

Chat from the chair

Let's keep saying 'hello', kindness costs nothing!

Hello and welcome to the September edition of our Newsletter! I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal thanks to the 'retiring' Committee members. Jane Atkins, Marilyn Redfern, Denise Whitsed and Susan Carlill have completed their terms of office. Under normal circumstances at the AGM we would all have given them a round of applause by way of thanks for their dedication and hard work. "Thank you, ladies, for all that you have done and continue to do for our U3A!"

Mike Lyall stepped down as Vice-chair a few months ago due to ongoing personal reasons. However, he continues to be an active member of our U3A. We wish him well and thank him for his service as Vice-chair.

I am pleased to introduce three new Committee members who, as there were no other nominations for these roles, will all step into post at our virtual AGM on 3 September 2020 to begin their terms of office. The three are: Kathryn Cope who, as reported in the last newsletter, joins the Committee as Assistant membership secretary, Irene Duncan who joins as Assistant treasurer and Allan Barham who, as announced in the last issue, has kindly agreed to join the Committee as Vice-chair for a term of one year. I am confident that, like me, you will all be delighted to see them join your U3A Committee, so, 'thank you Kathryn, Irene and Allan' and 'welcome aboard!'.

Desley O'Leary has kindly agreed to remain in the role of Speaker Seeker until we are able to recruit a suitable replacement. If you are interested in taking on the duties of Speaker Seeker please get in touch with me and I will arrange for you to have a chat with Desley. In the meantime, I would like to extend my grateful thanks to Desley for agreeing to stay on the Committee.

Under normal circumstances, at our general meetings, I would be encouraging you all to say 'hello' to one another. I do this in the hope of overcoming the loneliness and isolation that, sadly, exists within every community, including, unfortunately, your U3A! Please keep on saying 'hello'; just a smile says a thousand words and kindness costs nothing.

Linda Shutt

Christmas put back to next Spring?

It's hard to think about Christmas on what, as I write, is a glorious sunny day, but, before the Covid-19 pandemic, we had booked lunch at The Hostess for our Christmas get-together in December.

Whilst that booking is still available your Committee's decision has been to cancel, given that Covid is still very much in evidence. Perhaps we can look at a springtime event when (if) things improve?

Marilyn Redfern

Ode to the Pandemic

by the phantom diarist

The virus has got us all caught,
Life as we know it is fraught.
Handshakes are out,
Plans come to nowt,
And 'bubbles' are not as we thought!

Masks make our glasses steam up
What else will the government dream up!

We can't go to Spain,
Could lock-down again,
While Boris and boffins team up.

A cough or a sneeze in a queue
Is troubling to me and to you.
Two metres or one?
The rules get undone,
And with no end at all in view!

It brings out the worst, it brings out the best,
How and where do we get a test?

Nations vie for PPE,
"I don't think the rules apply to ME!"

But OUR NHS beats all the rest!

Breathing again at Gibraltar Point

Turn to page 3 to read more about this glorious deserted landscape, a paradise for nature on the East coast



A funny thing happened to me...

I hope you're all able to get out and about a bit more now lockdown is continuing to lift. My diary seems to be filling up fast again after several months where everything was crossed out and I think I'm finally easing back into a more 'normal' type of post lockdown life.

How are you getting on with wearing a face covering/mask? I'm not a fan, at first I found it slid up or down when I talked, although some would say this is a bonus if it shuts me up for ten minutes, but after experimenting with several different types, I've finally found one that I have an uneasy truce with and at least it stays roughly where it should do.

Unexpected bonus

I've also found there are other pros and cons to wearing one. I recently had a visit to King's Mill where it became apparent that there can be an upside as, during our chat, it was obvious from the questions he was asking that the consultant had no idea how old I was and had knocked off at least twenty years!

