



## Chat from the chair

### Buddy system planned

Hello everyone and welcome to the July edition of our Newsletter. I hope you are all keeping well, staying positive and, whenever possible, supporting each other. Boris Johnson's announcement relaxing restrictions a little further from early June must have been very good news for many of you and I hope that you have taken advantage of being able to be part of a "support bubble".

The latest edition of TAM magazine contained some letters that I found quite alarming. Basically, the writers of the letters in question were stating how unfriendly they found their U3A when they first joined. I hope this is not the case for us but to ensure it does not happen the Committee have agreed to an action plan for when activities can recommence. It has been proposed that we introduce a 'Buddy' system at General meetings to enable all new members to get to know our U3A. Group Leaders will also be approached to set up a similar "Buddy" system within their groups to help new members to become familiar with that particular group.

Likewise, the Committee is keen to discourage the saving of seats at General meetings and Group activities; whilst we all would like to be sitting with our friends all the time this does not encourage new friendships nor does it promote a welcoming and friendly atmosphere for everyone.

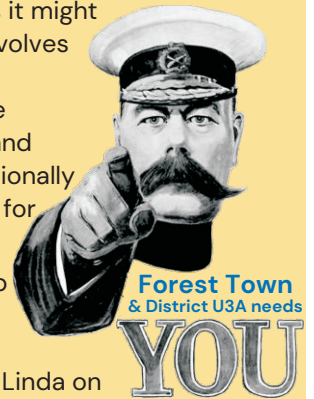
Please do share any lockdown news that you feel might be newsworthy. Stay safe, stay healthy and look after one another!

*Linda Shutt*

### Will you help your U3A survive?

A crisis is looming for Forest Town & District U3A. If we don't find someone to take on the role of Vice-chair our U3A will be forced to disband. The role is not as arduous as it might sound. It involves attending Committee meetings and very occasionally deputising for the Chair.

Please step forward to save your U3A. Email Linda on [lindashutt953@btinternet.com](mailto:lindashutt953@btinternet.com)



## Refunds for day trips and holidays in progress

Several day trips and one holiday have so far had to be cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Bearing in mind the uncertainty about when trips can be re-scheduled and the need to safeguard members' money, the committee has agreed the following actions:

#### National Trust visits

Members' money is held in a U3A bank account. As all visits are now cancelled, refunds will be given to members who paid for Kedleston and Stoneywell trips.

#### Day trips booked via Skills Travel

The following day trips have had to be cancelled:

- April: Lichfield
- May: Liverpool
- June: National Arboretum
- July: Anderton boat lift & Chester

Members paid Skills directly for these trips so Denise Whitsed has asked Skills to refund members' money. She expects to receive a refund cheque from Skills for the first three trips around 6 July. Skills have indicated they will refund the Anderton boat lift trip sometime after 15 July; the date this trip was due to take place. **Once the U3A has received these refunds,** Denise will contact members to arrange refunds to individual members.

#### Thursford Christmas Spectacular booked through Skills Travel

It is currently being assumed this trip will be able to go ahead as planned in November. As it involves overnight accommodation, it is covered by the Bonded Coach Holidays Scheme. The money members paid for this trip should therefore be safeguarded.

#### Potters holiday

This event should have taken place in June. Denise has arranged for the booking to be deferred by a year to the week commencing 14th June 2021. Anyone **not wishing to go** on this rearranged holiday should contact Denise Whitsed to request a return of the deposit they have paid.

**Please turn to page 2 in this newsletter for details of how refunds will be made.**

#### Any questions?

If you have any queries, please contact Ann Stanford re National Trust trips (tel. 01623 641864, email [annstanford1@sky.com](mailto:annstanford1@sky.com)) or Denise Whitsed (tel. 07791 941502, email [deewhits@aol.com](mailto:deewhits@aol.com)) for any other trips.

**Andy Riby**

# How trip & holiday refunds will be made

With monthly U3A meetings unlikely to resume in the next few months because of the ongoing risk of spreading Coronavirus, it is impractical to make refunds by cheque and cash.

