



## Chat from the chair

### Important to stay positive in these uncertain times



Hello and welcome to the October newsletter! I'm sure you will recognise this familiar opening line but you can imagine my surprise at being asked by Linda to provide this month's 'Chat from the Chair'. A little apprehensive I must admit but nevertheless I'm happy to oblige.

We all understand how difficult things have been during this unprecedented period and that the socialisation we all enjoy so much through our

monthly meetings and interest groups has been denied. However, I am pleased to report that the modern phenomenon that is 'social media' has enabled a welcome level of interaction within some groups to take place and that our recent AGM was successfully concluded on 'Zoom'.

As this is my first involvement in the running of your U3A I have to say how impressed I have been with the organisation and exceptional level of commitment and dedication of your elected committee. Apart from myself other new members are Irene Duncan (Assistant Treasurer) and Kathryn Cope (Assistant Membership Secretary) and I look forward to working with them and all those re-elected over the coming year. Many thanks too to Desley O'Leary who has

kindly agreed to continue as Speaker Seeker for the time being.

You will be aware that it has not been possible to begin to plan future activities and that recent fluctuations in the pandemic situation have made this doubly difficult. However we need to remain positive, look out for each other and as Linda said in the previous newsletter keep saying 'hello' with a friendly smile.

Oh! One more thing, I am Allan Barham, resident of Forest Town for over 50 years and recently elected as your Vice Chair for the next 12 months. Looking forward to meeting you all in due course as and when circumstances permit: meanwhile please feel free to contact me, happy to help if I can.

**Allan Barham**

## A-Z of Forest Town History

Many months ago an idea for a book on the *A-Z of Forest Town History* was put to members of Forest Town and District U3A Local History Group as a joint project with the Forest Town Heritage Group. The group members Pamela L., Brenda M., Jenny W., Chris A., Ann A., Alan R., Kathleen B., David W., Malcolm M., Pauline M., Jenny A., Julie R., Andy R., Bob H. immediately started to think of significant Forest Town history items for each letter of the alphabet.

Members came up with ideas or researched relevant information over a long period of time. Individual people in the wider Forest Town community and beyond were also asked for relevant information and were keen to share their knowledge. The contents grew and while not a

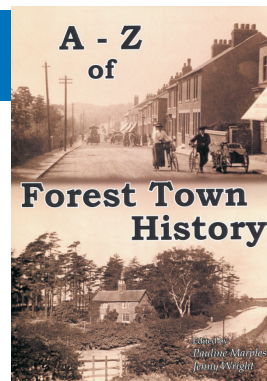
letter was missed out, some letters have more than one entry.

We are confident that our U3A readers will be surprised at what there is to discover about Forest Town, even our local history group is not aware (due to the lockdown) of how the information has grown.

For example, who knows about Living Whist? A Forest Town Ladies Cricket Team in 1938 or Tommy Townsend's nursery and his speciality in growing primroses. Of course you may also ask 'who was Tommy Townsend?'

The book which is published by Forest Town Heritage Group and printed by Portland Print will be on sale by the end of the month price £4.00 each or 3 copies for £10.

For information on how to collect a



copy, please email Pauline @ [heritage.foresttown@ntleworld.com](mailto:heritage.foresttown@ntleworld.com) or Jenny @ [emmyjen17@gmail.com](mailto:emmyjen17@gmail.com)

It will help if you can have the correct money or a cheque made out to Forest Town Heritage Group.

To obtain one copy by post the price is £4 plus £2.50 p&p from Forest Town Heritage Group c/o 15 Elmhurst Rd. Forest Town, NG19 0EU cheques made payable to Forest Town Heritage Group. **Pauline Marples**

# Meet the committee

*Kathryn Cope is your newly-elected Assistant Membership Secretary. We asked her to tell newsletter readers a little about herself.*

I am married to Kevin and we have two son's Ryan and Gary, daughter-in-law Rhian and grandchildren Rhys and Cerys.

I retired in May 2019 having worked for Nottinghamshire School Catering for 34 years, spending 11 years as School Chef at St Patrick's RC School followed by 14 years as an Area Catering Manager in the North of the County.

