, and pointless Christmas Presents.

There are not many positive things to come from a year of Covid, but for Parker Zoom was one of them. He learned to communicate more and recognise the important things in our life. Switching off the microphone mid conversation and putting subtitles on the TV made the girls think he was listening to them and actually cared. Of course the lap top had to be strategically placed so it gave the effect of looking straight at the screen and not the TV.

So this year will be very unusual, with no travel, no traffic jams, secret chuntering in the bedroom or sulks as he can't watch his programme, and lie down on the couch after dinner because the kids want to play. Luxury he keeps saying, sheer luxury.

I am happy in the knowledge we will all be vaccinated and safe to see a better Christmas next year, with all the things that come from being in a loving family.

Yvonne McGowan



Favourite photographs by John Wheeldon

Some highlights of 2020

Highlights for 2020? More than we imagined there would be in March when we feared the worst. Playing my saxophone in the street during 'Clap for Carers' and being joined by a cornet player from a neighbouring house was unexpected. Having Zoom music and dance sessions with friends from around the country was really nice. Then there was yet more de-cluttering, DIY house and garden jobs, joining a local cycling group, and both of us having more time for reading, especially previously read books that were sitting on the bookshelf waiting for a rainy day. The rainy days had arrived with a vengeance.

Finding lots of local walks were highlights. We've been hunting out nearby bluebell woods, fungi walks and autumn colour all reachable from our doorstep. But THE highlight of the year for the two of us has been to visit our favourite bed and breakfast in the beautiful Yorkshire Dales to celebrate a combined July birthday and wedding anniversary.



Some very popular local walks along the River Wharfe were far too busy and crowded for comfort this year.

So, studying the maps and looking for alternatives, we've walked along lovely quiet country lanes and footpaths and found our way up onto the moors with amazing views looking along Wharfedale. We'd never have explored these routes were it not for trying to avoid popular places. Just putting our walking boots on and



stepping out from our riverside guest house, we've enjoyed a quiet landscape of gritstone and limestone, gentle burbling streams, grazing swaledale sheep and stunning views. The weather was kind to us, with warmth and sunshine. We might still pass fellow walkers and exchange greetings with them, but we could stop worrying about being too close, about keeping our distance, about not touching gates and stiles. We could breathe in the clean Dales air and relax.

It was fortunate that there were gorgeous gardens where we were staying, we could sit out on the garden chairs, enjoy reading, watch the comings and goings on the opposite riverbank, and even enjoy a quiet dip in the river (just me, just once). Then in the evening, instead of the usual trip to the Pub for a meal, cooking a simple meal and enjoying a drink in our own little kitchen provided a great end to our busy days. Not quite the same as a walk up to the local restaurant, but under the circumstances it was most relaxing and enjoyable. In fact, so pleased were we with how things worked out, we booked for another short stay in September. We did venture into a pub for a drink, and we did some film location spotting in Grassington, where the latest James Herriot stories were centred around.



Then winter arrived. Christmas Day approached. We drew the curtains, switched

the TV on, and settled down to re-capture some of our lovely Grassington break with the Christmas special of “All Creatures Great and Small”, mostly filmed in and around where we'd been staying. Perfect!

Richard Benson



GETTING INTO TROUBLE

At first my thoughts were that my memories of getting into trouble when young would be pretty run of the mill stuff – playing cricket in the street and scoring a six by hitting the ball through a neighbour's window and something I'm sure I mentioned before – persuading my friend Tony to swap his fort with cowboys and Indians for my 'de-luxe' twin baby pram.

But suddenly into my mind popped the words 'Ration Books' – here was my story to be told.

A minor mishap with Ration Books occurred when I was sent to the local corner shop for our sugar allowance. Whilst waiting in turn I realised that customers were getting what seemed like large quantities of soap (the red and green blocks) for few coupons – this I was sure was a much better deal – and so, yes, proudly returned home with a large bag of soap but no sugar – we were very clean but sugarless for a while.

On my next 'adventure' with Ration Books.... I should begin by explaining that both my Mum and I had bright ginger/red hair with tempers to match. So on one of the seemed to be frequent clashes of temper I was sent upstairs to the bedroom, there to wait in isolated boredom because there was of course no television, radio, telephone and so on in bedrooms back then (I'm talking 1950s). On this particular day Mum must have been really annoyed because she would not even let me take one of my beloved books upstairs with me, CRUEL.

