



Chat from the chair

Lockdown continues to disrupt our activities...

Hello everyone and a very warm welcome to all our new members who may have joined within the last month!

At the latest U3A Committee meeting, held using Zoom, it was decided that, despite Boris Johnson announcing some slight relaxing of the lockdown rules, we are still not in a position to reconvene our monthly General Meetings nor Interest Groups activities.

I hope you are all safe and well and that you continue to keep in touch with one another by email, phone call or text to maintain the all important encouragement and support during this lockdown period. We may be isolated but we are not alone.

Warm wishes

Linda Shutt

Members celebrate VE day

Hi all, as social secretary I thought I would share the VE Day celebrations I organised for our street.

I dressed as a land girl making use of the fancy dress I wore on a '1940s trip' from Whitby to Pickering' completed with a few friends last year. I organised quizzes, bingo and a table full of food and we were out for a full six hours.

It was fabulous to see everyone come together. Before lockdown I only knew my neighbours to wave to despite having lived here for six years. During the celebrations we walked around each other's tables chatting and finding out about each other and discovered that quite a few live on their own.

Now, every Thursday I bake a tray of goodies and when we all come out for the clap for carers and key workers we all eat cake; everyone coming one at a time to the table to take one!

Denise Whitsed

Denise's happy neighbours



Right: Land girl, Denise Whitsed
Below:
Eyes down for the bingo



Denise wasn't the only U3A member to get behind the VE Day celebrations as membership secretary **Jane Atkins** reports:
"With the VE Day anniversary celebrations cruelly curtailed by the current situation it was heartening to hear and see that many were not put off marking this historic date. We got together with a few neighbours and had a splendid afternoon/evening on our driveways with radio 40's music, bunting, poppies and lots of cake, sandwiches and fizz to raise a toast at 3pm."



Jane's fizzy spread - love the poppies!

It's not too late to tell us how you commemorated this historic day. Send me a few words by email or post (my details are on the last page of the newsletter). Better still a photograph with a short caption. I look forward to hearing from you.

Helen Riby, editor

The changing role of the local chemist's shop

A topical issue with the local history group, is shops and shopping, something which has changed so much over the years.

One shop some of us are depending on at the moment is the chemist. We have been used to ordering our prescriptions and going in to collect or having them delivered without giving it much thought. Under lockdown however things have changed – people are queueing at a distance from each other and only one person at a time is allowed in the shop. In years to come I suspect people will look back on the Covid-19 arrangements as a very strange interlude.

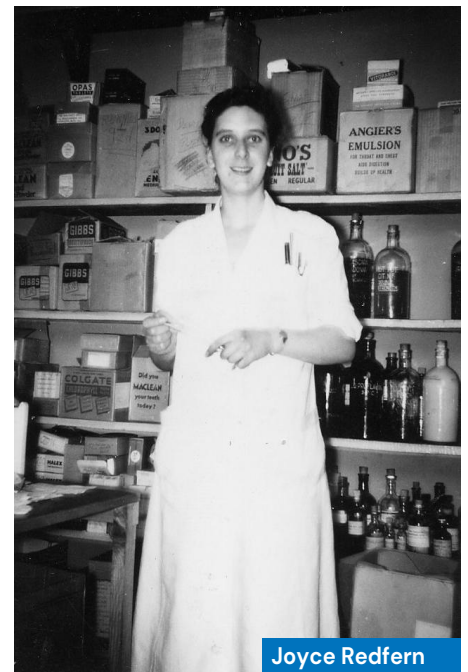
Turning the clock back, one of the chemists that was once in Forest Town was *May's* and the memories below from Joyce Redfern, which were in the *Forest Town Crier* community newspaper December 2004, reveal just how different it was.

"I was only a teenager when I started work at May's the Chemist. Mr & Mrs Holt's shop was on the left and Mr & Mrs Clowes on the right. If anyone

needed to make an urgent call for a doctor, they paid the chemist to use their phone. (No phone boxes or mobile phone in those days.) Every Monday my job was to walk to Ellesmere Road (still an unmade road then), to knock on doors to get orders. I would return to the shop to get the orders ready, then return with my basket full.

We had a brick building round the back of the shop and living area where we charged wireless batteries and accumulators. We also stored gallon bottles of various medication. At a much later date we made our own toiletries, face powder, hand cream, lipstick etc., and on Friday evenings the girls from Barringers (a Mansfield factory) came to buy them.

We also supplied the Miners Hostel with bulk medication. When the epileptic evacuees came from Lingfield in Surrey (September 1944 –



March 1945) each child was weighed every Saturday morning; a thing I felt privileged to do. Lily (Rhoades) Mysliwiec."