I've now had two visits to the hairdresser, the first one, with mask,



went fine; the second time I experienced a hazard they don't warn you about when a load of hair clippings went straight down the inside of the mask. Choking on your own hair is not normally part of the service. At least now I don't look like that photo Helen kindly attached to my piece the other month. The scary thing is I thought it was me to a T, apart from the beard, which is still work in progress, although with a little help from my hairdresser, it's coming along nicely.

It's interesting and sometimes amusing to see how various establishments are dealing with the problems of re-opening.

The tattoo parlour in Clipstone has now installed a baby gate on their front door and, while I know this is a practical way to prevent people wandering straight in off the street, it appeals to my sense of the bizarre.

There's now a one way system in the

Four Seasons, but don't worry, they've made 'crossing places' at intervals between the barriers so you don't have to walk all the way round to get to a shop on the opposite side.

The introduction of face coverings has meant that one way systems in some shops and supermarkets have eased up or even gone, but in others they remain.

They've caused me untold problems over the weeks either because I get so busy following the arrows I forget what I've gone for and have to start all over again, or, as in the case of my local Co-op, I end up stuck in the booze aisle every time. I'm thinking of having a T-shirt printed saying 'So I've got a problem, deal with it!'.

Ah, well, in the meantime there are banks to rob and coaches to hold up. Got my mask, now where did I leave my trusty getaway steed?

Jenny Wright

The phantom diarist (Snippets from semi-lockdown)

Household:

Sorting old paperwork. A pile for recycling and a pile for keeping (further sorting and filing; some 'gems' from the past discovered).

A grand garage tidy-up, helped by my daughter (the word 'procrastination' was used!). Some of the floor was eventually revealed (and later cleaned). Phew! The other half of the garage to be dealt with at a later date.

Cookery:

Picked some blackberries locally and made a crumble. Made some falafels with a tin of chick peas from the Co-op. Instead of going 'Mediterranean'

(didn't have the ingredients), I went 'Mansfield' and used ketchup! My taste buds were quite happy.

Garden:

Cleaned and re-filled the birdfeeder (dereliction of bird duties during lockdown as I couldn't get hold of bird food). Anyway, this was much to the delight of a gang of sparrows, who queued up for a snack.

Going out at night with a torch on a snail hunt (my poor runner beans mercilessly attacked).

Courgette failure because of strange weather conditions this year; only two or three tiny fruits produced

and used so far.

The swifts are still flying; diving, swooping, and circling; exciting to watch. Billy the Bat appears most evenings at dusk.

Reasons to be cheerful:

Family and friends; pets; wild birds; flowers; beautiful music (Bach, Brahms, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky); and...tea, chocolate, oh, and Marmite!



Free to Breathe Again!

How blessed am I to own a caravan! Even though it may only be based at Skegness, it has been wonderful to be able to just get away and breathe again! I think all of you will identify with that need – the taste of freedom and fresh air!

What I like particularly about being here is the daily opportunity to walk on the beach by the water's edge or to cycle along the prom for miles, taking in the panorama.

One of my favourite haunts is Gibraltar Point, a local nature reserve owned by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. It's situated where the coastline meets The Wash and has a variety of natural habitats – marshland, woodland, riverbanks and estuary, beach, sand dunes and lagoons. So, as you can imagine, lots of opportunity for bird watching. Hence I spend a lot of time there when I am based at my van.

The first time I visited since the

pandemic I found it somewhat different – none of the bird-watching hides from which I would normally spend a lot of time looking at the waders and waterfowl on the lagoons were open. However, I wasn't deterred because there's so much open space and different areas in which to walk and to view from raised viewing areas overlooking the marshes and looking out across the sea to Norfolk.