Having retired in May 19 I had many plans which filled my days through the summer but, as winter approached, Kevin and I looked into joining the U3A. As postal members of Sherwood we joined their walking group and then got involved in Forest Town's table tennis, tenpin bowling and 60's appreciation groups. In this short time before Covid-19 struck, we thoroughly enjoyed meeting new people and making new friends.

As you can see my interests are baking, walking, gardening and reading. Since lockdown I've also developed an interest in antiques, becoming addicted to Bargain Hunt. When we can meet again I thought we could look into starting an antique collectors group, if anyone is interested.

Let's hope that it won't be too long before we can start to meet again and I can meet you all in person. Until then, keep safe.

**Kathryn Cope**



## Refunds for cancelled trips almost there

This summer has proved to be exceptionally busy for the Social Secretary, the National Trust and Rambling group leaders and some members of the Executive Committee. Sorting out the consequences of day trips and holidays that had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic has been a bit of a nightmare.

The first task was to persuade the travel companies involved to reimburse the U3A with the money our members had paid them in advance.

### Pressure pays off

With hundreds of other customers clamouring for refunds, it took persistent pressure from group leaders to persuade these companies to return members' money.

But getting hold of these funds was only the first hurdle. The next step was for the U3A to refund members' money when lockdown restrictions made it impossible to meet in large groups.

To complicate matters, refunds were due not only to Forest Town U3A members, but also to members of Mansfield and Sherwood U3As. Thankfully, the U3A's secure electronic banking facilities enabled members' refunds to be made quickly and efficiently without the need for face to face contact.

Refunds due to members for cancelled day trips and holidays totalled £7,072. So far, £6,577 has been securely returned to 168 members by electronic bank transfer without a hiccup. That leaves just £495 still to be refunded to 16 members.

If you've not yet received your refund, 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 9:00 am and 4:00 pm Monday to Fridays on Tel: 07791 941502, or email [deewhits@aol.com](mailto:deewhits@aol.com).

Alternatively, email your bank details to the treasurer, Andy Riby, [ribya@imcgroup.co.uk](mailto:ribya@imcgroup.co.uk).

Some of you may still have reservations about disclosing your bank details. The figures shown above speak for themselves – all that money safely returned to members without a single complaint.

Whenever you pay by cheque you are giving away to complete strangers the very same bank details needed to receive a refund by electronic bank transfer. Take a look, the same details are shown on every cheque you write.

**Andy Riby**



# My family and other ne'er do wells

Recently I read a feature in the *Chad* about family history in which the author said that there are millions of stories out there that have never been told and are just waiting for the right family historian to come along and find them. He also added that there is something quite special in thinking that you might be the first person to explore that person's life and remember them in 200 years or more.

I agree with him. However he then went on to say that you never quite know what you might uncover and there may be dark secrets lurking in your family's past. Therein lies the problem and it's one the Family History group has debated on several occasions. How much do you reveal when documenting your finds, especially if you build your trees on one of the Family History sites online?

I don't think anyone has a problem adding something special about a relative, or even a tragic death, however, how would you feel if you found out your soldier hero who had died in the war was actually shot as a deserter, or what about that dodgy marriage or prison conviction? To tell, or not to tell? That is the question.

The author of the article goes on to say that he'd witnessed first-hand people's reactions to revelations (and I don't mean the biblical type). He tells of a family's search for the truth about a great aunt who they weren't allowed to visit and who was never talked about. When they ran her name through the newspaper archives it revealed that she'd been a cross-dressing, armed robber who was dubbed a 'menace to polite society'. In her 20s she would dress as a man and don a fake moustache to hold up a series of bookmakers with a starter pistol. The family however were delighted to see their relative in a totally new light.

This brings me to my own family. Before I started doing family history I thought they were all fine, upstanding citizens. How wrong could I be?

While I've yet to discover any of my relatives who were shot for desertion, I did discover that my granddad on my dad's side, who was a butcher by trade, was up in court in the mid 1930's for selling dodgy meat. He received a fine of £36 for his pains and this was after being declared bankrupt a couple of years earlier. At the time of the dodgy meat incident he was actually working in an artificial silk factory. Oh the shame for my grandma's family who always regarded themselves as a bit of a 'cut above'!