So there I was utterly bored when I noticed our Ration Books on Mum's dressing table next to her dainty manicure set, holding a nail file, tweezers and **scissors**.

Are you keeping up with me or are you a step ahead?

Yes – I sat and proceeded to cut up one of the Ration Books – fortunately Mum came upstairs before I got to any more.

I'm sure you can all well imagine Mum's anger but also her worry about how we would manage without the lost Ration Book. I think I hid quietly in the cupboard under the stairs until Dad came home from work. When he did he was to be faced

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with an irate wife, who wanted to know what he was going to do about **his** daughter as she presented him with a brown paper bag full of cut up coupons.

My Dad (who I'm sure was as worried as Mum), was a very patient man with a calming influence and he managed to assure Mum that the problem would be solved the next day.

So it was decided the next day Mum, Dad (did he have to miss a valuable day's work) and I would walk up to the Council Offices to ask for a replacement book. Because the Ration Book I had cut up was fairly new and Mum could remember which coupons had been used, she was hopeful she could explain this and a new book would be issued.

But, no such luck, the three of us were led into a small room containing a table, chairs, sheets of paper and pots of glue!

Yes, we were told to try to glue the Ration Book coupons back together on the sheets of paper provided. They were not about to trust what Mum had told them.

I cannot remember how long we were kept at the task (I don't think I would have been much help – I was probably about 8 or 9 at the time) but eventually someone in authority came in to inspect what had been achieved and finally said they would accept Mum's word as to how many coupons had been used and a precious new Ration Book was issued.

I never saw our Ration Books laying around again. Mum stopped sending me upstairs, instead, making me sit on the back door step where she could keep an eye on me!

Was this the first NAUGHTY STEP I ask myself?

*Carol Pearson
Living History Group*



Highlights of the year 2020

On this the thirtieth of December two thousand and twenty, looking back over the past year, it seems there could not have been any highlights. But on second thoughts there have been.

As most of us did, I curtailed my way of life, battled with grocers for deliveries, and recalled the differences between when World War Two broke out and now. Mum on her own with three little girls under six, the youngest not a year old, and Father away in France. And here I was, only myself to worry about. I had a warm comfortable home, plenty of food, after all, I was brought up in the war, and had always kept a good stock of food staples, no running out of toilet paper for me. Friendly neighbours, family not far away, whom I knew could be relied upon in an emergency. No Sirens to wake me up in the middle of the night, no listening under the stairs for the sound of jack boots marching down the street, as I had seen pictures of in the newspapers, and on the news reels in the

Cinema. No, this virus was nothing compared to that, as I remarked to my cousin on the telephone, “we lived through that, we will manage to survive this”. That remark haunts me now as my cousin Arthur died in November. That was a low point of this year. And there have been many. But also there have been several high points that are better to dwell on.

One was when, in March, a niece started IVF treatment to have a longed for baby, and a miracle occurred and a baby became due. That baby boy, George was born this month. Mother and baby doing well, as they say.

Another highlight occurred, this time a few days before Christmas when I was ceremoniously told by my forty-two year old nephew that his partner was expecting their first baby. As he is an only child, we had thought he was not going to have any children. His grandmother, at ninety four had died in October. So as a family, they had a low point, then a highlight.

Another high point, was a high point for most people, when in August we thought we could resume business as usual, with a few precautions, see friends, shop, have our hair done, and in my case a longed for pedicure. That for me was a real high point.

The above was then followed by the warning that all was not well in the world, and by September the news was getting worse.

October came and with it the worst month of my eighty seven years dragging on through November. Enough said.

With December low points came the highlights. The brightest light of all came when a message was received by me asking if I would like to have the Covid Vaccine? What a silly question. I have had the first injection, and await the second on the seventh of January two thousand and twenty one. What a highlight to the start of the New Year. How lucky I feel. Still around, still standing, with events to look forward to. And at the end of January of the New Year, ninety five percent security against the dreaded virus. HAPPY NEW YEAR to you all.

Betty Alexander



The highlight of August: seeing Edie for the first time. She was born in March, this year.



