

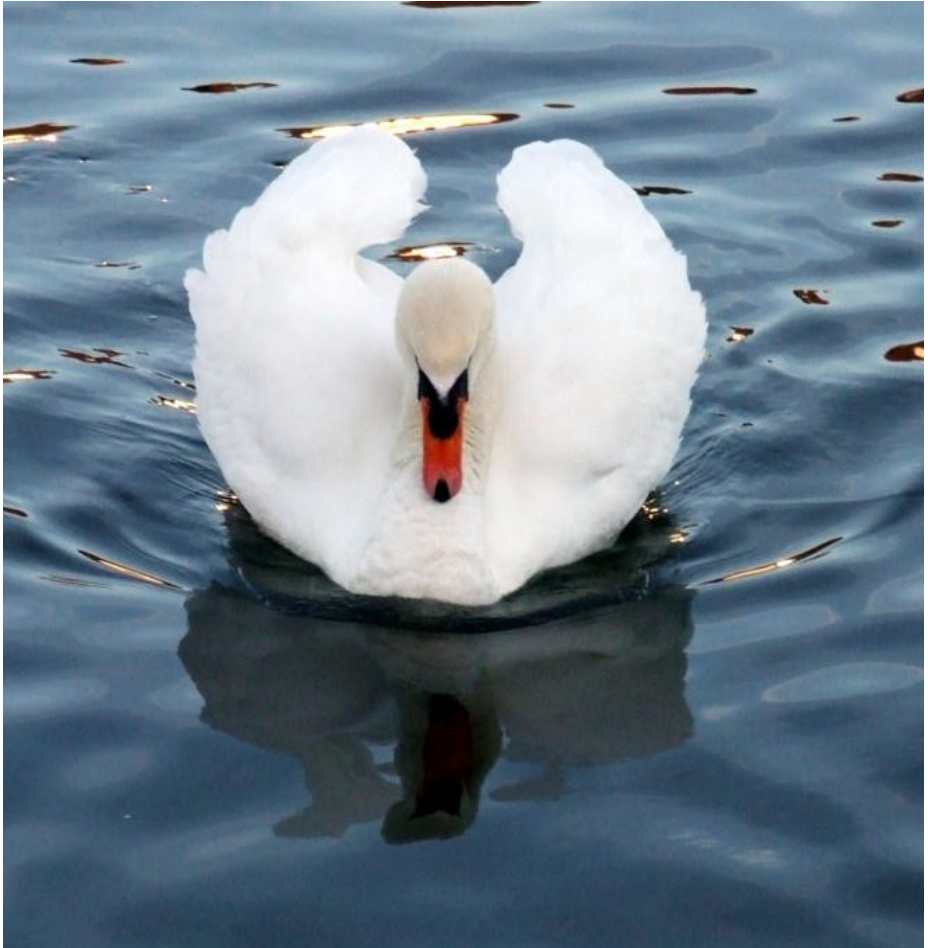


**Learn, laugh, live**

**Emsworth and District U3A**

Registered charity, No 1114777

## **Newsletter Mid 2020**



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### **Letter from the Chairman**

I'm very pleased to be writing this in Toni Reynaud's "proper" newsletter rather than my ersatz offerings of the last few months, it feels a little bit like normal. We (your committee and your group leaders) have been trying to keep as many U3A activities as possible running during the pandemic. I really hope we can get back to "normal" monthly meetings as it is strange to be the Chairman and not having chaired physical monthly meetings.

The monthly meeting we held on Zoom in July went well. We had about 30 delegates and the speaker, Frances Hurd, was excellent. Her talk was titled "Penguins in the Desert: behind the scenes in Abu Dhabi" and she told us much about life there.

The feedback from attendees was good and we hope to run more meetings like this. Trevor Rayner, our Speakers Secretary is investigating speakers.

It's really nice to hear that some groups are finding ways to run under the current restrictions and I'd like to express my thanks to group leaders who are making this possible. The leader of our Tai Chi group, Lincoln Allen, has said he is stepping down and I'd like to express my thanks to him for all the effort and the leadership he's put into it. It hasn't been possible to find another leader so unfortunately this group will close.

I expect you will know by now that the Emsworth Show won't take place this year, but the Horticultural Society are running a virtual show so you could check that out on the Emsworth Horticultural Society website. Also the Third Age Trust have postponed the national U3A day until June 2021.