Pauline Marples

Information on the Miners Hostel can be found in the book *Forest Town Miners Hostel 1944 –1959* by Malcolm & Pauline Marples. It is now out of print but copies can be found in Forest Town Library once it re-opens, hopefully in early July.

Ramblers go walkies

Walking alone during the lockdown hasn't been much fun, so why not take a dog with you for company? No dog? No problem. Borrow someone else's. This is what four dog lovers in the rambling group have been doing.

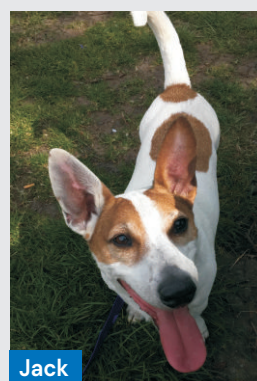
I've been walking dogs for the Cinnamon Trust for a few years now. This is a national charity to support the elderly and the terminally ill who have mobility issues, and of course their pets. The Cinnamon Trust needed emergency dog walkers to help keep pets exercised during the Coronavirus crisis, so other members of the rambling group kindly stepped in to help.

Helen, my wife, and Janis Bye have been taking it in turns to walk Teddy, a gorgeous 11 year old border collie with a beautiful temperament. I've been walking Jack, a bat-eared Jack Russell, and Ollie, a Dulux dog. Now Carol Green (Ashfield U3A) is giving Jack much needed extra

walks. Despite his 12 years, Jack is a bundle of energy with an insatiable desire to chase and catch balls, so he keeps Carol and I very busy on long walks. Ollie is 11 years old with arthritis, so he plods along very sedately for 20 minutes or so – unless he sees a cat that is!

There's no happy ending to this story, I'm afraid. Poor old Teddy had to be put to sleep yesterday (22/5) after suddenly falling ill. Apparently he had an undiagnosed internal tumour that began to bleed. Janis and Helen will offer what comfort they can to Teddy's mum while they await their next assignment.

Andy Riby



New discoveries...

What a difference it's made being able to go out for a bit longer and further afield. I must admit I was getting fed up with walking the streets.

We've been successful in finding pretty routes without crowds of people and not having to travel too far. A lovely walk was around Poulter Park. Last year we picked wonderful blackberries there and it's never crowded. This year we were lucky enough to visit when the cowslips were at their best (see picture).

Bothamsall is another nice area to walk in, avoiding Clumber park and the crowds. I heard my first cuckoo call this year! We are so lucky to have such beauty on our doorsteps.

A real find was 'Mansey Common from Maplebeck', which was a pleasant walk through farmland, woods and streams. We had set off from the viewpoint near Winkburn on

what was quite a warm day and apart from a farmer on his tractor we didn't see anyone throughout. The views were superb and towards the end we discovered a memorial to a Wellington bomber crew which had crash landed in October 1942 killing all on board.

At home I've discovered I may be a bit artistic! I wanted some sewing weights so came up with the idea of painting some large stones. With a few old tubes of acrylic paints (thanks to the grandchildren's craft box) I spent an enjoyable afternoon in solitude painting and I'm really quite proud of the results.

I've always been creative but drawing



Cowslips at Poulter Park



Hidden creative talent

and painting have never really interested me mainly because I was so bad at it. It is probably one of the most relaxing things I've done and such a simple exercise. If this lockdown goes on much longer I might have to paint all the lovely stones around the garden...

Jane Atkins

A taste of freedom...



In the middle of May we went for a drive; the first time, apart from hospital appointments, since lockdown. Not only did the car need its battery charging but so did we, and what a joy it was to see fields, hedgerows and trees. We had taken a flask of coffee with us and pulled in

overlooking Welbeck Lakes. There is only room for around four cars but luck was on our side. It is a popular bird watching spot and usually there are lots of small birds feeding out of the containers fastened to the fence, but on our visit they were not to be seen. A beautiful coloured pheasant did decide to investigate and hopped onto the fence just in front of our car. There was also a wide variety of ducks and geese on the lakes and in the distance two buzzards were gliding over the trees, that is till a large number of rooks decided to chase them off. A heron obliged us by flying down the lake and to our great joy we heard a cuckoo for the first time for years.

Each car was a reasonable distance from the next and everyone remained in their cars. As we drove home life seemed quite normal, that is until we passed, pubs, hotels and other eating establishments that were all closed, a sorry sight indeed!

Pauline Marples

Important message from our Welfare Officer

Whilst there has been a slight lifting of the lockdown restrictions, may I remind members that we are NOT in the position to begin meetings yet. **The time is NOT right to resume large gatherings of people.**

Whilst it may be tempting to hold smaller group meetings in our gardens, especially when the sun's out, or in our homes, please consider how your actions may affect your health and that of others.

