



## Chat from the chair

# Join the orchestra to help your u3a be a success

Welcome to this latest edition of your fabulous Newsletter!

I was talking to a friend recently about u3a and my duties as Chairperson. My role was likened to that of an orchestral conductor. Whilst I did find this quite amusing at the time it did get me thinking and, yes, I agree my role involves doing my best for the u3a but that success depends on the rest of our u3a playing their part.

To put this into context, an orchestra may have a first class strings section but if the brass section and the percussion section aren't performing very well then no one can expect a spectacular concert, can they?

This is why it is crucial that we all play our part in making this u3a the very best it can possibly be. We still need a Business Secretary to take over from Sue Harkin. This is a crucial role for the continuation of our u3a so please give this some serious thought. You might just prevent the dissolution of Forest Town & District u3a.

*Linda Shutt*

## Bathing Belles, 1920s style



With minds turning to the possibility of summer holidays and, some of us even thinking of digging out our swimming gear, this photo of five Forest Town girls, circa 1922, seemed particularly appropriate. They all lived in the Avenues and were on holiday in Skegness. We only know the names of two of the girls, Nellie Johnson third from the left and Ada Johnson on the ground. The picture was first included in The Forest Town Crier in September 2005.

*Pauline Marples*

## Let's get talking

In an attempt to overcome loneliness and isolation your u3a has now launched a Phone Buddy Scheme. We now have a team of dedicated volunteers who are prepared to give any member a call for a chat. The Committee acknowledge that many of our members live alone and whilst we know that some members do keep in touch with one another there are some who don't have much contact with other people.

If you would like a Phone Buddy to give you a call or you know another member who would appreciate a call please get in touch and we will pass your number on to one of our volunteers.

Contact our Welfare Officer, **Kelvin Foster** on **01623 422251** and Let's Get Talking!

*Linda Shutt*

# The phantom diarist

## Feathered Friends:

One morning a flock of geese (25 in all) flew over my garden, from east to west, in a beautiful 'V' formation.

Mrs Blackbird has been gathering nesting material from the lawn, bold as brass, a few feet away from me. She gives me a look, as much as to say: "I've got important business to attend to. No time to waste!"

## Domestic Doings:

A big black hairy spider was haunting my living room for a few days! Now, I'm not an arachnophobe, but this particular individual gave me the creeps! It took a stance up by the coving for a while; then scurried across the laminate flooring, too close for comfort. I prepared my weapons: a large empty yoghurt pot and a piece of strong cardboard. These were successfully deployed and the mini-tarantula was duly ejected into the garden.

## Garden:

I was doing some watering late one evening. I glanced up and there was a silver sliver of moon, peeping out from wispy clouds, in an inky-blue sky tinged around the edges with pink. And above a neighbour's conifer hedge I could see the parabolas of Billy the Bat, on a moth-hunt (plenty, that I could see, to choose from).

My nightly patrols with a torch seek out those dastardly slugs and snails that chomp away at my precious plants. The little critters are cast onto the compost heap, to feast away there instead.

My 'push-me-pull-you' hand mower has had a good few airings, giving me a valuable work-out.

## Onwards and upwards:

The May supermoon didn't disappoint: a splendid extra-shiny orb! (26.5.21). Partial eclipse of the sun. (10.6.21). Viewed online. The summer solstice approaches!

## Funny Goings-on:

I had a farcical visit to the local library the other day to return a book and collect one that I had ordered. I started to use the machine, in order to make these transactions, but couldn't understand why it rejected my card. I asked the 'Nice Lady' at the desk and she smiled and said: "It's because you're trying to use your Nectar card!" She re-assured me that I wasn't alone in doing that very thing (an assortment of 'rogue' cards being offered, apparently!). It was a very hot day and the heat seems to turn my brain to mush. That's my excuse, anyway, and I'm sticking to it!