I think we should consider how and when we might restart monthly meetings which are an important part of our U3A that provides an opportunity for socialising as well as interesting talks. As the Community Hall are looking at re-opening during October according to the Ems newspaper, perhaps St James' Hall might be similar. Most of our members are likely to be cautious with good reason. I have no doubt that Third Age Trust and the management of St James' Hall are thinking about this too and we will be guided by their conclusions, but this is your U3A and your committee and I would really like to know your opinion. So if you would like to tell me your view about how we might restart meetings (when we are allowed to) and what should be done to reach the right balance between caution and companionability, your opinion would be a valuable contribution and we would be pleased to hear it.

We usually organise a Christmas lunch for members, a popular event. Jenny Morris, our Outings Coordinator, is investigating options for organising one this year. Feedback from last year's lunch was that The Langstone was ok but perhaps it was time to try something else so Jenny is investigating the Chichester College which other U3A's have used and have given good feedback. Again we don't know how much interest there would be for this and Jenny would very much like to hear your opinions.

That's about all for this letter.

With very best wishes

*Mike Polgreen*

Chairman

## The Ancient Pensioner

By Catherine

There was an ancient pensioner;  
on the stroke of half past three  
got up and put the kettle on  
to make a pot of tea.  
A thunderous punching on her door:  
My word who can this be?



It was a scary faceless man  
obscured from toe to head  
in plastic gown with gloves to  
match  
helmet and shoes of red.  
The pensioner took a backward  
step  
What do you want? she said.

'Oh don't you know?' the droid  
replied,  
This is our new attire:  
protection from the virus  
and all that might transpire.  
I'll throw your parcel down and  
leave  
in case of illness dire.



His voice was strangely muffled  
Panicked, she slammed the  
door  
and breathless, lost her balance  
fell crumpled on the floor.

Virus was creeping everywhere  
invisible and deadly  
She couldn't shop, or meet her  
friends  
or visit the library.  
She hadn't paid her licence  
so she couldn't watch TV;  
Her family had flown to Spain,  
And left her with their key.

I know, she thought, I'll go  
online  
and order lots of things;  
food, clothes, perhaps a DVD;  
see what tomorrow brings.

And when that message boy  
appears,  
I shall invite him in.  
I'll risk the virus, have a laugh  
and let the fun begin.

## Blind baths, baby elephants and clever chimps.



When I retired last year, cleaning Venetian Blinds wasn't top of my wish list. We'd tried vacuuming them, and cleaning one in the bath: it got bent (the blind, not the bath). Lockdown had started, and Linda "recommended" I deal with them. They had to lie flat while cleaning; the bath wasn't long enough; so on went the thinking cap.

A "bath" constructed on the garage floor: lengths of board to form sides, a waterproof plastic sheet within. I start to fill it, and find that the garage floor slopes. Strike one.

A board underneath, propped up at one end to make it level. Fill it up again. This time it's level, but after a couple of hours leaning over it, wiping slat after slat, my back is

killing me: and ten blinds still to go. Strike two.

A wallpapering table. Boards clamped around it to make the sides, the same plastic sheeting, and I can work in comfort. I fill it up; but the weight of the water makes the table bow in the middle. It's less flat than the bath indoors. Strike three; but I'm not giving up!

Place the board on the table and fill it again. Spend hours spent soaking, wiping and drying blinds. Job done: blinds bathed, brownie points banked!

The baby elephant? To avoid expensive divorce proceedings I must stress that Linda is NOT overweight. However...

She'd been attending the "Arthritis first" exercise class at the Community Centre once a week; she felt she needed the second session (in Havant), but hadn't got around to it. Luckily when lockdown started her teacher decided to do the classes online. So Linda continues her class AND does a second one too, and I get the hang of "Zoom" on the computer. Everyone's a winner!



I haven't watched a class. Apparently much of it is done sitting down, including a seated "running on the spot" thing to get the blood pumping. Since the computer is upstairs it sounds like the ceiling is about to cave in. I'd call her Dumbo, but like an elephant she never forgets....

The blind bath was a little triumph outside my comfort zone. But when a local U3A group asked me to be the speaker at their first online “General Meeting”, it was like being back at work, except I could spend as much time as I liked putting it together, and when stuck or tired I could just walk away and come back to it later: better altogether! I called it “When Chimps are smarter than People”: something a bit different, and the gamble came off: the feedback was amazing! Later I gave it to our Science group, and they enjoyed it too. Maybe I’ll stick to talks and leave the blinds to someone else...

When are chimps smarter than people? Sorry, the only way to find that out is to attend the talk sometime: or ask one of our Science group!

