



## Chat from the chair

### Future of Forest Town U3A assured for now, but...

Hello fellow members, I hope you are all keeping safe and well!

At the time of writing this article we have still not received any news from National Office confirming when we might be able to resume meetings and group activities.

However, I am delighted to be able to inform you that we now have a new Vice-chair; although only for a period of 12 months. Allan Barham has very kindly stepped up and volunteered to take on the role as a 'rescue gesture'. But, he is only prepared to serve for one year to prevent the closure of your U3A!

I am equally as delighted to be able to inform you the post of Assistant membership secretary has been filled by Kathryn Cope. I would like to express my thanks to them both.

We still need to recruit volunteers for the roles of Assistant treasurer and Speaker seeker. Your U3A really does need you so please consider how you might be instrumental in saving your U3A!

Stay safe, stay healthy!



Linda Shutt

### U3A member's amazing lockdown building projects unveiled

Some of us did more than eat chocolate and drink wine during lockdown! Turn to page 2 to find out how one Forest Town & District U3A member filled their time far more creatively....



### Notice of Annual General Meeting

As we still can't meet up in person, the Forest Town and District Annual General Meeting will take the form of a virtual online Zoom meeting on 3rd of September at 1:45 pm. Members are welcome to join this meeting. The main purpose is to formally review the operation and finances of the U3A for the year ended 31 March 2020 as well as approving the appointment of new executive committee members. The agenda, a copy of last year's minutes, the Chairman's report and Treasurer's report plus accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 will be sent out via email prior to the meeting.

Members not on email can obtain a copy of these documents by contacting the Secretary, Sue Harkin. They can also ask Sue to pass on any comments they might have at the meeting, and instruct her to cast a proxy vote on their behalf. Sue's address is 3 Harby Avenue, Mansfield Woodhouse NG19 9HU and her phone number 01623 479110.

For those of you with access to the internet, you can join the Annual General Meeting via Zoom on Thursday 3rd September, 2020 at 1:45 pm by following the link below, and then typing in the Meeting ID and Passcode shown below, if prompted:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86956987291?pwd=dytpTjRISXVOeXcwTXhадOFNMEorUT09>

Meeting ID: 869 5698 7291

Passcode: 4DC9cR

**Please ensure that your camera and microphone are enabled.**



# Lockdown projects unveiled

## The rainy day project

The fabulous model of St. Thomas' Church, pictured right and on the front page of this edition, was purchased as a kit in February at a model railway exhibition at Doncaster racecourse. Yes it is a model, not a real church, but such is the detail, you do need to look more than once!

The U3A member who built it is Pamela Lander who now things are getting a bit better says she wants to share with us all the things that have kept her busy during these past few months.

I chose the model church because it was different from the usual 'railwayana' of stations, cottages etc. I was told by the stall holder that it was one of the most complicated kits they have produced.

However, up for the challenge, we got it. Little did I know then just how important a part it would play in the coming months.

Constructed of laser cut wood in over 200 parts, the main building went together as planned.

The windows took a long time with inner stone mouldings, stained glass and outer stone mouldings, followed by stone ledges, outer coping and finally decorative additions; all of which were painted, assembled and glued into position with the aid of tweezers.

The tower and main building were



then put together, the outside finish was applied (very messy) along with the moss finish and then the coping painted in stone wash.

Lights were fitted inside (with some help) and the base constructed, again in wood.

Gravel paths and lawns were added. I then set about making the Church yard as real as I could using Pauline Marples' Forest Town book for reference. Soldier's graves were placed carefully into position, benches and graves made from card and bits leftover from previous models.

The tree is made from wire and grated latex from railway model suppliers. The lychgate, copied from another Church, added style to its surroundings.

Still ongoing, this morning I made the small notice board. A porch light and sound board for hymns will all come in the near future.

## The fine day project

The garden being on a slope was adapted for my late husband's garden railway; the bottom part being slabbed, I decided to take up a part of this area and construct a Japanese style garden.

The idea of building a dried river bed, three-corner elevation Japanese lanterns and stones was copied from a small book I had been given many years ago. Because of lockdown however, most of the plants used



were home grown. The bonsai trees, mosses and ferns were already in different areas of the main garden.

