



Chat from the chair

Grab A Jab when you can

Welcome to the March edition of our fabulous Newsletter.

I hope you are all keeping well and have managed to get your first Covid vaccination. Kelvin, our Welfare Officer, has shared information to help you all with getting your jabs booked. So, if you haven't already done so, Grab A Jab!

I have been hearing about other members who are actively involved with arranging vaccine appointments for others. Well done and thank you for supporting our u3a community!

Committee members needed

This year, your u3a will be recruiting for new Committee members. The roles are not arduous and your involvement will ensure the continuity of your u3a. Please think about how you can help us to carry on being here to support one another! It is also possible to 'attend' a Committee meeting. Just let any member of the

Committee know well in advance and this can be arranged for you.

We are currently in the process of membership renewals which, as you will be aware, for existing members will be completely free of charge this year! Thank you to all those members who have already renewed and I would like to extend a polite reminder to those who have yet to submit their renewal applications. You have until the 1st of May. After that date any spare places will be offered to people on our waiting list.

March 21st is Census Day, where did the last ten years go? Good news is, we can complete the Census register online. However, we will all receive the forms in the post so those members with no internet access can still register their household.

As you read this we will just have had our first virtual General Meeting via Zoom. It's scheduled for Thursday 4th

Don't miss out on your free u3a membership

Just a reminder that all existing Forest Town u3a members can claim their free membership year which begins 1 April 2021.

To claim your free year you **MUST REGISTER YOUR MEMBERSHIP**. You can do this by email or by Royal Mail. Please follow the instructions on page 6 of this issue.

of March. It will be a short meeting – 40 minutes at most – as we have a free Zoom account. Whilst Zoom isn't for everyone we are hoping for a good turnout.

Stay safe and look after yourselves!

Linda Shutt

The phantom diarist (a few more snippets)

SPRING:

Snowdrops in the garden are blending with the thin layer of snow still lying around. Mr and Mrs Robin have been seen playing in the bushes and singing to each other. Also, Ma and Pa Blue Tit and The Coal Tit Couple.

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL ... STILL:

Family and friends; a warm and comfortable home; my garden; family pets; settling down with a good book; music; creativity (knitting, crocheting, sewing); my dentist's funny stories when I went for a long overdue check-up; the vaccination programme.

THINGS I MISS:

Meeting family and friends in person; u3a group meetings (laughter, gossip, and interest); mooching round the shops; outings to ... just anywhere! – trips away; proper grocery shopping (no masks, etc); tea and cake at a friendly cafe; the library. **FREEDOM!**

AND FINALLY

This piece of crocheting is something I made during lockdown, as a challenge more than anything. I don't know what to do with it, but I enjoyed making it!



EDITOR'S NOTE:

Have you learned a new skill in lockdown, or revived an old one? Do get in touch. Contact details on page 6

A funny thing happened...

Hi Everyone,

How's it going? This lockdown definitely seems like a long slog, but I'm sure, like me, that many of you have now received your first dose of vaccine, and the more of us that take it up when it's offered then not only are we doing our bit to help us all get out of this but in the meantime we're protecting ourselves against serious illness as well as others who still have a way to go before it's their turn for the jab.

Keep your distance or else!

Please remember though that even when you've had your jab, Hands, Face, Space still applies, especially Space please! This has become a particular bugbear with me recently as people seem to want to snuggle up to me in stores and the more I step away the more they follow, it's like they're attached by one of those leashes we put on our grandchildren to stop them getting away from us. Yes, I know I'm gorgeous and irresistible, but I'm not in the habit of cuddling strangers, even in normal times, and if you don't want a fist in the mask then please stay at least an arm's length, if not more, away from me!

Impressed with Wickes

I went to 'Wickes' for my job and was very impressed with how efficient everything was: in, out and back at the car in 25 minutes and all the staff and volunteers were friendly and up for a laugh while steering you through the system.

I commented to one volunteer that it was some years since I'd last been in there. She looked mournfully around and said that, in her opinion, the store had really gone downhill as stock was in woefully short supply, and yes, if I'd had any ideas about walking out with a new kitchen tucked under my arm I was definitely going to be disappointed. That said, I did get a sticker as well as the card to show for my visit, although it may be best not to do as a friend of mine did and ask for another sticker exempting him from washing up for six months. The answer was a firm 'No' and a fast track towards the exit!

Have you noticed that there doesn't seem to have been the same preoccupation with haircuts, or lack of them, that there was during Lockdown 1?