His granddad ran a pub and was fined on several occasions for allowing after hours drinking and rowdiness on the premises. It looks like the naughty gene might skip a generation, as so far I've not uncovered anything on my dad, or great grandfather, but if that's the case it doesn't bode well for me, although so far I've managed to avoid the long arm of the law!

One of my great aunts was reputed to be a practising witch; and I actually inherited her crystal ball, although it's never worked for me.

On my mum's side we have relatives, albeit several generations back, who were transported to Australia for night poaching and other offences. Once might be excused with hard labour, but they didn't learn and kept doing it.

In my uncle's (by marriage) family there was a story of a highway robber but no evidence to support this. I'd found nothing while researching his family history until the day I ran his name through the newspaper archives and came up with a headline 'Highway Robbery near Ormskirk'. Yes, this was him! But, It wasn't quite the Dick Turpin, coach, horses, pistols and ladies swooning while being divested of their finery scenario, more of a footpad mugging by three of them, although they did use the words 'Deliver or Die' as they robbed their victim at knifepoint. For their pains the gang got away with 7 shillings in silver and a pocket knife. On this occasion William was acquitted, as he had not been the main aggressor and the victim could not definitely identify him.

William continued with his life of crime however and five years later was sentenced to 18 month's hard labour for a string of burglaries in the Ormskirk area. The items William stole from the houses were bizarre, mainly women's clothing and footwear, which he pawned, small amounts of cash and four cakes! He was actually convicted of the crimes as he still had the pawn shop tickets on him when he was arrested.

Although not quite the romantic tale he'd imagined, my uncle was nevertheless delighted to find out that there had actually been a 'highway robber' in his family.

This is just my side of the family. Next month I'll tell you about my husband's family who make mine look like saints. My son has got a lot to live up to!

*Jenny Wright*

## AGM 2020

*by Allan Barnham*

So how are things at the U3A?  
A bizarre AGM was held today.  
A meeting held in our own front room  
Courtesy of a thing called Zoom.

Agenda published, format selected  
Next year's committee duly elected.  
All very proper, all very formal  
How we've learned to cope with this brand  
'new normal' !

We've had monthly newsletters produced  
with style,  
Fabulous contributions to make us smile.  
These the things that mean so much  
To keep our numbers in regular touch.

Perhaps however we'll soon resume  
Social gatherings without the need for Zoom.  
Perhaps our groups will meet again,  
Although not clear how and not clear when.

Meanwhile though, we need to stay well,  
Till good behaviour earns a release from  
this Hell !!!

# The phantom diarist (A few more snippets)

## Music:

The Proms. The glory of Beethoven's 7th Symphony, life-affirming and an expression of joy. Live at the Royal Albert Hall (BBC4), but without an audience (Covid!).

## Technology:

From the sublime to the mundane! A few weeks ago, Freeview TV, in their wisdom, carried out some sort of upgrade in our region.

Result: I and other customers had ongoing disruption to our TV reception. No signal for a number of channels. No "Columbo"! Disaster! Well, my son had to come round and work his magic with the remote control and bits of technical whizz, and put things right.

## Shopping mishaps:

One visit to the Co-op... struggling to use debit card, with glasses all steamed up (the dreaded mask!).

Another visit: prescription

sunglasses on a lanyard, regular spectacles also on a lanyard; getting tangled up with the elastic on my mask, while trying to pay at the checkout.

## Library:

Having given my details for government Track and Trace at our branch library, I approached the desk. Asked the Nice Lady about

ordering a book. Not on Nottinghamshire's list, apparently, but said she would ask if they were willing to purchase a copy (not offering much hope). A little later I had a call at home, to say that a copy is to be purchased and that I will be contacted in due course. How's that for service!



The 2020 BBC Proms was performed in an audience-free Royal Albert Hall

## Zoom for the nervous, hostile or terrified

If you are comfortable using Zoom, read another article. This one is not for you. This article provided by U3A centre is for people who have never tried Zoom or who perhaps tried it once and didn't like it.

Zoom is probably the easiest way for several people to meet up online. It is very flexible. You can share video clips, pictures, music – anything which you can bring up on your computer. You can even join by phone (see below in this short article).