Instead, refunds will be made by bank transfer. To be able to do this, Ann Stanford and Denise Whitsed will need to have your bank account details:

- The exact name on your account as it is shown on your cheque book or debit card
- The 6 digit sort code of your bank branch
- Your 8 digit bank account number

Some of you might have reservations about disclosing this information. However, if you think about it, whenever you make a payment by cheque you are already happily giving away all this information to complete strangers. It's shown on every cheque.

Andy Riby



# The NHS in Covid times

If you have had need to go to your doctors or had a hospital appointment in recent times you will know how strange it all is. These are some of my experiences.

## First the doctors

On entering the surgery I was met at the door by a receptionist wearing a visor who took my temperature. Then it was time to sit down in the waiting room, where the chairs were the obligatory two metres apart. There was only one other person waiting.

When being called in to see the nurse, or on another occasion the phlebotomist (blood lady) the health professionals wore masks, a plastic apron and gloves.

In some ways this was a good experience as I had a trip out and met different people to talk to.

I have also had need to speak to a doctor and this was done by requesting an appointment and the doctor calling me on the telephone, it worked well.

## Now the hospital

I have had appointments at Kings Mill Hospital twice in the past few weeks and to start with it was good to discover the barriers were up on the car parks and we didn't have to worry about how long we would be and the parking cost.

There is now a one way system as you enter the hospital and a security man on guard so it was a bit like "Halt! Who goes there?". It was at this point that we discovered only the person with the appointment can go in, so my husband had to go back and wait in the car.

When I explained I was a bit unsteady and was concerned about going up to Clinic 8 (Eye Department) I was 'plonked' in a wheel chair and pushed everywhere – up to the clinic and round the department before finally arriving back at the main entrance. I was then taken outside where, as I had phoned him, Malcolm was waiting.

On the second occasion, once again it was only one person allowed. This time I decided I could walk down to Clinic 4. It was not a case of follow the yellow brick road

as in the Wizard of Oz but follow the yellow circles with arrows directing you to keep on the right or left side of the main corridor.

There were lines in front of the receptionists in the clinic so you could only speak to them at a distance and, once again, the chairs in the waiting area were two metres apart. I found it interesting watching the various members of staff. Some wore masks, others didn't. Some pulled their mask down to talk to people, some didn't. It is certainly not easy talking to people with your mouth covered up as I have found with the one I have made. I couldn't fault any of the staff, medical or otherwise. They were all pleasant and helpful.

## Going mobile?

Today I have received a letter suggesting I let the relevant department know if I have a mobile phone number so the forthcoming appointment I have with a doctor can be done via a video link rather than an ordinary phone appointment. Now what shall I do about this? Me and my mobile phone don't always work well together!

Pauline Marples



Pauline in her 'T-shirt' face covering





# Have you ever seen baby pigeons?

At this time of year we are all delighted to see nature adorned with baby birds of all kinds, be it chicks, ducklings, goslings or young fledglings.

It's so cute to see them with their little wings flapping and their mouths gaping open looking up to their doting parents who run themselves ragged, literally, trying to supply their fast-growing needs. But, how many of us have seen a baby pigeon out there at all, let alone one being fed?

Well, when Linda Bancroft asked me that question, I for one realised that I hadn't. Fortunately, it wasn't an empty question, for Linda knew of a location where baby pigeons were actually in a nest. So it was that we arranged to meet in the garden of a friend of hers so that I could take a peek.



Moorhen feeding her chicks

In the few days that had ensued between the invitation and making the



A rare sight – cute baby pigeons in the nest

arrangements, Linda could hardly believe how much they had grown, from just their fluffy little heads being visible, to the quite sizeable youngsters pictured above that were now together filling the nest, with the mother bird seeming to be squeezed out and having to perch on top of them.

I know a lot of you don't like pigeons but then a lot of us don't like each other, so what's new! We can't all be desirable. But they are all part of God's creation and they definitely start off cute, just as we do! **Lynne Cooper**

## A new sighting and experience

The night was dark and still, nothing could be heard but the gentle noise of the farmer's water irrigation system in a nearby field. Then, like a cannon firing across the sky...wait for it...a Woodcock flew across the sky above the trees. A few minutes later, another...

Now I'm not sure you can say it was 'a sighting' as it was dark, but the sound, confirmed by those that knew, was that of a Woodcock.