The joys of having spare time are a blessing.

*Pamela Lander*

## Community news

- Kingsway Hall and the Arena are not yet open for group activities.
- Senior Moments, a long standing group which met at the Arena has closed due to Covid 19 and a lack of people to run the group.
- At present there are no plans to open the Methodist Church.
- St Alban's Church opened for Sunday morning service at 9.30am on 5 July but with no singing and careful social distancing & hygiene.
- It has been sad to read on the window of the League of Friends charity shop of the death of Mrs. Barbara Glass who ran the shop for many years.

# A new sighting & experience, part two

*In the last edition of this newsletter readers may recall that Linda Bancroft from the bird watching group managed to hear, but not see, a Nightjar. She vowed to be back.*

*Here she recounts her somewhat unusual experience when she went in search of Nightjars for the second time*

## Seeking Nightjars

I did say I would be back and here I am. It was a still and moonlit night as I made my way to my rendezvous in the woods. A rustle in the undergrowth disturbed the stillness of the night and out sprang two Muntjac deer that raced on ahead.

I walked a little quicker now as I couldn't yet see my birdwatcher friends. The rendezvous was just ahead, or so I had been told, when, suddenly, approaching from my right, a slim dark figure appeared. Maybe

another late arrival, I thought.

I stopped until the figure became apparent....OH MY, now that was a **New Sighting and Experience** in the woods! I knew not where to look. Just smile I told myself, be natural, look beyond the nakedness of the man. Talk to him as if fully clothed. Why was I so embarrassed?

So I talked and talked and smiled a lot and likewise so did he. We walked on ahead together and the nakedness disappeared. He was a gentle, kind and handsome man, beautifully tanned. The Garden of Eden came to mind, before Adam knew that he was naked. How blissful this world could have been before we knew right from wrong.

Alas my rendezvous point had been reached. The birdwatchers were waiting up ahead. OH MY!! A New Sighting and Experience for them too. There I was with a naked man but

they just laughed and laughed some more, with embarrassment I assume!!

He went on his way and we went on ours and the Nightjars came out to play, their eerie voices were heard and their silhouettes could be seen up among the trees.

A good night for Nightjars and an experience never to be forgotten.

Linda Bancroft



## Refunds for cancelled day trips – progress update

Group leaders and committee members have been working hard to reimburse members for cancelled day trips over the last month. The latest position is:

### National Trust visits

As members' money paid for these trips was held in a U3A bank account, we have successfully reimbursed everyone barring one member.

Devonshire Arms lunch – 18th March

Three quarters of members booked on this outing have now been successfully reimbursed by bank transfer as members' money was held by the U3A. For those yet to be refunded, please contact Denise Whitsed – details shown below.

### Skills day trips

Skills have now refunded members' money for the Lichfield and Liverpool trips and these funds are now held in a U3A bank account. Skills have now indicated they intend to refund the National Arboretum and Anderton Boat Lift trips during the first week in August.

As 175 coach seats were sold for all four outings, it's a huge undertaking for the U3A to reimburse members. To reduce the workload, those members who are booked onto more than one trip will receive one refund for the total amount they paid for all Skills trips. That's why members who were booked onto the Lichfield and Liverpool trips only have already been receiving

refunds. Members booked onto the National Arboretum and Anderton Boat Lift trips will receive refunds for all the trips they booked once the U3A receives the money due from Skills.

### What you need to do to get a refund.

If you've not already done so, please let Denise Whitsed 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.

Denise can be contacted by telephone between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday on 07791 941502, or email [deewhits@aol.com](mailto:deewhits@aol.com)

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



# Diary of a Lockdown Kid

(with apologies to Jeff Kinney and Diary of a Wimpy Kid)

Monday (or is it Tuesday?) I am awake and not in the middle of that somewhat bizarre dream involving a train journey across the rooftops of Paris. Don't ask, as I have no idea!

Open curtain, rain again, typical British Summer weather. Bang goes the planned mega washing session.