From the beach, which was more or less deserted and idyllic, I could hear the screech of birds out at sea and came to identify them as a type of Tern – they were dive bombing into the sea catching fish and then bringing them overland to feed their young. In pools on the beach could be seen Little Egrets and on the beach in the distance I could see Oyster Catchers, and, spreading their wings in the sun, were Cormorants. I spotted a Kestrel hovering over the marsh area and, in amongst the beautiful Sea Lavender, a couple of

Black-headed Gull



Common Tern



Meadow Pipits. There were a number of areas marked off to restrict people from walking as Plovers were reported to be nesting.

Apart from all these 'specials' there were the usual Swallows and Swifts, Linnets and Goldfinches to view. So glad that wildlife hasn't heard of lockdown nor social-distancing!

Lynne Cooper

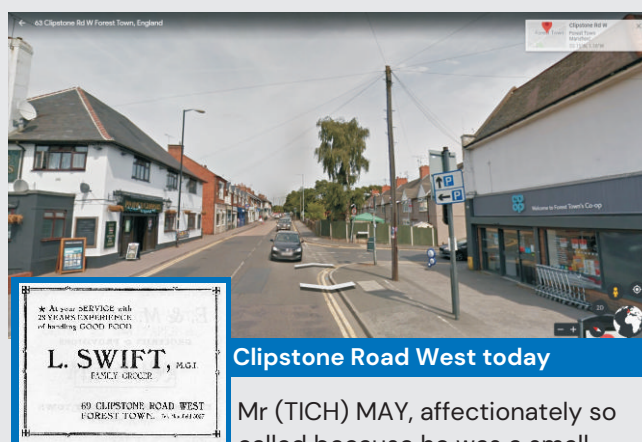
Changing hands

On a recent walk through Forest Town village I photographed all the shops. I do this every so often as it records all the changes as one business closes down and another opens. For example Zigabite Computer shop is now called Unique (I don't think they sell computers). Also I noticed the T.W.E.A.K's Trust, (next to the cafe) now what do they do and what was there before that?

Who recalls the florists, the green grocers, the dress shop and the butchers; not to mention the people that ran them? I challenge you all to recall all the shops you remember on the Clipstone Road through Forest Town?

Looking back through the early copies of the Forest Town Crier Community Newspaper, in Issue 5 June 2000 I had included an article under the heading of 'Shops and Shopping', with some of the memories of an early Forest Town resident, Audrey Todd (nee Swaby). Audrey had written me a long letter back in 1995, full of Forest Town memories and this was how she remembered the shops:

"We seem to be a very self-contained community, all our shopping needs being provided for. The CO-OP consisted of the Butchery, Drapery and Grocery. Then there were the little independent shops, the 'BEER-OFF' where the PRINCE CHARLES now stands. Two newsagents, COOKS and NEEDHAMS, a couple of small grocers and greengrocers and MR BROWN, the cobbler, who would collect your shoe repairs and bring them back! And of course the Fish and Chip shops, two at one time. Also there was the Chemist,



Clipstone Road West today

Mr (TICH) MAY, affectionately so called because he was a small man. Whatever ailed us he would make up the cure, and his shop was quite fascinating with all the glass bottles and jars of different colours. All this sounds like centuries ago but I am referring mostly to the period between the wars.

"We had a collection of 'horse and cart' delivery people thro' the week, the bread van, the milk cart, several greengrocers. Some of their owners were characters in their own right, providing amusement for us youngsters. Even the funeral carriages were horse drawn, so there was always plenty of manure for the allotments! I remember horse drawn carriages for the funeral of my grandfather, Charles W. Swaby, in 1936. Probably the only vehicle was the ice cream van – SCOTTS of Sutton in Ashfield. When we needed larger items, coats, hats, shoes, household goods, then it called for an excursion into Mansfield, quite a treat."

Pauline Marples

Diary of a Lockdown Kid (part two)



Sunday (or is it Wednesday? Who knows?). Have to report, the 39-pointer for Popmaster didn't materialise. Must try harder!