### Why should I bother?

There are lots of reasons to learn how to Zoom, but there are probably six main ones:

- It opens up new horizons;
- It stops you missing out;
- More and more U3A interest groups are using Zoom;
- You can boast about your new tech savvy skills to your grandchildren, great grandchildren and anyone else who's prepared to listen
- It's dead easy
- You can even join by telephone (although you won't see the picture unless it's a smart phone)

### What do I have to do?

If joining by laptop or pc you will receive an invitation by email and only need to click on a link and the device will



guide you through simple steps to set up a temporary link to Zoom and join you to the meeting. Once in the meeting you can switch your video and audio on and off. Zoom will show you who is speaking. At the end of the meeting Zoom will terminate the connection and disappear from your device. (If you want to set up your own meetings, you will need to install the software.)

### Joining by smart phone or tablet

You need to download the Zoom app to your smartphone, then away you go!

### Joining by phone

You can even join by phone, if you really want to. Most of the invitations provide you with a land line number to call. But, be aware, unless you have some sort of landline package, this could be a relatively expensive option.

### What do I do next?

Next time you get an invitation to join a zoom meeting, just say 'yes' and click on the link.

# REACH-OUT to help out

Since lockdown started in March many of our members have been isolating and shielding, resulting in them seeing no-one from one day to the next.

As the effects of Covid-19 continue and considering that British Summer Time will end in October, bringing the long dark nights, contact with the outside world could become very limited for some.

For this reason we propose to launch a REACH-OUT scheme whereby members are invited to either receive or make an

occasional phone call to check in on each other.

This is not about calling round to each other's houses for a face to face chat. It's about reaching out to those members who we suspect have very little contact with anyone else. We know from the membership list that there are members who have no email address so we feel that an occasional phone call is the most appropriate approach.

I know some members are already keeping in touch with those who have been shielding and I would like

to thank them all for taking the initiative during these unprecedented times. Please remember, if you are concerned about any member, contact me, your Welfare Officer, and let me know your concerns.

If you feel you would like to receive a Wellness Call or you think you could take part in the scheme by phoning others, please do get in touch. Tel: 01623 422251 or email: [kelvinfoster298@yahoo.com](mailto:kelvinfoster298@yahoo.com)

**Kelvin Foster**

## REACH-OUT walks this winter

Forest Town U3A Chair, Linda Shutt, and Groups Coordinator, Anita Adlard, would like to hear from any member who might be interested in joining them on walks and chats over the winter months

As Anita explains: "The idea is we will meet at the Arena at a given time. We will change times and days to suit the weather if we feel the need to. There will be six in a group and socially distanced so we may have two groups at any one time with a gap between the groups.

"Each group will decide where they walk and for how long. This is about keeping in touch with each other in our U3A.

As we get to know one another we can get ideas and discuss any issues."



If you are interested in taking part in these REACH-OUT walks contact Anita Adlard by email: [a.adlard@ntlworld.com](mailto:a.adlard@ntlworld.com) or mobile: 07926 955505.

## A message from our Welfare Officer: The 'snakes & ladders' of Covid-19

It has been a while since my last update on Covid-19. This is a pandemic, the likes of which have not been seen before!

The ever-changing guidelines remind me of the board game snakes and ladders. On the way 'up the ladder' over the summer things were beginning to improve but now it is starting to look like we are sliding back 'down the snake' with a steady increase in virus cases.

There have been huge changes to the way we have to do things to be safe, even down to what we must wear when we are out and about.

There is now a new Government campaign to remind us what we need to do – **HANDS – FACE – SPACE**

- Wash hands regularly for 20 seconds,

- Cover faces in shops and other indoor spaces where two metre spacing is impractical;

- Maintain social distancing – two metres apart.

Support bubbles between a household with only one adult in the home and one other household (of any size) have allowed us to help one and another out.

Texts, email and phone calls have kept us in touch and let us give some support to friends, family and those who are on their own.

In the early days of lockdown many were faced with the problem of shopping when shielding or self-isolating. The result was a dramatic increase in online shopping and problems securing a delivery slot. Oh the late nights waiting for that

delivery to come!

The bright spot in all this was clapping for the NHS and other key workers.