Sort clothes to wear for another 'indoor' day, which stylish top shall it be today? Wearing a 'favourite' one is a recipe for disaster as something will be spilt on it before the day is out. Wearing 'this old thing' will encourage a very elegant neighbour to pop by and cast her eye over the less than perfect look. Oh well, tough.

Begin exercises/stretchers (but nothing like the Joe Wicks regime).

Take meds. Shower.

Turn on phone. Ping, an overnight message pops up. Not important, but I have to read it. Then get sidetracked with the news headlines. What has The Donald done Now???

Breakfast time. Kettle on and, whilst waiting for it to boil, get distracted by the flurry of birds on the bird table and bird bath, all elbowing (should that be winging?) each other out of the way for the remnants of yesterday's offerings.

Oops. Crash landing of huge pigeon tips up the table, scattering seeds and birds. Well, that's the first outdoor job on today's To Do list.

Eat breakfast whilst shouting at Radio 4, rewriting To Do list and

shopping list. Wonder what to cook for dinner with the bits and pieces in the fridge as online delivery not due till next week. Oh heck!

Change radio station to Radio 2.

Notice it has almost stopped raining, so a quick load up of washing machine, then a foray outdoors to empty the compost crock and feed the hungry horde of birds.

Half an hour later, having been distracted by a little light weeding and deadheading, I am back indoors, just in time to hear the phone ringing, only to find it was one of those dratted recorded messages purporting to be from Amazon, insisting my account has been compromised so press 1 to be transferred to someone who will be able to help resolve the issue.

It would be more believable if I actually had such an account. Do they think I was born yesterday?! Deleted and blocked, but they will still manage to get through, drat and bother (or similar words).

Begin a few random emails. I find it more satisfying, somehow, to respond out of sequence. It adds such excitement to the day.

Knock on door; a man desperate to deliver a parcel to number 16. I explain for the umpteenth time, this isn't number 16, it is several houses past the next junction. It's a 'residential hazard' of living on a strangely numbered road. It does



however give the opportunity to lay bets on who or what will come up the drive next. The best time tends to be evenings, when pizzas, Indian or Chinese takeaways are triumphantly plonked on the doorstep, only for the courier to be called back and redirected, much to their puzzlement and annoyance. Not had a taxi for a while though nor the police, but that's another story.

Washer pings, unload it, take outside, hang laundry out, whilst exhorting the flock of birds not to leave any calling cards on it.

Realise it is 10.20, dash inside, turn radio on and await the instruction to 'Put the kettle on'. No, my radio hasn't been taken over by androids it is merely the early warning to prepare yourself a drink and a biscuit for **The Quiz** at 10.30.

What do you mean, you have no idea what I am talking about?????

The Quiz.

Popmaster.

Radio 2.

Ken Bruce. Enough clues?

**EVERYBODY stops for Popmaster.**

Sorry, I have to go. 39 points to aim for. Maybe if you are lucky, I will get to Tuesday's diary.

*AnonyMouse*

## The phantom diarist

### A week in lockdown (before easing of restrictions)

**Gardening:** Cut the grass, using the "push-me-pull-you" mower: a jolly good work-out on the slope for 40 minutes! Made me think of sunny childhood afternoons, and the gentle sound of my dad tending his precious lawn.

Lots of lovely tomatoes, grown from seed, forming in the conservatory; daily watering.

**Wildlife:** Watching the antics of a small bat in the garden at dusk. Nicknamed it "Billy", as it circles

round and around like Fury!

Entertained and transfixed by the aerobatics of a few swifts, flying for sheer joy? I watch enthralled as my friend, the skylark, darts and hovers and sings its magical chorus. A matronly blackbird perches for a moment, with worms in her beak, before flying off to her precious brood. A family of sparrows gather in the corner of neighbour's roof for annual chick rearing. Lots of twittering and cheeping. Don't enjoy

the jagged cry of magpies. I worry about the little birds.

Occasional signs of hedgehog visit.

**Hair:** The unruly coif has been tamed by moi and a pair of needlework scissors. Oh dear. What will Claire say when I get back to her emporium!

**Puzzles:** I could paper the walls of the cloakroom with completed (during lockdown) crosswords. Oh the joy of getting that last sticky clue!