Be aware too that there will be NO insurance cover for individual incidents that may occur as such group activity is not sanctioned by the U3A.

National Office has not yet posted any information about the easing of the restrictions and when it may be possible to begin introducing our normal monthly meetings.

Also, there is no official guidance on

promoting bookings for trips or other events such as Christmas parties.

As far as meetings are concerned the lockdown means we stay at home until it is safe to restart them; safe for you, your friends, your health and mine.

I look forward to seeing you all, when possible.

Kelvin Foster

Another funny thing happened to me...

Hi Everyone,

I hope the last month hasn't been too arduous and that at least some of you have been able to take advantage of the slightly relaxed conditions of lockdown.

Those lucky enough to have a garden will have been able to take advantage of the mostly good weather, apart from the cold snap in early May, during which (along with many others), I celebrated a lockdown birthday. Trust me to get the day that February returned with a vengeance, but at least I didn't need ice in the G&T!

As I've been shopping and picking up prescriptions for several other people, one of the questions I'm frequently asked is 'What's happening out there?' Well, the short answer is not a lot.

On the up side, nature is continuing to conduct its business very well without us, thank you very much. Many birds and animals have been taking advantage of our absence and the blossom has been stunning.

I've developed a close relationship with a Pied Wagtail, who's been christened Stanley Wagster (think I'm finally losing it...). He's developed such an obsession with my car that I have to give it a weekly wash just to control the ever growing piles of little presents he leaves behind. Over the past few days though I've noticed Stan's visits have declined, I think Mrs W has probably had a word about family responsibilities and told him to stop flirting with that human and the pretty boy in the mirror.

There's also less air pollution as road and air traffic has been a lot lighter. When were you last able to chat in the middle of a main street without running the risk of becoming road kill? Sadly, it's now starting to increase again.

Very few places are open yet, in Forest Town there's only the Coop, Forest Town News, and Well Pharmacy, that's it folks, oh, the Post Office is also open, nearly forgot that as it's no longer really in Forest Town. Most fast food places, including the chippy, are still conducting some sort of business, either by offering delivery services, or operating

a one out, one in policy, and sometimes you have to order in advance.

Shopping's a whole new experience, which seems to change on a weekly basis just to keep us on our toes. There are varying lengths of queues at the supermarket, pharmacy etc. but these are being tackled with the usual British stoicism. Brits are famous around the world for our love of a good queue, must be something good at the end of it, and there's very little complaining.

The phrase most frequently heard at the moment to describe our attitude is 'It is what it is'. This is usually accompanied with a slight shrug and a wry smile.

There are also some amusing moments, I heard recently about a notice in a shop window, and this read, 'No cash, card payment only, sorry for any incontinence', at least they tried, even if they didn't quite make it.

Inside the supermarket things are very different too, Perspex screens in front of the tills, card payment preferred and shop assistants controlling queues inside and out. Each supermarket seems to do things slightly differently; some have one way systems and a single queue for the tills. Woodhouse Morrison's recently introduced the latter, although as this goes around their clothing department there is a suspicion that it's a ploy to entice us to buy while waiting, forget the sweets, buy a new vest. There's good and bad news on the availability of some items, hand wash and sanitizer are still as rare as hens' teeth, but at least the toilet roll crisis seems to have passed.

Well, I could go on but Helen would probably gag me, there's only so much space in the Newsletter, so keep your distance, stay home as much as possible, and above all stay safe and well.



Jenny Wright

The phantom diarist (another week during lockdown)

Sameness: Which day of the week is it? Can't remember. What have I got planned? Don't know. Well, whatever takes my fancy...

Hair: Have taken to snipping bits off with nail scissors, in order to tame the unruly coif. The hairdresser will throw her hands up in horror, I'm sure.

Food: Far more tinned food than normal. Eggs hard to come by.

Picking herbs from garden every day to go with main meal (vitamins!). Chocolate! Tea!

Post: Two packages this morning: 1) face masks ordered and sent by my daughter; very pleasing. 2) packets of runner bean and courgette seeds sent unexpectedly by a friend! A lovely surprise, as I was going to be disappointed this year. So kind.

Puzzles: All the edges of the 1,000-piece jigsaw in place. Eleven cats, tabby and ginger! The remaining

pieces all look alike. Oh dear.

Another cryptic crossword finished. Victory dance round the room...

Knitting: Just had to rip out several rows of fancy cuff for baby's mitten! Dropped stitch. However, one mitten already completed. I was never a great knitter, but I get there in the end!