The first time around there always seemed to be some story or other doing the rounds about a home haircut disaster, perhaps we're all getting used to walking around looking like yeti, or we just don't care anymore. I think I fall into the second camp as I take the view that there's nothing I can do about it anyway. I have lopped a bit off



the front and sides, where I can see what I'm doing and also the back. Is it straight? I don't know and as I can't see it why worry? If it's a really bad hair day I can always stick a hat on. I am having to be careful now spring's approaching though, because, if I stand still for too long outside, the birds have started eying me up as a prospective nesting site.

Zooming along

I expect that many of you over the last year have become familiar with Skype or Zoom and if so, I hope you've had more luck than me with Zoom. Unfortunately all my attempts have ended in failure. When I have been able to get on I've been unable to hear what anyone is saying as it breaks up. Due to this I've resorted to joining Zoom meetings that I've had to attend for committees etc. by phone as it's much less stressful. Whilst this way I can hear what's being said, it's not ideal, especially when you're trying to get your point across to seven blokes who all consider themselves to be Alpha males. In fact I've likened it to herding cats with a blindfold on. Ah, roll on the day when we can meet face to face again and I can just lob something at them to get their attention.

In the meantime, take care, and if you're having a bad day remember what Linda said in last month's Newsletter, 'You're not stuck at home, you're safe at home!' It works, I've tried it! Perhaps by next month things will look a little brighter and at least spring will be knocking on the door with the promise of longer days and hopefully warmer, drier weather.

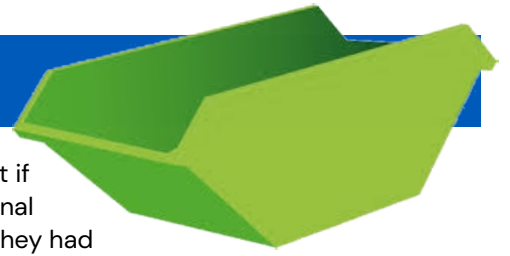
Jenny Wright



The perils of updating your status

I recently thought I would update my Status on Facebook and where it asked for details about me, I clicked 'Married'. Oh dear it then told everybody I had been married that day 4th February. It certainly caused some comments such as: 'Where was my invite?', 'Does Uncle Malcolm know?' and 'Are you keeping him then?'. My daughter explained that if I tried to take it off it would then state I was unmarried. What a laugh especially as in May we will have been married 58 years.

Pauline Marples



Greetings, I have no idea what day it is, so here follows a range of 'random happenings' over the past week or so.

A flurry of DIY activities has been noted during the 'Daily Walk', so spring must be on its way. Skips are being delivered and arranged at various jaunty angles in driveways and on kerb-sides, ready to be filled with all the detritus that needs moving before any serious work can begin e.g. the Christmas tree 'decorating' the front lawn waiting to be chopped into manageable lengths.

There is one particular house that is still in full-on festive mode, with the walls and garden displaying a range of flashing and twinkling lights and a huge glittering tree. Goodness knows if, or when, these will be packed away.

On another walk, a caravan fully kitted out with a myriad assortment of Christmas decorations was spotted. I

couldn't make out if it was an intentional installation, or if they had been 'placed' there, being surplus to requirements, as every now and again, the caravan door is propped open and some of the trimmings appear to migrate all around the front garden.

Pallets piled high with bricks, tiles, setts and unidentified building items have also been popping up; all with the promise of a variety of challenging projects that may begin to appear any time soon.

A neighbour nearby has had a building project on the go for several years now. More and more scaffolding appears on a regular basis and a few bricks are added to the wall every now and again.

continued on page 4 ►►►

Horrible haircuts

As Jenny Wright points out on page 2 there hasn't been the same level of concern about haircuts in what we all hope is the third and final lockdown. This piece sent in by Kay Toy reminds us ladies how it used to be. Kay takes up the story:

I discovered this 'blog', (from a time when we had no idea what a blog was), when I was sorting out some paperwork recently. It was written about 30 years ago and when I lived elsewhere, so no local hairdressers need hang their head in shame. Anyway, it may be familiar to some of you!

Being quite satisfied with my present hairstyle, I decide to have a trim to tidy it up before going to a family wedding. I make an appointment at a local hairdresser where I have been two or three times before. I don't mind who cuts my hair provided they can fit me in.

I arrive 15 minutes early. The girl perming a lady's hair glances at me, shows no sign of recognition, despite having styled my hair two or three times before and subjected me to a lengthy monologue about her social life; she bellows over her shoulder: "Your trim's here, Jean! She's early."