**Pets:** Cheerful visits from family dogs (chasing tennis ball in garden). Their joy is infectious.

# Harlow Wood Hospital remembered

Often when local history is mentioned the response is: "But, I don't come from round here." Well, as Pauline Marples, our resident historian explains: "Neither do I. We moved here in 1977 and discovering about the local history became a passion of mine. It is appropriate this month when we are hearing so much about the National Health Service to tell you about one of Mansfield's former hospitals, Harlow Wood Orthopaedic Hospital."



In 1929 the road to Nottingham from Mansfield was the object of great change. It was to affect, not only the area, but the lives of many people far and wide. This new innovation: the Harlow Wood Orthopaedic Hospital.

Winifred, Duchess of Portland, was greatly concerned with the welfare of 'crippled' people and was already a prominent figure in the work of the *Cripples Guild* in Nottinghamshire. The land for a hospital to care for the specific needs of 'cripples' was given by the Duke and Duchess of Portland of Welbeck Abbey. Sir Jessie Boot was instrumental in the building, offering to build the hospital without profit, providing the work commenced by 1 September 1928. The work proceeded and the foundation stone was laid on 7 November 1928 by the Duchess of Portland.

On 3 August 1929 the new Hospital was opened by the then Duke and Duchess of York (later to become King George VI and Queen Elizabeth). The first matron was Miss Dorothea Denman and the surgeon in charge, still remembered by many people, was Mr Alan Malkin.

The first patients were admitted in September 1929 when the hospital comprised two wards, a nurses home, reception block and the lodge. A third ward, which could accommodate 40 children, was the next to be built. Fresh air was a cure believed in at Harlow Wood and many people remembered being pushed out on the veranda in all kinds of weather!

Many gifts were donated through the years and fundraising played a big part in the hospital's life. Visitors from far and wide came to brighten the days of the patients, including Prince Edward in 1933, the Australian and English Test Match players in 1934, Noel Coward in 1935 and Harry Worth in 1970. The Duchess of Portland was a constant visitor.

The hospital continued to expand. Huttred wards were built during the war to help care for wounded service

men. An Occupational Therapy Hut was also built. The beautiful woodland setting of the hospital must have helped in the rehabilitation of those people who had been through the harsh trauma of war.

In 1948 the hospital became part of the newly established National Health Service.

Queen Elizabeth revisited the hospital on 24 July 1950 and opened the remedial pool which benefited many patients. The pool was constructed from a static water tank built during the war to provide an emergency water supply to put out fires.

The hospital was renowned for its orthopaedic treatment, consultants and nursing staff. Patients came from far and wide. The building programme, which included new theatres and a new reception area, continued until the last few years of the hospital's life. HRH Princess Anne opened a new Occupational Therapy Department in 1988 and the Duchess of York visited the hospital in May 1989 for the Hospital Diamond Jubilee, (retracing the steps of the first Duchess of York in 1929).

By March 1995 however Harlow Wood Hospital was a sad place. Few patients and staff remained. Everything was tagged or numbered as it awaited removal to another hospital, or waited for a 'lot number' in the pending auction.

On Sunday 26 March a Thanksgiving Service was held in the Winifred Portland Memorial Chapel in the hospital. The service extended into the Portland Room where hung a beautiful portrait of the young Winifred Duchess of Portland. If it was possible for a painting to cry, I am sure we would have seen a tear drop from the eyes of this lady as the doors of her beloved hospital closed for ever, on Friday 31 March 1995.

Today the area is a good quality housing estate.

**Pauline Marples**

*First written March 1995 updated October 2017 & July 2020*

## Lockdown Blues, by Allan Barham

Are you suffering lockdown blues?  
Not able to do the things you might choose.  
Can't go out to visit friends  
Wondering when this thing will end.

We're told we are a vulnerable group  
And have to jump through the isolation hoop.  
Shopping habits, what a trial  
Two metres apart in single file!

Even so our spirit's high,  
To survive it's essential that we try.  
We must stay safe and social distance,  
We'll get through this by sheer persistence!

I'm sure however when it's done.  
We can get together to resume the fun  
Of the pleasure we get each first Thursday,  
When next we meet at the U3A!