But, there is more. I waited a while longer..it's now 10.15pm so that's a BIG clue as to what might have been heard next. Have you guessed? Yes, of course, a NIGHTJAR. From the call we thought just one but there again maybe two, then a fleeting glimpse for those that knew where to look. As for me? I missed it. OK, so what's new? But, I did hear it, that much I know; not close by but it definitely was a Nightjar. When you have heard one, it is not a sound you forget.... So, as Old Schwarzenegger would say: "I'LL BE BACK". **Linda Bancroft**

## The phantom diarist (yet another week in lockdown)

**Exercise:** Stretching exercises in the garden when fine (in a spot not overlooked!). A bit of a boogie round the living room occasionally to a 60s music CD (won at the Music Group raffle!). Twisting to Chubby Checker is a good workout and my creaking joints can just about cope!

**Money:** Emptied a large 'piggy bank' of coppers saved over the years. Sorted and bagged. The living room looked like Ebenezer Scrooge's counting-house!

**Cookery:** Made some rock buns and forgot to add the sugar (all weighed out and waiting)! Lockdown has addled my brain. What would Mrs Dansey-Smith, the domestic science teacher, have said? Given me a sad look and a smile, no doubt. Ah well... cakes smothered in sugar afterwards and quite nice.

**Shopping:** Marmite out of stock! Not worse than the toilet roll crisis, but still quite awful, in my opinion! Some tiny pots of Marmite sent to

me through the post by my dear daughter, as a surprise. Aww...



# Yet another funny thing happened to me...

Hi Everyone,

Hope you're all still keeping hale and hearty. How's the lockdown hairdo coming along? I'm willing to bet there's been a fair few DIY haircuts by now, from a full job with the dog clippers to just a bit off here and there.

I must admit to the latter, although my barnet has now got to the stage where I could give a cave woman a run for her money in the good grooming stakes. In fact I suspect there may be a couple of birds nesting in there somewhere, but so far I've not managed to flush them out of the thicket.

If it's not the length, the other main problem being experienced will probably be the colour, especially if you're not into using a home hair dye. If this is you, have you considered parting it down the middle, and telling everyone it's a racing stripe?

While waiting in a queue recently, an ambulance technician joined us and was encouraged to go first, but he kept refusing. When pressed, he admitted that everywhere he went now people were pushing him to the front of queues and he was starting to find it embarrassing. He then added, that once the pubs re-open he was thinking of trying it there to see if he could get a free pint or two, I hope he does and it works.

Mind you, that's not nearly as embarrassing as something that happened to me just before lockdown began. I was waiting off to one side in the pharmacy when a man came in with a prescription and stood behind me. I politely informed him that I wasn't in the queue and pointed out where he should join the rather long line of others waiting to be served, all of whom were, understandably, glancing over. He acknowledged but didn't move. After a couple of minutes he called to someone behind the counter and said that he'd come back later, he then smiled, and informed me, loudly enough for everyone to hear, that he was a doctor from next door. Oops!

I hope some of you have now been able to 'bubble up' with someone, and possibly given family that big hug we're all waiting for. I think one of the saddest things I've seen recently was a grandfather staring through a front window trying to catch a glimpse of his family within, especially when my neighbours have been flouting the rules and partying in their garden all through lockdown. And no, all ten of them don't live in the same two bed bungalow, unless there's a north and east wing I don't know about.

On the other hand, children bring many smiles. I recently met a family on a walk round Vicar Water. The dad was engaged in a heated argument

Dear hairdresser, I miss you



with his son, who was around four years old. It was about whether something on the path was rubbish or not. Dad turned away, thinking he'd won when son piped up, 'Daddy, it's NOT rubbish, it's a squirrel!' When I got to the same spot the 'squirrel' turned out to be a fallen catkin. Aah, the power of a child's imagination!

I had another heart warming encounter with a family who had a little girl of about eight. On seeing me she stepped smartly off the path. When I got closer she stood to attention, with her arms straight by her sides, head up and chest puffed out, so proud because she was doing the right thing and giving the old girl room to pass by safely. I made a special point of thanking her for her consideration and was rewarded with the biggest smile.

Take care and stay safe, things are improving so look for the good things and keep smiling.