I busy myself with a magazine in front of the mirror. After a few minutes I glance up to see one of the hairdressers idly circling my chair, poking at the equipment. Could this be Jean? She fails to make eye contact. Perhaps not ... But wait ... she approaches with a comb, lifts a strand of my hair and asks in a flat voice: "What would you like me to do with this?" I try to explain with some

conviction (but my optimism is fast dwindling) that I want very little off the top as it won't lie flat; we establish that half an inch can come off the bottom. She proceeds.

I listen to the banter going back and forth between The Perm, The Girl Doing Her Hair, Jean, an Idle Hairdresser, and the bleached, adolescent boy Sweeper-Up. Doris, The Perm, has been married for 30 years. Her husband is a good man. She knows how to handle him. He lies awkwardly in bed; being fat, she has little room. Janice, the one who comes in to have her hair done sometimes, is a funny girl. Never smiles. What about that girl who came in the other day to have a perm before going to Greece with her boyfriend! Jean didn't like her right from the start. And then she had the cheek to complain about the scrunch-dry style she asked for. The boyfriend said it looked lovely. Doris's Girl would have thrown a fliddy or burst into tears.



Jean abandons her cronies for a moment whilst carelessly flicking the hair across my head. "Which way does your parting go?" I point to the opposite side, indicating exactly where it was before she began her handiwork. She indolently flicks the hair across the other way. She fetches a mirror to show me the back of my head. I remark on the piece of hair sticking out at right-angles from the crown of my head, and try to flatten it. Silence. I look at my face. My lovely full, swept-across fringe has been replaced by a thin, spiky, uneven mess, and I now have a 3-inch crop of layering all over my head. I resemble a sprouting peanut. Putting on my metal-rimmed glasses, I look like Lofty from EastEnders. I brush at the chunks of hair on my clothes furiously and miserably, watched closely and almost silently by The Perm, Her Girl, Idle Hairdresser, and boy Sweeper-Up. Oh, and Jean.

Kay Toy

...diary of a lockdown kid *continued*

It has become a permanent fixture, rather like an art installation.

Recently, an indoor project re-commenced with the swoosh of a normally lowered window blind being pulled up to reveal an ongoing wallpapering session in an upstairs room that appears to be a 'multi-functional' space. We all have one of those these days, don't we, with 'pop-up' offices appearing in all sorts of places? Mine varies from the knees to the dining or kitchen table to the top of an armchair, (as in 'I will just look up something before I get on with my To Do list').

Now the days are lengthening and it's more or less daylight when the curtains are pulled back of a morning, all the birds are in evidence, flurrying hither and yon in their haste to bag a branch or two for nesting purposes. But where were they when they were required for 'The Big Bird Count' at the end of January? Pens were poised, pristine pieces of paper at the ready, binoculars to hand and eye, with the required hour set aside and what happened? Not a lot!

Until this week, that is. Dozens of the little B(**&^%!, more than can be counted before they've flown off to the tree tops. One or two blue tits and chaffinches have begun their annual beak-bashing contest against windows and the few 'artfully placed' repurposed mirrors that lurk around the garden, trying their best to intimidate their phantom rivals.

There are several male blackbirds with uniquely identifiable feathers, all squabbling and squawking for the attentions of a very unimpressed female, who is wisely using the time to scoff all the seeds.

The recent spells of very cold weather have discouraged most of the cats that normally lurk around with evil intent, bar two; our neighbour's very elderly black and white cat and Timid Tabby, who has recently discovered a vantage point on our shed roof, from where the entire garden may be surveyed. Unbeknown to him, it is the domain of 'Er Next Door, who has used it as her personal sun trap/viewing point for many years. They have yet to meet nose-to-nose. No doubt it will be a noisy confrontation when it happens, so be warned.

I trust by now a lot of us will have had their invite and/or their jab! I must relate my experiences as it was all very 'Monty-Pythesque/Little Britain/Computer -says -No' in style!

All the staff/helpers/meeters and greeters were very cheerful, friendly and supportive. But to begin with, at the entrance to the requisitioned building, the first greeter, armed with her iPad, was convinced I had come to the wrong venue, as she wasn't able to find my details, despite me showing her my phone with both appointments on it.

She then admitted it was her first day on duty and had to go and confer with a colleague.