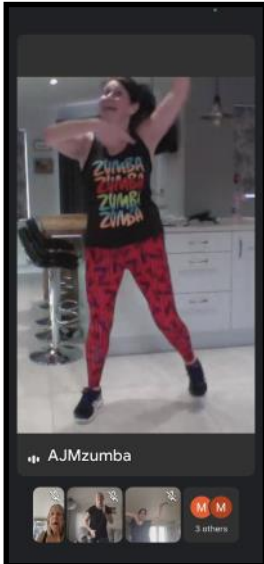
The first Christmas cake baked in forty years.

My 2020 highlights

Along with a lot of members, my garden has been a source of joy in 2020. It was only its second summer and was full of colour from daffs and tulips onwards to dahlias and salvias still flowering at the end of November. Cosmos grown from seed provided plenty of 'froth'. It has certainly exceeded expectations. After our move from a very well established garden 2 years ago we thought it would take longer to build up.



Walking with friends is always a treat but has been even more so this year. As soon as we were allowed we were back walking in the Peak District - up until Christmas. Now they are in Tier 4 we can't meet with friends and we have switched to just the two of us in Clumber, also in Tier 4 but easier to get to and less muddy!



I suppose I have to mention Zoom - this time last year I hadn't heard of it. Now it is in regular use in this house for keeping in touch with family and friends. The next best thing to face to face meetings. It's also allowed me to keep my Zumba exercise classes going up to 3 times a week - to the amusement of my husband as I leap about the sitting room!



Speaking of my husband, we celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary in the summer. No big party as we'd hoped of course, but a small garden gathering with children and grandchildren. We did precede that with time away overnight at Winteringham Fields on the south bank of the Humber estuary. Delightful luxury accommodation and exciting food. So we weren't too deprived but, in common with most things this year we couldn't spend it with friends and wider family. Roll on 2021.

Wendy Hattrell



I thought this photo would cheer everyone. Taken from my kitchen window.

Happy New Year.

Sue Johnson



I spent a lot of lockdown digging in my ex husband's garden as he was on the vulnerable list and I don't have a garden. The seeds and bulbs I planted brought a lot of butterflies into the garden. It was calming and beautiful to watch them.

Sue Costin

Some unusual events

Jedburgh's Ball Game 2nd February

Jedburgh, Roxburghshire

A ball game played by two teams made up of 'everyone that wants to play'. The game has very few rules and is played with a ball approximately the size of a baseball. The object being to get the ball past a certain marker. Legend recalls that following a local battle the first game was played by Scottish soldiers with an Englishman's head.

The ba' game is essentially a form of street football, some of the action taking place in the streets around the market place. Today the game is played at Candlemas and Easter E'en by two opposing teams. The ancient ball game known as 'Jethart Hand-ba', popular throughout medieval Scotland, supposedly derives from the Jedburgh men playing with the heads of English soldiers. The traditional ball game, which has been played in the Border town for 250 years, pits the Uppies (residents of the higher part of Jedburgh) against the Doonies (residents from the bottom half of the town). The game uses a leather ball stuffed with straw and decorated with ribbons. The ball is thrown, rugby-style, into a group of men who then proceed to move with it through the streets. It can move up alleyways, into yards and up streets and can be concealed or thrown for someone to catch and run with. The aim of the game, which has had its current form since the 1700s, is to "hail" the ball to the respective side of the town. The boys play for a couple of hours before the men take over and it is usual for 'hundreds' to participate.

The Feast of St. Blaize 3rd February

St Etheldreda's Church, Ely Place, London

The patron saint of people afflicted with throat complaints. During a ceremony at the church, sufferers' throats are blessed when touched by two candles bound together.

Blessing the Salmon Nets 13th / 14th February

Pedwell Beach, Northumberland

Close to midnight on the 14th, fishermen gather on the banks of the River Tweed where the vicar of nearby Norham blesses the nets and boats. The fishermen then set out to make their first catch of the season

Cradle-Rocking Ceremony Sunday closest to 2nd February

Blidworth, Nottinghamshire

Although banned in the Reformation, cradle rocking was revived in Blidworth in 1923. The ceremony involves the rocking of an infant in a cradle, in remembrance of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

Hurling the Silver Ball First Monday after 3rd February (Feasten Day)

St Ives, Cornwall

The game starts when the ball is thrown from the wall of the parish church of St Ila. Whoever holds the ball at the stroke of noon wins the prize of a crown piece.