## Technology:

Be careful what you say in front of your smartphone! A couple of anecdotes from friends via email: one was discussing a crossword clue with her son and this happened to be 'Haagen Dazs'. An advert for this ice cream popped up on her phone later! A friend in the US reported a similar incident: information about a particular item of interest that popped up on her phone a few



seconds after discussing it with her husband. So, switch off 'voice recognition' on all apps, if you don't want to be spied on!

Recently I had to make a payment for excess on my insurance policy to a well-known large energy supplier (!). I thought I would take the easy route and use the phone. Wrong decision! After giving the correct (in my opinion) answers to the robot voice (and having been asked and answered the same question twice on occasion), I was informed that the system couldn't proceed and that I would be connected to a member of staff. The line was so faint that I struggled to hear what was being said and found it hard to understand the person's foreign accent. Apparently, I could enter my card number onto my telephone keypad or say it out loud; I chose the former. It didn't work. I tried again. Stress was building up and I politely informed the young man that I was going to sign off and send a cheque in the post. Which I duly did... with no stress at all!

## 'Ow, wouldn't it be lovely!'

- to join one's friends in group activities;
- to travel down to London on public transport and mingle with crowds;
- to shop without a mask;
- to see far-flung family (and friends);
- not to queue up for 20 minutes outside the pharmacy (one out, one in) to get repeat medications;
- to feel normal.



# Celebrating past & present



On Saturday 19 June 2021, a Centenary Garden was unveiled in St Alban's Church grounds, Forest Town, to commemorate 100 years of the Royal British Legion and 100 years of Forest Town's War Memorial.

The idea came up earlier this year when Rev Philip Stead, Neil Davidson (Chair of Forest Town and Clipstone British Legion) and I (Pauline) met in the churchyard. Because of Covid rules we were not allowed to meet indoors. Amongst other events which will be taking place later this year, we had the idea of a special flower bed and at that meeting we planned where it could go.

A green area just below the vicarage boundary was chosen as this could be seen by people walking up Old Mill Lane, or on Clipstone Road West. I did a rough sketch of what it might look like.

The garden was dug out four weeks ago by members of the Royal British Legion and has since been planted by Jim and Phyllis Gregson.

Though keen gardeners they had never done anything like this before and they only had my rough sketch to go on. From that they worked out how many plants were needed and what type to use, Begonias, Lobelia, and Petunias were decided on. These were ordered from Harrisons Garden Centre, Shirebrook and duly collected.

Watering the plants during the very hot spell of weather was an extra pressure and involved further help from a member of St Alban's Church (also a British Legion member), as an outside tap to the water supply had been vandalised and needed turning on inside the church every time water was needed.

That Saturday, in their capacity as Chair and Secretary of Forest Town Community Council, Phyllis and Jim unveiled the garden which had been carefully and briefly covered over with a union flag. Around twenty-five members of the community attended, once again we were limited on numbers because of Covid rules. Everyone agreed the garden is really beautiful. It also has a mock War Memorial *in situ* made by Jim. The centre of the garden depicts a poppy for the British Legion.

Please do find time to go into the churchyard and take a look. There are two seats nearby where you can sit and ponder on the history behind the garden.

*Pauline Marples*

## Strolling on...

After the recent good weather, how typical it should rain on Friday 18 June; our first official outing since February last year.

Nevertheless, 14 of us met at Rufford Abbey and, at our own pace, strolled around the lake eventually meeting up for refreshments in the tea room. Our next outing is at Thoresby Park on Friday 16 July, meeting 10.30 am in the new car park.

Hopefully the weather will be better!!

*Denise Doud*

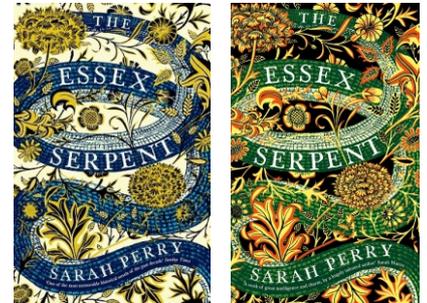
Strollers Group Leader: Denise Doud. Meet monthly on third Friday at 10: 30am

Contact Denise Doud: 01623 619856

Email: [dmdoud52@gmail.com](mailto:dmdoud52@gmail.com)

## Book Group is go!!

We have our first book for this year from the library, 'The Essex Serpent' by Sarah Perry. The book can be collected from Forest Town library.