Next, the chap at the registration table had to call the duty doctor over twice, to check on some of my queries regarding allergies and meds. He wasn't too pleased, for

some reason, and it was not very easy to understand his replies, which were muffled behind his mask, so I had to ask him to repeat his answers.

After the jab, I was asked to go and sit on a chair against a wall, and 'self-time' for 15 minutes, in case I had any adverse reactions. I was sitting minding my own business, when one of the security guards sidled up to me and asked why I was sitting there. I replied I had been told to do so for 15 minutes. He insisted I was meant to go and sit in my car.

I said: "How do you know a). I came in a car, b). even if I did, it might be parked quite a long way off, in which instance it would be far safer for me to sit here for the required period in case I had a wobbly en route to it, and c). why was a long row of seats provided if nobody was actually meant to use them?"

He muttered: "There are obviously a few crossed wires here, I need to go and speak to someone," and went off.

By this time, a queue of people was building up in front of me, all waiting to 'book out' via another desk/computer. I went and joined the end of it, only to see the security guard walk past me, saying, with a twinkle in his eyes, "You could have saved yourself 15 minutes sitting, as you will probably take that time waiting to get out."

I reached the desk, gave my details only to discover that I didn't appear to be on that system either! Cue more head-scratching and typing and conferring, with me offering to show them my vaccination certificate, when voila, I magically reappeared on the computer. At the exit door, I was invited to use the hand-sanitiser, but it was empty. A notice on it requested that if it needed replenishing, to go and find someone. As I had my own bottle and as time was pressing, I beat a hasty retreat getting home just in time for Pop-master, phew!

After another onslaught from the 'Beast From The East', joy oh joy, a few mild days brought out the crocuses and a sudden need to find the shed key to retrieve a huge stack of seed trays and pots ready for The Big Clean. This was accomplished with the help of suitable head-banging music, my second best rubber gloves and an old kitchen brush. Half an hour of virtuous brushing produced a very satisfactory neat row of pristine (well, almost) pots, all ready to be filled with an array of promising seeds.

Next on the To Do list, scrub the old labels and sort out the shoe box (doesn't every good gardener keep their seeds in old shoe boxes?). Better keep that job for tomorrow, don't want to get through the list too quickly.

Stop Press: Whilst on The Daily Outing today, it was noted 'that caravan' had had a mysterious makeover with all of the Christmas decor removed and a washing basket full of laundry and several trays of seedlings in its place. Nobody would have any idea that anything strange had been happening – rather like that vintage tv programme for children with A Little Weeed, who saw everything. All for now, chocolate to consume (purely for medicinal purposes of course!)

AnonyMouse

My local history interest: where did it start?

Researching Forest Town's local history actually started because of doing a college course which I did with my friend Maureen Newton from Hucknall.

Maureen and I were both keen family historians, belonging to Derbyshire Family History Society, but we also knew that family history was more than just names and dates. You needed to look into both the local and social history of each of your ancestors.

To further our knowledge, we enrolled for a Certificate In Local History at Nottingham University. This comprised one day a week for two years. However somewhere along the line it changed into a three year course and became an Advanced Certificate. We both travelled in by bus and usually met up on the bus from Nottingham centre out to the University.

Our first term's project was to 'Walk round a village or a parish and look with your eyes'. Well if you will excuse the pun, this was definitely an eye opener for me. After taking photos looking at maps etc., I realised that Forest Town then was not even 100 years old. We are talking about 1992, (Well, I think that was when it was!)

I had lived in Forest Town since 1977 and to be honest up until doing the University course it was just a place where we lived. where the kids went to school and where my husband went to work. Suddenly a whole new world opened up.

Along with Maureen, who was looking into Hucknall's history, we both spent many hours in libraries and archives. For us then the internet had not been born and we could enjoy looking at original old documents, and maps making endless notes and purchasing photocopies etc.

Hucknall has a much longer history than Forest Town, but there are connections, for when the Mansfield Colliery opened up this attracted

many miners from Hucknall, especially those who were having a hard time at their own pit.

People such as the **Jennings** family who lived in Seventh Avenue, the **Peppers** and **Smiths** in Fifth Avenue and the **Mills** and **Sprays** in Fourth Avenue. These families were all here in 1906. Over the years many others followed. The children went to the village school, the men worked at the colliery and some sang in choirs or played in bands.

Maureen and I both started producing a community newspaper, mine was *The Forest Town Crier*. There was a small team behind this, but, for mainly health reasons, in 2006 it closed after seven successful years.