Points to ponder

Why is it when a new blouse being worn: a) to feel cooler; b) just in case that lady – see last month's copy – turns up again to see me in my 'go-to' comfortable T-shirt, jeans and down-at-heel flip-flops; or c) to look a 'little smarter' (apparently the psychology of 'working from home' dictates that you should do this to maintain your former level of productivity and efficiency) gets beetroot salad spilt all down the front and repeated attempts to remove the stain fail!

Back to the default wardrobe. At least it's a clean T-shirt. The older the clothes, the less likelihood there seems to be for any sort of stain to be attracted to them.

On the clothes theme, why is it that some firms seem to have an entirely random-sizing? Three pairs of trousers, all in the same size, but in slightly different styles, ordered from the same place but none fitting despite the use of a tape measure and a very careful comparison of metric and imperial measurements.

Oh well, another trek to the post office. Can do without such hassle, hence why clothes purchasing is such a rare occurrence.

Feline visitors

For some reason, the Jungle Telegraph has flashed that my garden is a 'must-visit' venue for felines. At least twelve have chosen to wander

through, dig a few holes, chew on the catnip, grab a few passing birds and, if they are in the mood, deign to approach a human for a head-rub or even a cat treat. (A packet is always in reach on a shelf by the back door, just in case).

During the recent heatwave, with all doors and windows fully open, there have been a few uninvited visitors nonchalantly venturing indoors, taking a tour round, pausing for a groom, taking a snack and wandering out again. Some have been identified as having 'proper' owners, all look well-cared for and sleek.

One feline blends in extremely well with the grass and undergrowth round the bird bath and feeders. It's a magnificently marked young male tabby, sporting a very smart green and gold collar, complete with (useless!) bell. Up until recently, he has been a relatively benign creature, until in a vertical leap from behind the aforesaid bird table, two claws attached themselves to the feeder. This was followed by an acrobatic manoeuvre enabling him to perch on top of the feeder and nonchalantly reach down to pluck an unsuspecting goldfinch before leaping to the ground and consuming said bird; all before I could dash outside to remonstrate. Mr Tim the Tabby is definitely not flavour of the month in my eyes! The sheer, brazen cheek of it. I went outside to shoo him off, but he was having none of it.

I got the 'you looking at me?' stare and that 'I'll be back' turn of his head. Sure enough, he seems to have taken

up residence, as I now spot him nearly every day.

Another cat has taken to coming in. I discovered that she lives a few doors down and has had her nose put out of joint, as a new kitten has been brought into her house. Two others I have christened Cora and Clarice, with a nod to the twin sisters in Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast novels. They saunter through, but it is beneath their dignity to acknowledge the presence of a human.

Two more grey and white longhairs, very fluffy and timid; a mere look from a window sends them slinking away and another, older black and white one sleeps on the shed roof, just taking it all in.

A huge ginger Tom strolls through. Oh, hang on, I thought things were going too well; no deliveries for number 16 this week but I spoke too soon. I have just seen a hand passing the window, clutching two take-out coffees from a well-known chain and, in the other, a very weighty insulated box. Must go and disabuse him of his presumption, back in a tick. Turns out it was a breakfast delivery, never had one of those before!

I am beginning to know the culinary habits of number 16 very well. They seem to have every meal of the day delivered at some time during the week – hmmm.

And on that note, I will close, to continue researching the curious attraction of this particular garden to the feline population of the area!

Jenny Freeman

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>

Following the AGM on 3 September the members will be: Linda Shutt (Chair), Allan Barham (Vice-chair), Andrew Riby (Treasurer), Irene Duncan (Assistant treasurer) Sue Harkin (Business secretary), Anita Adlard (Groups' coordinator), Steve Evans (Assistant groups' coordinator), Kelvin Foster (Membership secretary & Welfare Officer), Kathryn Cope (Assistant membership secretary), Desley O'Leary (Speaker seeker) and Bob Hunt (Website editor).

Next issue

Please send articles or ideas 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 18 September please.**

Please visit our website for the latest news:

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

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