There are multi audio copies on 'Libby', the Inspire borrowing

platform for books and magazines. To access 'Libby' you need your library and PIN number.

If anyone would like to join a Zoom session to discuss the book that would be brilliant.

The Zoom meeting will be on Monday 19 July 2021 at 10.30am. Links will be sent to Book Group members and anyone who wishes to join us. Email me for details.

The next book is *The Memory Book* by Rowan Coleman. It will be available from the library from Tuesday 20 July followed by a Zoom meeting in August.

*Ann Stanford*

Book Group leader: Ann Stanford

Contact Ann Stanford by email: [annstanford1@sky.com](mailto:annstanford1@sky.com)

## A new group at Dukeries u3a and you're invited

Dukeries U3A are hoping to start a Uke n' Sing Ukulele group at the end of July. Most of us are beginners, (apart from the teacher!) We plan to meet on Thursday mornings for an hour, cost £1, venue to be finalised. If any of Forest Town & District members would care to join us, they would be most welcome.

Please contact Linda Bond (Dukeries u3a)

Tel. 01623 861595, or email: [howardbond1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:howardbond1@yahoo.co.uk)

# Diary of a semi-lockdown kid part 11

Hands up all those who signed up for the new glass recycling bins some time last year.

So, it's You Guys we have to thank for the extra early wake-up call recently, with all the clattering and rattling that the emptying of them involves – the risk-assessment team missed a chance there with the decibel levels.

I am learning to distinguish the subtle differences between the many types of alcoholic beverage bottles as they are smashed and crashed into the vehicle. Gin bottles appear to be the most robust and noisome. From now on I shall have to try to match up an appointment that requires such an early call every 8 weeks!

The hedgehog activities continue to entertain every night – at least five individuals have been identified, barging and shoving one another off the feeding bowls; plus the occasional cat attempting to muscle in.

They have a treat in store shortly as some 'new' food has been ordered, which claims to be even more tasty. Goodness knows how it is actually tested, but I am sure it will be given due consideration.

## How non-waterproof is waterproof?

I have a favourite jacket for the warmer months, very soft and lightweight and it scrunches up into a very small space, albeit with a bit of coercion, into its own little pocket – very nifty. It was sold to me as fully waterproof only a couple of years ago. I have faithfully followed the washing and drying instructions to the letter. The last time I wore it in a very light drizzle for about half an hour, I gradually became more and more moist.

Cue email to the manufacturer, who subsequently informed that I needed to 'pre-clean' with a waterproofing product they could supply to me (how convenient!) et voila, it would be miraculously restored to its 'factory setting', so to speak. Product duly purchased and used as per more instructions. I am now waiting patiently for 'a light drizzle' so it can be tested.

I did ask why this information wasn't included on the care label in the jacket or even on the swing label, but I then got 'well, it's all on the website, madam'. Why should we have to trawl the internet for this information? How do we actually know that we ought to do this in the first place and why couldn't they just inform the customer at point of purchase? Rant over.

## On the subject of clothes

There was 'a bit of a disaster' with the gardening gear recently. I decided it was high time it was washed, thereby



revealing another dilemma; if all the gardening gear is in the wash, just what does a person wear whilst in the garden in the meantime?

I don't have a second-best-set and I am not the sort of gardener who can work effectively wearing a skirt, in the manner of a certain gardening presenter.

The bullet was bitten and everything flung in the machine (well, not the boots!): jacket, shirt, scarf, trousers, socks and the hat. When the machine had done its job and all had been removed ready to be hung out, I discovered:

a) Despite turning out all the pockets, secret or otherwise, from the waterproof jacket, a stray tissue had managed to escape and had deposited itself over every conceivable surface.

b) The bomb-proof hat looked like a mouse had been having a bit of a feast and several holes had appeared in the crown.