Maureen, who I must add is the Local

History leader in Hucknall U3A, is still continuing with hers and she is about to produce her 100th edition.

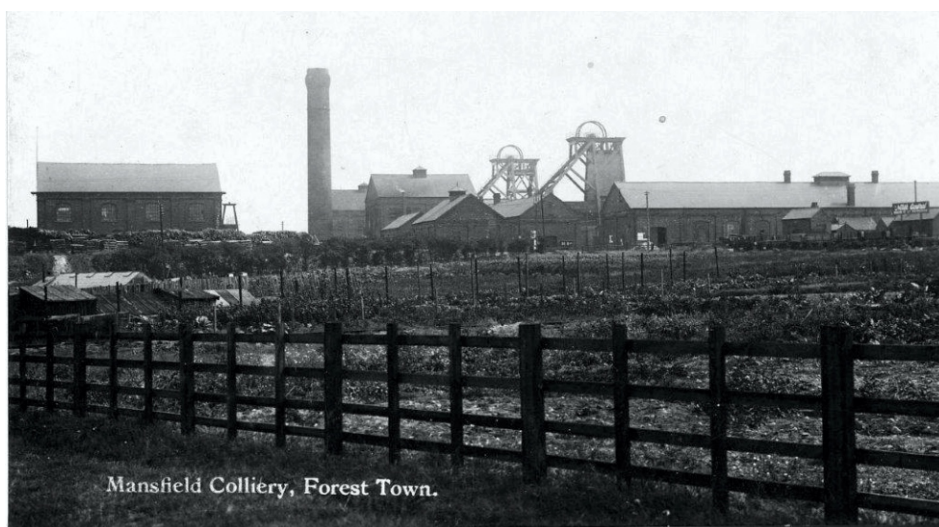
Additional to that and with the help of one of her family, the very first five editions of the Torkard Times can now be viewed on the internet. Do take a look at: www.hucknalltorkardtimes.uk

or visit:

www.hucknalltorkardhistory.co.uk

Many of you will be aware where my own local history story has gone, talks, exhibitions and books and so it continues – watch this space for what comes next.

Pauline Marples



National u3a Day is 2 June

The first ever National u3a Day will take place on Wednesday 2nd June 2021. This event, which was originally planned for June 2020, will be held every year on the first Wednesday in June during Volunteer Week. The idea is to celebrate the new experiences that come from being in your third age (no longer in full-time employment or bringing up children.).

It will show the amazing and diverse things that members get up to and challenge preconceptions of what being an older adult means. The 2021 event will be enhanced by the multitude of projects, activities, outcomes and new approaches to communication that have emerged as a consequence of the 2020 pandemic lockdowns.

Something to smile about

Teamwork!

There are four people named
Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.
There was an important job to be done and
Everybody was sure Somebody would do it.
Anybody could have done it,
But Nobody did.
Somebody got angry about that,
Because it was Everybody's job.
Everybody thought Anybody could do it
But Nobody realised that
Everybody wouldn't do it.
It ended up that Everybody blamed
Somebody
When
Nobody did what Anybody could have done.



Out of the mouths of babes!

A family were entertaining some pious friends for dinner. The Hostess, keen to show they upheld Christian standards in their own home, asked her five year old son to say grace.

He looked blank. There was an awkward pause, followed by a reassuring smile from the boy's mother. "Well darling just say what daddy said at breakfast this morning." Obediently the boy repeated "Oh God, we've got those awful people coming for dinner tonight!"

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>

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 or by post to: 5 Fal Paddock, Mansfield Woodhouse NG19 9RW
by midnight on Friday 19 March.

Please visit our website for the latest news:

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

Forest Town & District U3A is a
Registered Charity Number 1186417



Claim your free membership

To claim your free Forest Town U3A membership (April 21 to March 22), please complete this form and return to the address shown. If you are unable to print the newsletter, or do not want to cut up your printed copy, simply write all the details on a slip of paper and return it, or put the details into an email. Clearly, if returning by email no signature is required.

Please return to one of the membership team:

Kelvin Foster, kelvinfoster298@yahoo.com

– 6 Walkers Close Forest Town NG19 0DQ

or **Kathryn Cope** cope.kevin@btinternet.com

– 97 Ling Forest Road Mansfield NG18 3NQ

I confirm that I wish to continue my membership of Forest Town & District U3A. *Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS*

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____ Tel: _____

Email (if applicable): _____

Signature: _____

I would be interested in attending virtual
General Meetings via Zoom

YES/NO