**Jenny Wright**

## A trip to Newark does you good

After feeling that we needed something different to Asda and Morrisons, we decided that the weather looked good on Saturday 13 June for a trip to Newark. The fact that the sun was shining was a good sign.

So we packed some lunch and set off on a lovely drive at a steady pace on the A616 to Newark. There were a few of us doing the same thing.

Arrived at Newark to find the main car park closed but we got in the smaller one. Walked over locks into town, there were a few markets stalls open and some of the shops that were allowed, so did some shopping. By then the sun was quite warm.

We walked back to Market Place and there was a skiffle group playing and a few people were dancing, there was a takeaway doing good business so we sat and had a ice

cream and enjoyed the entertainment. Everyone was doing the right thing, such a feeling of 'yes, we may get back to normal and all come together again and recover from lockdown.'

We sat by the river Trent and had our lunch. It was peaceful and we reflected on the past few weeks. The trip was a real tonic and did the car good as well.

**Anita Adlard**





# No need to walk alone

We ramblers, along with the birdwatchers are lucky as, even during the depths of the lockdown, we have been able to get out and do the things we love, even if it did have to be alone.

Whilst there are no group activities sanctioned by the U3A with relaxation in the lockdown rules there has been nothing wrong with a group of friends in pods of no more than six walking together, albeit at the designated two metres apart. (Hopefully that will be down to one metre by the time you are reading this.)

So over the last couple of weeks some of us have been meeting up to walk locally so even the nervous drivers can join in. For those without cars we are also planning walks which start close to their homes as, of course, there can be no car sharing at this time.

*Helen Riby*



Keeping our distance on walks with friends. Left, on a Maun Valley walk and above, in the village of Halam on a walk from Farnsfield

## Getting to know your ancestors

There is so much more to family history than just collecting names. Many boast of tracing family history back to 1066 or beyond, but do they actually know anything about the people in the long lists they amass? The real fun is in putting the 'flesh on the bones' and getting to know who our ancestors were and what their lives were like.

This is a story of a local lass. She is my son's 5th great grandmother and is more than just a list of dates. Maria Wombell was baptised in Tuxford on 28 September 1787, the illegitimate daughter of Elizabeth Wombell. Nothing more is known of Maria's early life. On Christmas Day in 1816, at the age of 29, she married William Crowder at St. Peter and Paul's Church in Mansfield. William was a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars. He had volunteered for the 45th Regiment of Foot in 1807 and fought in numerous campaigns. He was injured after falling from a scaling ladder at the storming of Fort Picariene at Badajoz. and was discharged on 6 November 1814 without a pension.

Many years later his gallantry was recognised and he was awarded a medal and 13 clasps. Around twelve years prior to his death he was also awarded a pension of 9d a day. This had risen to 1s 3d by 1866, Maria must have been very proud of him. Until his death, William earned a living as a wood sawyer, he was also a Chelsea Pensioner.

Maria must have waddled up the aisle, as she gave birth to their first child, Henry, two months after the wedding. Sadly Henry only lived for 10 months. Two years later Maria gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth and then to another son, John, in 1823. Tragedy struck when John

died aged five, on 19 October 1828.

In 1838, their 18 year old daughter Elizabeth gave birth to an illegitimate son, William, who was later brought up by his grandparents after Elizabeth married a soldier. William followed in his grandfather's footsteps and became a wood sawyer. From 1841 Maria and her family lived in Clerkson's Alley. This is one of the last of ten alleys and yards that ran from West Gate to Back Lane West (Clumber Street). They were narrow and lined with small stone cottages, dating back to the 17th and 18th century. There were at least 14 families living there and most earned their livings as labourers or mill hands. Water was drawn from local wells that were often contaminated until mains water became available in the late 1800s. There is no evidence that Maria, or Betty as she was known, worked, beyond household duties, but life must have been hard for them all.

William died on 1 January 1871 when Maria was 84. She continued to live in Clerkson's Alley, making ends meet by working as a factory labourer until her death on 14 March 1874. The causes were 'a fractured femur and exhaustion'. At this point I thought Maria's story was finished until I found a reference to her in William Moss's Diaries, 11 February 1874. It appears that Maria sustained the fracture after falling through a trapdoor into the cellar while visiting Cotton's grocers in Mansfield market place. The diary entry also said she sustained other severe injuries, although it isn't known what these were. Maria lingered on for another month before finally succumbing to her injuries and must have been in considerable pain, her daughter Elizabeth was with her when she died.