Whilst all were flapping away on the line, I trawled my fabric stash that is secreted about the house in the most unlikely of locations; mainly under spare chairs that are artfully covered with quilts, throws and blankets. (A bit like those photo-shoots in the glossy glamorous homes magazines).

The result of the search was that I found lots of half-forgotten projects; all of which looked enticing, but had to be shoved back undercover, however, a piece of 'that-will-have-to-do' material was retrieved.

Now you wouldn't imagine a saucer or an antique silver lid would be involved in the repair process, would you? The aforesaid saucer was exactly the right size to draw round to make circles of fabric to fit the crown and the silver lid improvised as a milliner's hat stand. Lateral thinking put to great use.

## Ducks in the drive!

A kerfuffle of barking quacking and shouting took me off task whilst I was deadheading the roses one morning. I glanced up in the direction of all the noise to see a man brandishing his walking stick and muttering furiously to himself.

Turns out he was admonishing a dog who had been barking at the temerity of aforesaid ducks for venturing onto his property. The man was doing his best to herd ducks nearer to a source of water, but they were now in the middle of the road, totally oblivious to all the traffic weaving around them.

They inspected each driveway in turn, hoping that there would be a pond or a river that would meet their requirements, but alas not, so we followed behind, cajoling and persuading, as each of the ducklings was now going to a different drive and the mother was becoming rather distracted. You've heard of the phrase: 'herding cats', well, herding ducks is almost as impossible! The scene was reminiscent of the pied piper, except the humans were all in the rear, doing their best to alert the stream of traffic coming towards us and the wildlife in front.

As the man in question said, [continued on page 5](#) ▶▶▶

# Walking in sunshine

Having first admired the new electric car that Steve, our walk leader, arrived in, we set out on the first Wednesday in June from Grassmoor Country Park.

It was one of those rare cloudless summer's days when you know you'll need neither a raincoat, nor a jumper. On good paths we soon passed the Williamthorpe Ponds at Holmewood before taking a leisurely morning coffee break in the churchyard at Heath.

A spell crossing arable fields brought us to Sutton Scarsdale where we looked round the ruins of the hall before taking lunch in its grounds. It became hot and sticky on the bridle paths to Temple Normanton where we switched to little used and, at times, overgrown footpaths.

Having survived a charge from a small group of bulls which took exception to us passing through their field, we arrive safely back at our cars.

Our second walk in June was again blessed with a cloudless sky. Just three of us set out from the remote and secluded Eddlestow Lot car park near Ashover where there are some very strange goings-on.

Oldish men on their own park up, some stay in their cars; windows up and engines running, a few get out and chat, while others pull in, turn round and drive off without stopping. We were glad to get underway and enjoy the glorious countryside on rather overgrown paths with big views to the village of Uppertown.

On better paths we climbed steadily up to the hamlet of Spitewater to the sound of curlews calling, with a gentle breeze taking the edge off the heat. We enjoyed more panoramic views on our descent to Ashover. Thankfully the final steep climb was on a shaded woodland path which took us back to our cars where the strange goings-on continued.

Our next rambles: 7 July: Rowsley, Beeley and Calton Lees (7.1 miles),  
21 July: Details awaited. New members welcome.

**Andy Riby**



## ...diary of a semi lockdown kid *continued*

he was out for his daily constitutional and he was heading roughly in the direction the ducks were pointing. He assured me that he would 'keep them under control'. All were last seen heading towards a field at the bottom of which was a small stream. Maybe there will be an update in due course.

Just as a postscript – whilst minding my own business, typing away and listening to calming melodic tunes (the head-banging ones come out later) – there was another clatter and crash coming from the open window next to my desk and a head poked in. Magnificent Mabel had discovered she could leap onto the cold frame and thence onto the window ledge. She got a bit of a shock when I jumped up and 'discouraged' her from moving any further forward. TTFN.