# First Matron at Harlow Wood

Jenny Wright from the family history group continues the Harlow Wood story looking back at the life of Dorothea Denman, the hospital's first matron.

Mary Dorothea Denman was born on 25 April 1877 at Oakamoor, near Cheadle in Staffordshire. She had a twin sister, Alice Campbell. They were the first born children of Rev Charles Denman and Alice Mary Searle. Over the next 16 years, Dorothea and Alice were joined by five brothers and sisters. George Charles born the following year in 1878, then Arthur Clive in 1880, Emma Marjorie early in 1886, Helen Muriel in 1888 and finally Christopher Campbell in 1893.

The whole family was brought up in Oakamoor where Charles was the Wesleyan Methodist Minister of the Memorial Congregational Chapel.

At least three of the girls went into nursing, possibly influenced by their Grandfather Searle who was a surgeon. All served in World War 1. Alice rose to Sister in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service before marrying Richard Osborne in 1913. He was a Fleet Surgeon in the Royal Navy. Prior to the war Emma also nursed children with orthopaedic conditions before marrying Fleet Surgeon Christopher Louis White Bunton.

Dorothea and Helen never married. Helen was seriously injured in 1940 in an accident between her cycle and a van. This was only days after taking up the post of Matron at Picket Post School in Ringwood. She died two days later from head injuries.

Two of the boys pursued a military career. George, who was a 2nd Lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment, died at the

age of 20 in Bombay. Arthur became a Paymaster in the Royal Navy. Christopher emigrated to America in 1910, at the age of 17.

Although it isn't known where Dorothea trained, her nursing career centred on children's nursing. She was at the Wirral Children's Hospital in 1901 and, by 1911, had moved to Mulberry Street in Liverpool. There were two children's hospitals in the area. By 1901 she had risen to Sister.

In April 1917 Dorothea joined the Newnham & Girton Unit of the Scottish Women's Hospitals as a nursing Sister and was posted to Salonika, where she served until November 1918. Around 1,500 women, served with the SWH in France, Russia, Greece, Corsica and Serbia in 14 mostly all-female staffed medical units. They cared for sick and wounded soldiers, civilians and prisoners of war in the heart of war zones as well as providing assistance to refugees. Conditions in Salonika were testing, with challenging terrain, overcrowding in hospital tents and lack of proper drainage in camps. Extreme weather conditions as well as the remoteness became part and parcel of camp life and diseases such as typhus, dysentery and malaria were rife. Dorothea was awarded the Victory and British War Medals.

Before leaving Salonika, Dorothea had been promoted to Matron. She then served in a similar capacity in Belgrade before returning to England where she had charge of a children's hospital in the East End of London.



Dorothea Denman

Dorothea was appointed first Matron for Harlow Wood Orthopaedic Hospital some months prior to the official opening in August 1929. Although there is little information about her in the papers at the time, all reports about Harlow Wood were glowing, especially commenting on how happy and content the children were. In a large part this was probably due to Dorothea's influence as Matron. There is one small piece which gives an insight where she smilingly admitted to collecting sticks and fir cones in the woods shortly after coming to Harlow Wood. This would have been a great contrast to the conditions she encountered in the East End.

Dorothea continued as Matron until her retirement in 1938 with a gratuity of 100 guineas. After she retired Dorothea went to live in Budleigh Salterton, Devon, with her sister Alice and brother in law, Richard. She died there at the Cottage Hospital on 11 March 1954. She was succeeded as Matron of Harlow Wood by Lynda Maud Prickett.

Jenny Wright

## 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 current members are: Linda Shutt (Chair), Andrew Riby (Treasurer), Sue Harkin (Business secretary), Anita Adlard (Groups' coordinator), Steve Evans (Assistant groups' coordinator), Jane Atkins (Membership secretary), Kathryn Cope (Assistant membership secretary), Susan Carlill & Denise Whitsed (joint Social secretaries), Bob Hunt (Website editor) Desle y O'Leary (Speaker Seeker) and Kelvin Foster (Welfare officer & Assistant membership secretary).

## 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 21 August please.**

Please visit our website for the latest news:

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

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