Garden: Lawn repair (moss, clover, and family dog).

Two birds, one stone

.Hi everyone, where has the last month gone? This month my report serves two purposes – Bird watching combined with “How I am spending my time”.

Sunday 3rd May was National Dawn Chorus Day so I set my group the challenge of getting up early enough to hear it. Alternatively, if they just couldn't get out of the pit then to try to match one bird to the sound of its song, which is not always easy at this time of year because of all the foliage.

No-one has come back to me with any amazing results so I thought you might like to hear about a challenge that I took up personally which incorporated a dawn chorus.

'Dawnlive', commissioned by the National Trust, took place on Saturday 16th May to commemorate their 125th Anniversary. It consisted of musicians tasked to play from various places around the UK to hail in the dawn as it swept across the land, from John O' Groats to Land's End.

So it was that I set my alarm for 3.30am! Uh! Kitted up with several layers and a flask of coffee I went out into my garden and got ready for the event. It was due to begin at exactly 3.43am so no time to lose.

Guess what? My phone said that I was out of range – panic stations – I had to rush and get my laptop and set it up to see if that was any better. Praise the Lord I gained access – but, I needn't have worried as it was them having trouble with their signal, not

me! So I wasn't late,

I settled down to listen to the dulcet tones of the narrator leading us into the event. And so it was that the music began, a variety of instruments gradually coming in – violin, double-recorder, hand-held pans (not the pans we bang on a Thursday night!), piano and harp. The event finally began at 4.20 and went on till 5.30am. During that time, as instructed, I focussed on a particular part of the skyline to observe the changes. Although it wasn't a dramatic sunrise that morning it was an amazing experience.

And now for the bird link! As it grew lighter, the bird chorus began. First it was the Blackbirds with very vibrant calls from roof aerials, rooftops and fence posts, followed by quiet cheeping by other smaller birds hidden in hedgerows and trees. This gradually built to a crescendo, including the rolling vocals of the racing pigeons in next door's coop.



Small birds began flying low over garden hedges and fences; joining in with the singing. Two Blackbirds came and sat on the fence beside me and one sat on the shed right in front of me with his head cocked as if listening to the new dawn sound (I was just too late to catch a photo). A pair of geese flew over in silhouette with their gagging sound radiating out. All in all, it was a wonderful experience.

After that, I was more than ready to respond to my own challenge – a dawn chorus walk. And I wasn't disappointed. I was up over the top of Vicar Water skyline by 6 o'clock and was blessed with the sighting of many birds and able to match them to their calls as they sat atop the trees showing clearly, singing out to their heart's content – and mine.

The sight and song of Song Thrush, White Throat, Linnet, Greenfinch and best of all Yellow Hammer made my walk most memorable. Well worth setting that alarm! **Lynne Cooper**

Family history

Some members of the family history group have been really busy this past month. Having completed her own story, Ann has made a start on life stories for other family members and is back to her great great (GG) grandparents. She's also found photos of all her great grandparents except one, very impressive! I've made a start on my own story, but have to admit that I'm currently only five years old, so no change there.

Ann has also emptied and sorted a box of goodies, photos, artefacts etc. that have been boxed up for 36 years. She's found her great grandma and GG grandma's cookery/diary books with lots of newspaper cuttings stuck in. She has also contacted a distant cousin who has the family bible and the second half of their great grandfather's diary, written when he went to New Zealand. She's hoping this cousin may send her a copy to add to her half, which she has re-read. It seems he was very good at keeping detailed entries, including the meals he had.

Pauline has been helping Ann fill in details about her GG grandfather and mother by doing some newspaper searches and found inquest reports for both, very sad

circumstances it seems.

David had already written his life story several years ago, but has taken the opportunity to update it.

Julie and Andy have spent quite a lot of time on Ancestry but are finding it slow going, due to many incorrect citations that can easily throw you off course.

I recently received 12 family photos dating from around the 1920s from a cousin. We know where they fit on the Wright family tree, but sadly, although there have been several guesses; we have no idea who any of the people actually are, which is very frustrating.

Finally, are you a member of the library? If so, and are already a Family Historian, or would like to make a start, you can now access the library's Ancestry site for free, from home via the Inspire website.

All you need to get started is your Inspire library card and pin number. Go to www.inspireculture.org.uk then follow the links from the Home page. Chose Inspire Online then Information & Reference followed by Research and finally click on Ancestry and then follow the instructions on that page to login etc. **Jenny Wright**

Video conferencing: Give it a go!

If you'd asked me about video conferencing before the Covid-19 lockdown I'd have said: "Don't know much about it and not really interested in finding out!"