Whuppity Scoorie 1st March

Lanark, Strathclyde

This festival marks the approach of Spring. At 6 p.m. children traditionally race around St Nicholas' Church, making as much noise as possible and trying to hit each other with paper balls on the ends of strings.

Its origins are obscure: one source claims that the children's shouting was to chase away evil spirits, another claims that it reflects curfew changes when the lighter spring evenings replaced the dark winter nights yet another that it dates from a time when miscreants were whipped round the town cross then 'scoored' (scoured or cleansed) in the nearby River Clyde.

Penny Loaf Day 11th March

Newark, Nottinghamshire

For three nights Hercules Clay dreamed that he saw his house on fire. So convinced was he of impending doom that he moved his family out. They had no sooner left the property, when a bomb fired by Parliamentary forces during the English Civil War, destroyed the house. As thanks for his lucky escape, Hercules left £100 in trust, to provide penny loaves for the poor of the town.

Tichborne Dole 25th March

Tichborne, Hampshire

This custom dates back to the twelfth century when Lady Mabella Tichborne lay sick and dying. She asked her husband Sir Roger to establish a gift (dole) of bread in her memory for those who arrived in Tichborne for the Feast of the Annunciation. Not thrilled at this prospect, Sir Roger said he would provide flour for the bread from as much land as his wife could encompass. A determined lady, she managed to crawl round 23 acres, an area still know today as The Crawls.

<https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/The-Folklore-Year-February/>

<https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/The-Folklore-Year-March>

For all of those interested in history—this website has a wealth of information—well worth checking it out

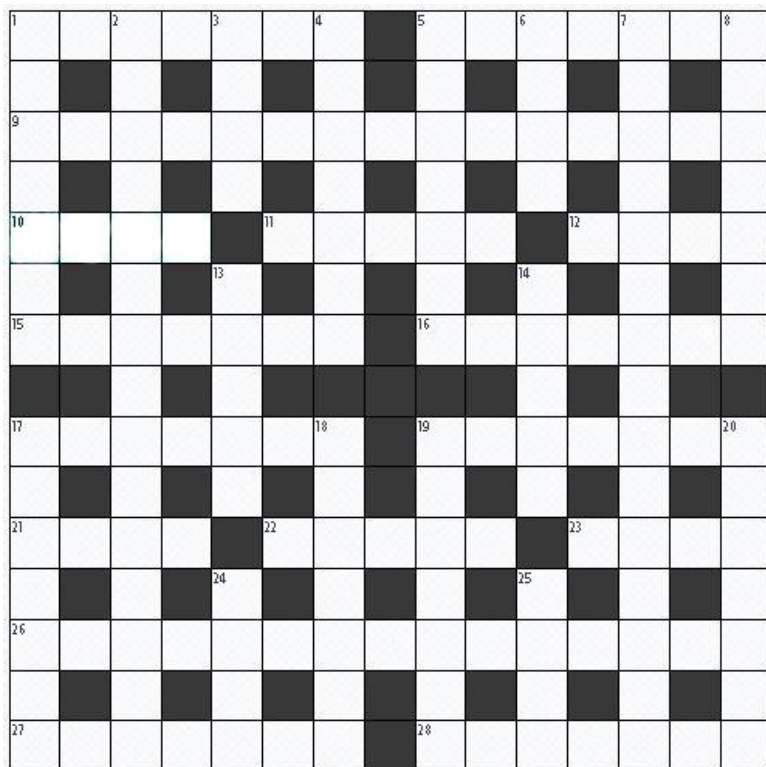
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B Thompson

PUZZLE PAGE

Cryptic Crossword



ACROSS

1. Ten quit, making group of five (7)
5. Lance, go out and get set (7)
9. Their work is their life (15)
10. Getting stuck right into cured pork can cause damage (4)
11. Homes provided for workers with red lumps (5)
12. He covers up his dog tag. What audacity! (4)
15. As the afternoon wears on they grow longer tails (7)
16. Cakes that absorb liquid? (7)
17. Mascara made a mess of rattles (7)
19. Head of state worked on charm (7)
21. Extremes of naked envy evident in admiral's command (4)
22. Best idea is to include rewrites in a new direction (5)
23. Warning that Nemo is making a comeback (4)
26. Commendations given to Girl Scout, Anna, for organisation (15)
27. Chose to somehow delete about a hundred (7)
28. Dank cell is being done out to house returning wildebeest (7)