*David Gane*



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An elderly German friend of mine had many favourite sayings in English. One that he frequently quoted was “Life Long Learning”. Margaret Harry ably demonstrates that this is a well understood principle!

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I have done 3 free internet History courses with FutureLearn, a co-ordination of universities and colleges all over the world. The courses last for 4 – 6 weeks, and cover every subject under the sun. Each week I was sent that week’s course, broken up into short videos and articles. They encourage the participants to make comments and discuss the comments of others, but nothing is essential. As I say, it is all free unless you want to take a test and achieve a certificate!

My courses were on England in the time of Richard 111, provided by Leicester and ending with the dramatic finding of his remains. The second came from Reading, and was on the Ancient architecture of Rome. The professor had created an amazing virtual Rome of the time and if I had had the correct extra on the computer I could have ‘walked’ through ancient Rome. It was interesting even without this aspect.

The last was on the Romans at Hadrian’s Wall. This was very varied, from the history of the 300 years or more of their occupation, to methods of archaeology, and the use of forensics, and was provided by Newcastle University.

*Margaret Harry*

*Shelagh and Percy Phelps managed to keep busy during Lockdown—here is a sample of what they have achieved ...*

**Shelagh** This is my finished crochet project made during 'Lockdown' is of any interest. It is my second crochet blanket in the past year and like the other one will eventually head to New Zealand for my youngest grandson. The pattern is described as Moorland Wave and represents a scene, like Dartmoor, with grass and mossy boggy areas, heather and the blue summer sky. The pattern came from Attic 24 Blog run by a lovely lady called Lucy.



I have also made, for the first time, insulated quilted place mats... a set for one of our sons, his wife and their 5 children; 7 different centre fabrics so there's no

squabbling! I made masks for the same family. Finally, a picture of some of our honey from the bees in our garden. All these activities have kept me busy...

I still have plenty of projects on the go including another blanket which needs to be finished by September 22<sup>nd</sup> for my eldest granddaughter's 16th birthday;

I have also been producing a weekly Newsletter every Friday morning for the Stitching Group I belong to; we have met at Hewitt's in South Street for over 2 years and I felt it was important to keep in touch with all the lovely ladies especially as many live alone; I aim to have the Newsletter, including photos from the





group, sent out to everyone before 10am as that was when we would meet. One of the other members has been scheduling Zoom Coffee & Chat sessions at 10.30 so we maintain the integrity of the group and fill a little of the gap that Covid 19 has brought to our lives. This week's edition is number 18!!

I made myself a coat but didn't have anywhere to go except the garden!!!



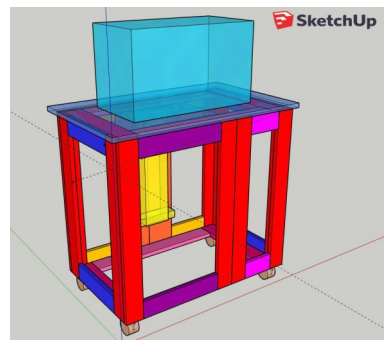
**Percy** The lockdown has cut out my social or outdoor activities of Scuba diving, Freemasonry, beekeeping meetings and U3A meetings. Having a spread of interests and activities during lockdown has been vital during this very weird situation.

Zoom has been really useful. Gail, who runs the U3A Science Engineering and Technology group, organised and set up a Zoom version of my monthly meetings and I gave my second Zoom presentation. "Satellite Navigation, - The link between Einstein and the price of food", Just how dependent are you on Satellite Navigation?

I have weekly beekeeping training Zoom meetings. Likewise I have a weekly Zoom meeting with my lodge members, keeping in touch, chatting, and working out how we can have a safe meeting at some time in the future (incredibly difficult). Also every two weeks we have a Zoom meeting with our old school friends, even after leaving school some 50 years ago.

I have increased my wood working during lockdown, and I have been learning a new piece of software called SketchUp that I could use to design my woodworking projects. Oddly my first project was to design and make a custom Sewing cabinet for my wife. The cabinet contains a lift, to put away and lift into position without the need to 'lug' the very heavy machine around.

My old table saw (given to me by my friend of 50 years) broke, but was



repairable and manageable with using G clamps. As woodworking has become a big thing since I retired my wife Shelagh suggested that I just bought a replacement. So I did! My new table saw arrived on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April and I had nearly finished the sewing cabinet by the 5<sup>th</sup>. As Shelagh had a new big sewing project, I quickly made the cabinet usable, but not finished, on the 7<sup>th</sup>.