How times change. I now take part in a virtual yoga class every Wednesday evening. This comes out from my yoga teacher via Zoom and we've had up to 17 of us all on screen at once. It's been such a success she's thinking about running an extra virtual class even after we're all allowed back into Turner Hall! I've also taken part in several quizzes and even hosted a couple myself using Webex. If you haven't tried this new way of meeting yet, I really would encourage you to give it a go!

There are lots of systems but I'm going to focus on Webex for the simple reason that it's free, you can talk for as long as you would like (Zoom cuts you off after 40 minutes) and you can have up to 100 people involved.

Joining a meeting

You can join a Cisco Webex meeting from your laptop, tablet, iPad or smartphone. You don't need to sign up or create an account. If you want to use your phone or tablet/iPad you will need to download the Cisco Webex Meetings App from Google Play or the Apple store.

Depending on how your host has set it up you will either get a link to their personal meeting room or an email invite to a scheduled meeting. At the appropriate time

click on the link or the 'Join' button. (The first time you join you may be asked to click on a webex.exe file). Now enter your 'Display Name' and 'Email' and click 'Next'. You will see a preview of your video, click on 'Join'. You may also be asked to allow access to mic and camera, click 'Accept'. If you are asked for a meeting password it will be in the email invite. Once you are in the meeting you will see and hear the other people who have joined. If you have used your phone you will only be able to see up to three people – the screen is too small to see more.

Hosting a Webex meeting

If you want to set up a meeting you will need to create an account. This is easy and it's free. Go to www.webex.com and click 'Start for Free'. Enter your email address, and follow the instructions to request an account. When your account is ready, you get an email. Click the link in the email to create a username and password.

You will now have a personal meeting room link. The simplest way to start a meeting with anyone is to email them that personal meeting room link and a meeting time. Just ahead of the meeting time, log into your Webex account and click on the green 'Start a meeting' button. You get a preview of your video and need to click on 'Start a meeting' again. You will now be in your meeting room waiting for others to arrive. That's it you should now be able to see and hear your friends.

If anyone wants more detailed instructions I'd be happy to help. Send me an email ftu3anews@gmail.com

Helen Riby

Church service news

Rev Philip Stead tells us that whilst St. Alban's is still shut: "We have a very tentative re-opening date of 4 July. If that does happen social distancing etc will be in place." He continues: "I hope you and your loved ones are all virus free, sane and not experiencing cancellation or delay to vital NHS appointments. Even if attending church is not your scene please still free to ask for a prayer. You can email me phil-stead-vicarage@tiscali.co.uk or text on 07816 522529."

AGM postponed

The AGM will not be taking place in June as planned. The committee has decided to postpone until September, when, hopefully, things will be more 'normal!'

However, we still have committee posts to fill: Assistant Membership Secretary, Assistant Treasurer, Speaker Finder and Web Editor (initially to support Bob). Should you feel able to take up one of these posts please contact Sue Harkin on ftdbusinesssec@hotmail.com or write to Sue Harkin, 3 Harby Avenue, Mansfield Woodhouse NG19 9HU. The appointments will be made under the casual vacancies provision, to be ratified at the reconvened AGM. Any motions for the AGM must be submitted to Sue by 7th August.

In the meantime a copy of the accounts will be sent to all members who have supplied an email address. Anyone who doesn't have email can get a copy by sending a stamped addressed envelope to Membership Secretary, Jane Atkins, 14 Paulson's Drive, Mansfield NG19 7AA.

Sue Harkin

Your Executive Committee

Forest Town & District U3A couldn't run without the hard work of its Executive Committee. Everyone gives their time freely. Welfare officer, **Kelvin Foster** has been keeping in touch by email but for members who do not use email he's keen to emphasise that any member who needs help should contact him by phone on **01623 422251**. All executive committee members can be contacted via the website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/forest-town/contact>

The members are: Linda Shutt (Chair), Michael Lyall (Vice chair), Sue Harkin (Business secretary), Andrew Riby (Treasurer), Marilyn Refern (Assistant treasurer), Anita Adlard (Groups' coordinator), Steve Evans (Assistant groups' coordinator), Jane Atkins (Membership secretary), Kelvin Foster (Welfare officer/Assistant membership secretary), Susan Carlill & Denise Whitsed (joint Social secretaries) and Desley O'Leary (Speaker seeker).

Next issue

Please send contributions for the next issue to Helen Riby by email ftu3anews@gmail.com or by post to 5 Fal Paddock, Mansfield Woodhouse NG19 9RW **by midnight on Friday 19 June please.**

Please visit our website for the latest news:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/forest-town/>

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