DOWN

1. Crushes top removed from marrows (7)
2. Tax income from inside trading? (8,7)
3. Keep these flaps on when watching closely (4)
4. Its crop failed in warmer latitudes (7)
5. Mongrels have hardly any night-time restrictions (7)
6. Scruffy part of northern primate (4)

7. After sunset, prudish Titanic survivor picked a yellow flower (7,8)
8. Tenants heard using fewer vowels? (7)
13. Entrance into mountain-top orchard (5)
14. Injury caused from being twisted around (5)
17. It might help a one-eyed ref see more clearly? (7)
18. Said, "Date Ted" while under the influence of tranquillisers (7)
19. Medical officer and teetotaler were first to be spotted (7)
20. Practical kind of training for factory worker lad (5,2)
24. Expression of annoyance when doctor returns little thanks (4)
25. Mr Laurel stirs up ants (4)

??? If you are having difficulty, the following clues include anagrams:
Across: 1, 5, 17, 19, 23, 26; Down: 4, 25

Solutions for December - January puzzles

1. White Christmas
2. Little Drummer Boy
3. Deck the Halls
4. Frosty the Snowman
5. The First Nowell
6. The Twelve Days of Christmas
7. Good King Wenceslas
8. Silent Night
9. Santa Baby
10. Joy to the World
11. Little Donkey
12. We Three Kings
13. Jingle Bells
14. Away in a Manger
15. We Wish You a Merry Christmas
16. While Shepherds Watched
17. Mary's Boy Child
18. Winter Wonderland
19. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
20. It came upon a Midnight Clear
21. Let it Snow
22. Here We come A-Wassailing
23. In the Bleak Midwinter
24. The Holly and the Ivy
25. Hark the Herald Angels Sing
26. Angels from the Realms of Glory
27. Last Christmas
28. Ding Dong Merrily on High
29. Do they know it's Christmas
30. I saw Three Ships
31. Past Three O'Clock



The Twelve Days of Christmas.

Total number of Gifts = 364

Partridges in pear trees: 12;
 Turtle doves: 22;
 French hens: 30;
 Calling birds: 36;
 Gold rings: 40;
 Geese-a-laying: 42;
 Swans-a-swimming: 42;
 Maids-a-milking: 40;
 Ladies dancing: 36;
 Lords-a-leaping: 30;
 Pipers piping: 22;
 Drummers drumming: 12

Do you know who painted this?



Pieter Bruegel the Elder
The Census at Bethlehem (1566)

Contacting Group Leaders and Committee Members

Group Leaders can be contacted by telephone (see below) or by clicking on the Blue Bird on their group page on the DU3A website.

Go to: <https://u3asites.org.uk/doncaster>

Committee members can also be contacted via the DU3A website by opening the 'Contact' page and then selecting the appropriate member.

*** Page 7 - Membership renewal: Go to website 'Contacts' page.

Contact Numbers

DU3A Committee Members

Chair	Chris Woolven
Vice Chair	Jane Page
Secretary	Diane Woolven
Treasurer	Derek Marriott
Membership Secretary	Christine Curtis
Group Co-ordinator	Vanessa Whaley
Minutes Secretary	Christine Curtis
Publicity	Jane Page
Beacon Administrator	Wendy Hattrell
Committee	Jill Laming
Committee	Diane Williams
Committee	John Wheeler
Committee	Paula Harmer

Activity Groups & Other: Contacts

Group leaders - see printed Newsletter for telephone numbers, or DU3A Website

**Newsletter Editor
& Website Manager**

B Thompson

bthompsonu3a@btinternet.com

Help the environment and save money by receiving the email version of the DU3A newsletters.

Deadline

Thank-you to all the members who have sent articles for this issue. Articles for the April / May newsletter need to be received by **Wednesday 24th February**

Please send news of group activities, articles, photographs, etc. to du3anewsletterbmt@btinternet.com

Monks Printers

We are grateful to Monks the Printers for their help in printing and distributing this newsletter.

Prego Café

We would like to thank our friends at the Prego Café for their help over the past years. We wish them the best during this difficult time and look forward to having our meetings there again in the future.

DU3A Website

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

Visit the DU3A website for information about all the current interest groups, latest news/notices, membership information, meetings, social events, monthly calendars and newsletters, help/advice links, links to regional and national u3a and more.....