My wife and I have beehives in our garden, where we extract the honey from the honey frames (see Shelagh's photo) Also, we got a panicky phone call from our daughter-in-law that there was a swarm of bees in their garden. So, we kitted up and picked up the swarm of bees and passed them on to the swarm coordinator of the Petersfield and District



Beekeeping Association to go to a worthy home. I have also been melting out the wax from old removed frames from our beehives. These are then cleaned and stored to be kept for future projects.

Since then I have designed and made an improved wax melting tray, made two garden stages to hold trays to keep plants potted on by my wife in keeping the garden full of plants, vegetables, and flowers. (I still must finish off the sewing cabinet!) With lockdown we have two grandsons in a need of a special shaped desk/table to go into their bedroom to do their schoolwork. So, another project!



*Shelagh and Percy Phelps*



# Emsworth U3A Committee

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<b>David Bittles</b> davidbits@sky.com 01243 945494	Secretary	<b>John Righton</b> Webmaster & Technical Co-ordinator

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## Emsworth U3A Cycle Group

*A note from James, just to keep you updated.*

I have been riding alone throughout bulk of the Lockdown, as I am on the Shielding list and have to be very mindful of not mixing in company.

Les and I decided to start up the Thursday rides on the 25th June, there were 5 members in total and we have continued to ride every Thursday since. The numbers are small, usually 4/5, but that suits the situation at this time. We are happy to bring our own snacks and drink and find a place to rest up and enjoy a socially distant chat. I foresee the summer continuing in this way, but when the weather turns and we have to look at going into cafes, I'm not sure as yet, how we will proceed.

I hope this gives you an insight to what the cycle group are doing. Best wishes, James

## Important notice



If at 08.30 on the day it is raining and the forecast is not looking good, the ride will be cancelled and an e-mail to that effect will be sent to all on the cycle group register.

Contact for Ride Leader James Powell 023 9245 2424 or 07922 455 625

To register for the group please e-mail [jamespowell22@btinternet.com](mailto:jamespowell22@btinternet.com)

## U3A Virtual Wine Group 2020

How do you keep a wine group going in the time of Covid 19?

The Emsworth U3A Wine Appreciation Group has found a way using Covid safe methods. We have now managed three tastings all of which have proved Zoom can be used to continue and even enhance participation.

Each monthly Zoom meeting started with six bottles of wine bought from three different wine merchants, two of which were based in Emsworth. The real effort is in dividing the wine into 90 small bottles [50ml] for the 15 group participants. This involves much



washing, sterilisation and the tricky process of pouring the wine wearing gloves and masks.



Each group member collects their wine from outside and gets their wine to the correct temperature [not easy for the August meeting] before the group meeting starts.

After a short presentation, backed up by written notes, the group tastes each wine in turn. Comments come from all about the look, smell and taste of





the wine. Each individual then scores the wine out of ten and finally we say what we would pay for it. The latter has given surprises in both directions. Not unexpectedly wine six gets more effusive comments than wine one! So far, the three sessions have covered Sauvignon Blanc and Merlot, wines of Portugal and this month Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon.

The lesson learnt is that you *can* do practical things together using Zoom and it can be enjoyable.

*Gillian Percy*



I have often thought that the railway was a place of too many fatuous announcements when you wanted peace and quiet and too few when you needed actionable information. Before lockdown I had been collecting together station and train announcements I had heard with a view to combining them into a poem. The time gained in lockdown and then some imagination to think what announcements there might be as the weeks progressed gave me the opportunity to finish it. Many of our members will recall I am sure the advertising campaign that the title of my poem is taken from. *Gill*

### **We're getting there. We're getting there.**

Due to today's weather platforms may  
be icy or wet  
Take extra care and watch your step.  
The 1232 arriving from Wareham  
Now departing platform 3 is for  
Fareham  
This is a platform alteration.  
This is a platform alteration.

CCTV monitoring is in operation  
24hours day and night on this station.  
If you see something that doesn't look  
right  
speak to staff and we'll sort it out.  
See it, say it sorted. See it, say it,  
sorted.

There will be no trains after 10 pm  
Due to engineering works starting  
then.  
The train on platform 3 is ready to  
depart.  
Its doors are closed and ready to start.  
Do not approach this train.  
Do not approach this train.  
Stand well back from the platform  
edge  
The next train approaching platform 8  
Does not stop here.  
Does not stop here.

Stand behind the yellow line. Behind the  
yellow line.

Leaves on the line. Trespassers on the  
line

We will now arrive at five past nine.  
Animals on the line. Fallen branches on  
the line.