In September steps were taken to try to limit a second wave of the virus.

The police now have legal powers to enforce the new rules if any group has more than 6 people in it and pubs and restaurants must close by 10pm.

The best way to reduce the risk of catching or spreading Covid 19 is to keep at least 2 metres away from people you do not live with.

Social distancing is essential to STOP the spread of the virus, as an infected person, even if they do not have any of the symptoms, can pass it on simply by breathing.

Remain vigilant, stay safe and keep healthy.

**Kelvin Foster**

# Diary of a Lockdown Kid (part three)

I am pretty sure it's Monday today, but who knows and I can't prove it either way!

The end of summer has been well and truly marked with the thunderous arrival of tractors and trailers trundling and bouncing down the drive one way, followed by their more ponderous return trip, heavily laden with precariously-balanced bales of straw, strewn escaping wisps that land delicately on the top of our hedge.

Over the next few days, these tractors return, pulling less-than-fragrant loads of Farmers' Gold, aka muck, to be upended in steaming heaps at the edges of the fields at the end of the lane, awaiting spreading.

The following week, the fragrance theme continued with the arrival of the 'Lavender Joe' tanker, employed to clean out the septic tank of a recently sold house at the other end of the drive. This property had been under the constant watchful eyes of 'The Village Pump', fount of all knowledge, who imparted that 'all was **not** well', since it had been discovered the drains and connecting pipes had sunk and cracked. This required the attention of two different vehicles, parked on the drive for the rest of the week. We now await the removal van bringing the new residents and their belongings in the not too distant future.

There has been no mention of the ongoing pizza delivery/number 16 'misunderstanding' as yet. Fear not. There were only two 'very near' visitations last week, so it would

appear that some delivery people may be learning from past experience.

One would-be delivery man parked outside, peered at the house name prominently displayed, got out, half opened the side gate, hesitated, walked round to the main drive gates, metaphorically scratched his head, got back into his car, made a phone call, executed a very neat but convoluted U-turn using a neighbour's drive and zoomed off up the drive in hot pursuit of the 'real' number 16. He hasn't returned, so it has to be assumed he found it.

The following day, whilst I was busy working in the front garden, a car drove slowly up and down several times, clearly looking for number 16. He stopped, wound down his window and plaintively asked: "This isn't number 16, is it? I have been looking for it for ages." I assured him it wasn't, but that, if he turned round and followed my directions **to the letter**, he would be led right to the door. Good news, he hasn't returned either.

It has gone rather quiet on the feline front with the exception of the 'cat-next-door-but-one', who now considers this her holiday home. She calls round for afternoon tea anytime from 2.30pm onwards, with an occasional 'morning coffee' drop in. Memo to self – need to impress upon her the importance of not appearing until at least 10:55am when PopMaster, has ended;

BTW, 27 points was the dizzy score last Friday and with no cheating, unlike the programme's travel

reporter who brazenly states he always has a full house of 39 points!

Back to the feline. Her arrival is announced by a loud miaowing (did you know that apparently, cats only miaow to humans, not to other cats? Hissing, growling and spitting yes but, miaowing, no.)

She now has a pouch of a well-known brand of cat food, served in two halves, followed by a few biscuit treats, a charge round the house, a crawl/roll over the carpet, a flump in the hall doorway and, finally, an exit to submerge herself in the catnip bed. What more could a cat want?

Now, what exciting events await tomorrow? Ah, yes, the long-delayed installation of a new boiler. It's been on hold since January so I must away to clear out a few cupboards, unearth the Big Teapot and the box of Builders' Teabags and packet of Dunking Biscuits.

And, of course, undertake some revision on potential PopMaster questions. I **will get** 39 points one day!!

**AnonyMouse**



## Editor's note:

Over the last 3 months it has been great to receive these 'Lockdown Kid' articles, but, I owe the author an apology. All should have been attributed to AnonyMouse, but in the last issue I revealed the real author – well almost – got the first name wrong! Sorry AnonyMouse!

## 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>

Current members are: 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](mailto:ftu3anews@gmail.com) or by post to: 5 Fal Paddock, Mansfield Woodhouse NG19 9RW **by midnight on Friday 23 October.**

Please visit our website for the latest news:

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

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