



APRIL 2021

Hi Everyone,

Is the end in sight? Are we beginning to move towards some sort of normality? Does the `Covid vaccine' herald the beginning of something new, just as the distinctive Cuckoo's call is the harbinger of Spring? Or, is it an April's Fools' prank? April Fools' Day traditions include playing hoaxes or practical jokes on others, often yelling "April Fool!" While its exact history is shrouded in mystery, the embrace of April Fool's Day jokes by the media and major brands has ensured the unofficial holiday's long life.

No, I am sure that the powers-that-be are not playing a prank on us, rather they are seeking to give us, what has been in short supply during the past twelve month — hope; hope of recovering some sense of normality, exchanging isolation for face-to-face family time, renewing friendships that have been on hold, and recapturing the `hustle and bustle' of community.

Here's the thing. How have you coped with this lockdown? Are you beginning to feel that it has gone on long enough? I know that it has affected people in different ways. It certainly has interrupted our rhythm of life, the ordinary, the things that we have taken so much for granted!

For some of you, this lockdown has been like an oasis of calm in the busyness of life, where you have enjoyed your own company and have been able to do just what you have wanted to do without interruption. Sadly for others, Covid-19 has inflicted immeasurable pain with the loss of loved ones. To all of you who are dealing with such loss, let me on behalf of your Committee extend our deepest sympathy and prayers to you.

This lockdown has presented us, as a u3a, with tremendous challenges and we have sought to respond as best we can with the use of Zoom and WhyPay. Yes, I know these are not the same as actual face-to-face meetings, but they are better than nothing. When I think of having `face-to-face' meetings, I am reminded of the little boy who went shopping with his mother. His mother said to him as they entered a particular store, `Did you see the look that man gave me, Huw?" "You had that look when you came into the shop, Mummy, replied Huw"!

As the `light at the end of the tunnel' gets brighter, we have to consider what kind of u3a is going to emerge? What will the re-set look like? Will we have the same groups? Who will take responsibility for them? Will our members have the same enthusiasm and commitment? These are all imponderables — we don't know, do we?

Let me say personally, and on behalf of your Committee how much we have appreciated all of you, who have remained loyal and supportive, during this very difficult and strange time. Certainly, it is worth refreshing our minds as to why we

exist, it is: *“to help people stay young, live longer, make friends, and have fun by making lifelong learning, through the experience of u3a, a reality for all agers.”* The danger with any organisation after a period of time is that it ends up doing the opposite to what it had originally set out to do. Lifelong learning is our goal and that involves members being willing to be `participators' not just `consumers'. To put it bluntly — being willing to take responsibility for interest groups, or becoming a member of the Committee when a post becomes available. A great example of this kind of commitment is Rev. Pamela Lewis, who for many years led our Coffee Morning. Sadly, I have to report that Pamela has become unwell and is unable to continue to do what she has been doing. Thank you, Pamela, for all the time, effort and commitment you have given to the u3a. We shall really miss your amusing anecdotes!!

It is people with this kind of commitment that will enable your u3a to flourish as we resume in the future, people who are willing to take responsibility for running a group. As I have said on many occasions, if you have an interest and have four or five people who share that interest and you would be willing to take responsibility for a group, then we would encourage you to do so. Your contribution of new ideas and thoughts can help invigorate our u3a, helping us to remain relevant.

Finally, let me remind you that our Zoom lectures this month will be given by Maren Hamre (from the world of Banking) on “Scam Awareness” on Wednesday, 14 April at 2.00pm and Julian Chidzoy will give his talk on “Life on the Ocean Waves” on Wednesday, 28 April at 2.00pm. The Zoom Discussion Group will be held on Tuesday, 6 April at 2.00pm and WhyPay Discussion Group will be held on Tuesday, 13 April at 2.00pm. Finally, the Zoom Book Group will be held on Monday, 19 April at 10.30am and the book under discussion is “American Dirt” by Jeanine Cummings. Also, there are a number of extremely interesting Zoom lectures available on the u3a National website, on the National Programmes page.

Keep well, Keep safe,
John (Chairman)

Mae'r gwanwyn wedi dod, a'r clocs wedi mynd ymlaen un awr, a mae'r dyddiau yn hirach. Bydd llawer ohonoch yn treulio yn yr ardd, ac yn edrych ymlaen am weld ffrwyth eich ymdrech. Mwynhewch y gwanwyn, a cadwch yn iach. Gan ddymuno pob bendith arnoch
Sandra (Trust Volunteer)