We will now arrive at twenty past nine.  
We are sorry for the disruption to your  
journey.

Disruption to your journey. Disruption to  
you journey.

We are very sorry. We are very sorry.  
Due to signal failure. Due to points  
failure.

Due to a fault on a preceding train.  
We will be late again, late again.  
We are very sorry. We are very sorry.

Due to a fault with a level crossing  
This train will run without stopping.  
We are sorry for the disruption  
And late arrival at Clapham Junction.  
If you are late at your destination  
You can claim compensation  
Via our website clicking delay repay  
Thank you for travelling with us today.

We are sorry. We are sorry.  
A bridge has been struck by a lorry.  
We are sorry. We are sorry.

Due to vandals stealing cables  
We are experiencing points failures  
We are sorry. We are sorry

Due to the wrong kind of snow  
We are having to run slow.  
We are sorry. We are sorry.

Tracks have buckled due to extreme heat.  
So this train will terminate at Small Heath.  
We are sorry. We are sorry.

Due to late running this train will not stop  
at Barking  
To get to Barking you must change at  
Dorking.  
Due to maintenance works overrunning  
There will be no trains to Brighton.  
A bus replacement service is in operation.  
Make your way to the front of the station.  
Make your way to the front of the station.

While in lockdown for Coronavirus  
We are running a reduced service.  
Special timetables are in operation  
Affecting services from this station.  
Check all train times in advance of travel.  
Check the train times in advance of travel.

We advise you not to travel.  
This train is for essential travel.  
We advise you not to travel.  
This train is for essential travel.

The government say.  
Don't go out for the day.  
If you feel unwell when waiting for a train  
don't get on it.  
Don't get on it. Don't get on it.

Don't touch anything  
Don't even look at anyone.  
Don't travel. Go home

Don't travel. Go home.  
Wash your hands. Wash your hands.

Emergency. Emergency.  
Due to new regulations  
We've shut all cafes on our stations  
Stay home. Stay home.  
We advise you not to travel.  
We advise you not to travel.

Wash your hands. Wash your hands.  
Keep 2 metres apart. Keep 2 metres  
apart.  
Mind the gap. Mind the gap.  
Stand back to let passengers off.  
Use a tissue if you have to cough.  
Wash your hands. Wash your hands.

For hygiene reasons the station toilets  
are closed.  
All surfaces are wiped and platforms  
hosed.  
The train on platform 1 is ready to  
depart.  
Sit 2 metres apart. Sit 2 metres apart.

Stay at home. Stay at home.  
Help all our courageous doctors and  
nurses,  
And for the safety of staff and  
customers  
No skateboarding, or cycling is  
permitted on the station.  
A reduced service for key workers is in  
operation.

Please listen out for further  
announcements.  
Stay Alert. Stay Alert.  
Keep 2 metres apart.  
Wear a mask. Wear a mask.  
Go Home. Go Home.  
And leave us alone.



## **Amble and Pub Lunch.**

As we transfer from full lockdown to something approaching normality, we have had to make adjustments to the way we do things and live life. The following excerpts from a series of emails illustrates one path through this complicated new world to restore a pastime to something acceptable.

Dear Ambler

I am thinking that it would be nice to start up the amblers again, if we can think of a safe way to do this.

The cycling groups have been going out, having divided into small groups of 6, each setting off at a slightly different time. And now they can meet up for lunch at a pub which exercises social distancing.

If we were to have a walk in August, how many of you would like to come? I don't know about you, but I am fed up with walking on my own, or the same boring old partner! Please let me know if you would (a) join the walk and (b) have lunch together.

Dear Amblers

Obviously there are lots of you who are keen to walk in a group again!

However, sadly there are too many; 18 people have asked to join. (This is more than we normally have.) Government guidelines say we can only walk with a group of 6. We had the idea we could have two groups of 6, who did the same walk but the other way round. That only works for a maximum of 12 people.

Lunch is also an issue. We will want to eat outside, which again has issues if it is raining. 18 people for lunch is too many for a pub in these current conditions. We need a pub which has many large tables outside, so we can have 4 people at a table; small picnic style tables are no use. It also needs a big car park because we will be unable to car share. (Unless we start the walk from Emsworth).

Please consider the following choices and let me know which you prefer. We need to split into 3 "pods" of six.