*Jenny Wright*

# Local man earns Rolex watch

Since the early days of Forest Town there have been members of the Annable family living in and around the village; each with their own story to tell of life in the community. If our group had been meeting there is no doubt we would have spoken about VE Day and other memories of World War Two. I would have taken along my files on the Annable family to discuss one member in particular, Philip John Annable.

Philip John Annable was born in May 1920, son of Arthur and Gertrude Annable. The family lived on Lime Grove, Forest Town. His mother was said to be a talented pianist and his father one of the brass band personalities of his day, playing, I believe, in Mansfield Colliery Brass Band. Sadly Arthur died in January 1927. He had been in poor health after serving in the First World War.

Phillip's school life saw him attending Forest Town School, Carter Lane School and then Ravensdale School where he was their first head boy. An unnamed and undated article reveals :

*Musician Annable who joined the navy at the age of 14½ and trained at Deal, is clarinettist and tenor saxophonist*

## Garden, by Kay Toy

A cloud-backed raptor, circling and hovering,  
With music from a solitary skylark,  
tiny in its heavenly quarters,  
And not to be seen.

A small skyblue butterfly has settled on a leaf  
For a brief moment.  
A Common Blue? But special to me...

Purple spires of Honesty stand tall  
next to last year's cousins,  
Silvery discs like paper coins twinkling in the sun.

A goldfinch is trilling on his high-up perch...  
Joined by his mate,  
they fly off to do some finchy things together.

I linger in the canopied shade of an enfolding space,  
With its woodland plants;  
a tiny patch of calm, my peaceful place.

Quiet thoughts hover here  
And keep me strong.

*in the band of the 'Ajax' which ship he joined in January 1938. During the fight in the Graf Spee, his duty took him to one of the control positions in the ship, where he acted at the range-finding apparatus during the actual battle. "We started firing at 6.10am," he said "And finished about 8am when the battle was broken off and we followed the Graf Spee at long range until she took refuge in Monte Video harbour about 11 o'clock that night. She had fired at us for about two hours during the morning." After a well-earned six weeks leave Annable has now gone back to duty carrying with him the hearty good wishes of everyone with whom he has come into contact.*

Another article (not dated) written by Philip himself adds more to his story :

*In 1940 after the return home of HMS AJAX the citizens of Forest Town made a presentation of a valuable 'Rolex Oyster' watch to musician Philip Annable, a member of the band of HMS Ajax playing the clarinet and saxophone. This watch I wore until 1960 when it gave up. I placed it in the Royal Marine Museum in Portsmouth, where it had been on display for the last 25 years as part of the 'battle of the River Plate Memorabilia.' As the display has been discontinued, today the 'Rolex Oyster' watch came home to Australia, where my children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy it in future years.*

Philip had married Barbara Mcalister on 13 April 1946 at St Lawrence's Church, Mansfield. He continued in the Royal Marines till 1950. He and Barbara emigrated to Australia in 1961 where he became the Principle Woodwind teacher to the Australian Army Band Corps. Some 15 years in a prestigious Grammar School took him to retirement.

Referring to the watch Philip wrote that: "He was glad to have this small part of his roots back where it belongs." The inscription on the watch pictured says: 'To/ Musn. P. J. Annable/ H.M.S. Ajax/From Forest Town/ Residents/ Battle River Plate/Dec 13/39.



*Pauline Marples*

## Your Executive Committee contacts

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), pending vacancy (Vice-chair), Andrew Riby (Treasurer), Sue Harkin (Business secretary), Anita Adlard (Groups' coordinator), Steve Evans (Assistant groups' coordinator), Jane Atkins (Membership secretary), Kelvin Foster (Welfare officer/ Assistant membership secretary) and Susan Carlill & Denise Whitsed (joint Social secretaries).

## Next issue

Please send articles or ideas for the next issue to Helen Riby by email [ftu3anews@gmail.com](mailto:ftu3anews@gmail.com) or by post to 5 Fal Paddock, Mansfield Woodhouse NG19 9RW **by midnight on Friday 24 July please.**

Please visit our website for the latest news:

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

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