**AnonyMouse**

## U3A - We Need You by Allan Barham

We have endured the  
direst year,  
Our war with COVID has  
filled us with fear.  
Such an effect on life as  
we knew it,  
But the vaccine's here  
and we're almost through  
it.

Hopefully not long before  
we can meet,  
Though we must still give  
space when we cross in  
the street.  
At last though light in the  
tunnel to see,  
And our future's a priority  
for your committee.

We need your help  
though if we're to survive,  
So come on let's breathe  
some much needed life  
Into the U3A that we  
enjoy so much,  
So vital to help us all  
keep in touch.

Let's start to plan for  
what lies in store,  
Positive vibes for good  
times and more.  
We will not lie down and  
give in to the virus,  
We'll rise like the Phoenix  
and not let it tire us.

Please support our  
efforts to keep things  
together,  
Good times can return  
like a change in the  
weather.  
Let's raise a cheer then  
for our U3A,  
And all pull together with  
a 'Hip Hip Hooray' !!

# A funny thing happened...

Hi Everyone,

Well, the dog's finally gone home after nearly a month with me. We had another visit to the vet as she still had a limp after more medication and strict rest, this time she had X rays taken but these have not shown up anything to account for it either, so it's all a bit of a mystery.

As she was on strict rest, which meant I was grounded too, I managed to acquire a child's pushchair with the idea that at least I'd be able to get out for some exercise if I could work out how to keep her in it. I admit I was cringing as I imagined other people's reactions on seeing a miniature poodle going for a 'walk' in a pushchair. I know what mine would've been, so I fashioned a sign saying 'I'm not pampered, I'm poorly!'

I'm not sure if I'm sorry or relieved to say that in the end the pushchair wasn't used as she took a dim view of the whole idea too and it soon became clear that the only way I stood any chance of winning was if she was upside down, back to front or sedated. All I can say is thank goodness she's not a cat, or I would've been ripped to shreds!

It seems very quiet now she's gone, although I'm sure the local assorted cats, dogs, squirrels and birds are all breathing a sigh of relief, not to mention the neighbours, as she suffers from 'small dog syndrome' and can't resist barking at anything that moves. The trouble is that this extends to television too and meant I couldn't watch anything with animals in it. Do you have any idea how many adverts also feature animals? Well, I can tell you, most of them!

The house move finally happened two weeks later than hoped and wasn't without its moments. My son and daughter-in-law only knew definitely the day before that it was on. Their removal men were two hours late, then there was more to move than they'd anticipated and the van wasn't big enough to do it in one run.

To add to the confusion, the new owners arrived and insisted on starting to move their stuff in despite the fact

that not all of my son's belongings were out, so we ended up with my son and I moving his items out of the back door and stacking them along the side of the house while the new owners were coming in the front door with theirs.

This led to inevitable mix ups as I'd piled up items on the landing after doing a last 'sweep' of the bedrooms, only to find one of their removal men was busy taking it all back in when my back was turned. By this time my daughter-in-law had wisely removed herself from the chaos and gone to the new house to get the keys and supervise the arrival of the first van-load.

Anyway, they're finally in with the inevitable mutterings of 'Never again!' and all dogs and kids have been retrieved from the various houses they'd been boarded out to.

My grandsons, aged 7 and 4, are over the moon, not with their new bedrooms or the garden, but with the fact that they've now got THREE loos!

My youngest grandson proudly took me on a tour to admire them all with the comment 'Come and see what's happened in our new house!'

Incidentally, he's still only using one out of the three, because it's got a sparkly seat! They're not the only ones taken with the over-abundance of loos, their other dog, who is a standard poodle, thinks he's acquired three more drinking bowls, plus the usual one in the kitchen and is making full use of them all if they don't remember to put the lids down.

There's no accounting for taste is there?



*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>

Current members are: Linda Shutt (Chair), Allan Barham (Vice-Chair), Andrew Riby (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 & 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 Sunday 25 July.**

Please visit our website for the latest news:

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

*Forest Town & District U3A is a Registered Charity Number 1186417*