- (1) 2 pods do the same walk but the other way round. Lunch together. Third pod walks and eats at a different location
- (2) 3 pods all do the same walk but with half an hour between them. We would have to stagger eating times too.
- (3) option (1) or (2) but have a picnic, not a pub lunch. Finding a picnic spot might be tricky, but if we find a car park we could take our own chairs

Dear Amblers

We have come up with a plan! The walk will be on August 10th as usual.

We are going to have 3 walks, each comprising max 6 people. We are all going to walk to Kingley Vale, by 3 different routes. We will meet at the top where we will have a cup of coffee, nibbles etc (bring your own!).

There will be two walks starting from Stoughton,  
WALK1 will go up the steep hill and down the gentle slope,  
WALK2 will do the same walk the other way round.  
WALK3 will start at West Stoke, and come back the same way.  
Hopefully we will all end up at the same place.  
As we cannot car share, we will all have to drive there, ready to start at 10am.

Dear Ambler,

Glad to hear we shall have you for company on Monday. Some have decided not to join us, so there are only 11 of us. We will have to travel separately and meet at West Stoke car park at 10.00 for the walk to Kingley Vale and Devils Humps. We shall be meeting the Stoughton group at the top for coffee. Last Monday there were plenty of places when we arrived but busy when we got back.  
Look forward to seeing you again.

So the day came and dawned bright and clear with a promise of lots of heat. The group of five arrived at West Stoke car park as planned, and keeping socially distant from each other (no hand-shakes or hugs!) ambled gently along the track, through the woods up to the bowl below the hill. Going through the gates we made sure to use sticks or elbows or backsides to open and close to avoid transferring anything nasty to our faces. We paused to take in the view and drink some water, then

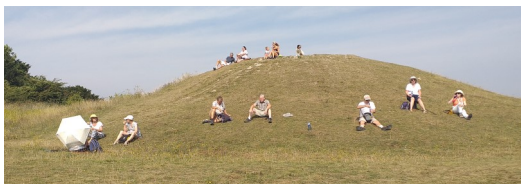


continued up the hill through the yew trees and arrived at the Devil's Humps in good time. There were pauses along the way to admire the somewhat misty view to the south picking out Chichester Cathedral spire poking up out of the haze, and looking at the wild flowers and butterflies on the clearer parts of the route. The Stoughton group appeared a few minutes later,

having taken the slightly longer section of the route for their ascent, and after greetings we sat, ate snacks and drank plenty, and chatted and enjoyed renewing acquaintance with people some of us had not seen for four or five months. It was a most enjoyable interlude, but eventually we had to leave and get back to the car park. Some went straight home, while others went to The Hare and Hounds for lunch in company.

Altogether it was a good morning out, staying within national guidelines while enjoying company, but it did take a fair amount of work to get organised and co-ordinate from the first idea.

Our thanks to Gail, Les, Elizabeth and Mel.



*Toni*

## Rhythm and Rock

As the lockdown began to ease, some members of the Rhythm and Rock group decided to try an informal gathering within the national guidelines for a social bubble. Five households (Two couples and three individuals) agreed to meet in a garden, maintaining distance by sitting well apart in order to listen to their music in a safe fashion. Hand cleansing gel was on hand, and a music centre was placed where all could hear it without upsetting the neighbours. The weather was kind, and a musically sociable morning was appreciated by all present, so much so that a second event was planned. This had fewer members arriving but took place in the same way, all keeping apart but listening to and discussing the music.

Although the present situation does place limits on what can be done, we have proved to ourselves that while the weather is kind, we can still work within the limits placed upon us and enjoy our music in company.

*Toni*



After being married for 40 years, I took a careful look at my wife one day and said, "Forty years ago we had a cheap house, a junk car, slept on a sofa bed and watched a 10-inch black and white TV, but I got to sleep every night with a hot 23-year-old girl.

Now ... I have a \$500,000.00 home, a \$35,000.00 car, a nice big

bed and a large screen TV, but I'm sleeping with a 63-year-old woman. It seems to me that you're not holding up your side of things."

My wife is a very reasonable woman. She told me to go out and find a hot 23-year-old girl and she would make sure that I would once again be living in a cheap house, driving a junk car, sleeping on a sofa bed and watching a 10-inch black and white TV.

Aren't older women great? They really know how to solve an old guy's problems.

## Editor's bit

My thanks to all those who sent in items — please keep them coming.

My email address is [tonibr@btinternet.com](mailto:tonibr@btinternet.com), and there is a link to me on the U3A Emsworth website. My snail mail address is 12 Orchard Lane, Emsworth, PO10 8BH, so send letters here. I can accept offerings in just about any format. *Toni*