



u3a
learn, laugh, live

Christmas Newsletter 2020



(cover photo by Bill Harrison)

Website: www.u3asites.org.uk/mansfield/home

Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/mu3a2016

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/349190408987691/



Words from Madam Chair: Amanda Kingswell

As Christmas comes rushing towards us, I hope that we are all able to come together with our loved ones over the festive period during these uncertain times. I hope that 2021 brings the release from the grip of COVID 19.

It hasn't all been bad news, we've given nature a respite from our destructive tendencies for example bees are able to smell the flowers and collect more pollen because of the reduction in air pollution, humpback whales stress hormones have reduced due to lack of large sailing vessels including Cruise ships, our endangered hedgehogs have had a bit of a reprieve due to less traffic and our dear household pets have benefitted by having us at home more often.

Who would have thought that we would be having on-line meetings via Zoom & Google Meet...improving our I.T. Skills, perhaps some of us have done some on-line studying.? Certainly, some of our own U3A groups have been meeting via Zoom.

As I look back over 2020, I am optimistic for the future having seen the positives in ourselves in volunteering, the support for the vulnerable and the camaraderie between friends, neighbours and fellow members in these very difficult times.

All it really leaves me to say is that I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Amanda x



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Words from the Editor: Bill Harrison

It is with sorrow that we announce the death of Sheila Hinds in the John Eastwood Hospice on Sunday 22 November. A member of long standing, Sheila enjoyed many of the activities of Mansfield u3a, especially the Singing Group, the Shufflers Group in recent years and the Thoresby holidays.

Her funeral will take place (under Tier 3 regulations) at the Thoresby Chapel of Mansfield Crematorium on Thursday 17 December at 12.15. Family flowers only. Donations may be made to the John Eastwood Hospice.

R.I.P Sheila.



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So, as we approach our final month of 2020, let's not reflect on what has gone in 2020, but look forward to a New Year 2021.

Christmas is a time of giving, a time for greeting, it brings to mind a quote by the very famous entertainer Bob Hope, who said "My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: love others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?".

And his very accomplished partner and friend Bing Crosby said.

"Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings, all the snow in Alaska won't make it 'white'." He was always dreaming of a white Christmas.

This is a time to thank those who contribute so much to making the Mansfield & District u3a the success that it has become. Our New Madam Chair Amanda Kingswell, our trusty Treasurer Yvonne Kennison, my good lady wife Business Secretary Carole Harrison, Membership Secretary Jean Hatton, Group Co-ordinator Lynne Payne, Group Treasurer Sheila Pegg, Speaker Finder Philip Tucker, Committee Members Stephen Cross and Mick Kennison, Bob Longdon and Mike Allen for looking after the website, Sarah Spurry for administering our Facebook and last but not least, you the Members, for making Mansfield u3a the success it is,, we thank each and every one of you for your loyalty.

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Words from Business Secretary: Carole Harrison

A BIG THANK YOU

The Committee would like to take this opportunity to offer our gratitude and thanks to the following Group Leaders, who have decided to stand down this year from leading their Groups:

Group	Group Leader	New Group Leaders
Art Appreciation	Pauline Boucher	
Cinema		
Current Affairs	Norma Shillinglaw	
Family History	Brenda and Peter Corbett	
Indoor Curling	New Group	
Scrabble	Brenda Thurkettle	
Shufflers	Sylvia Slack	
Tai Chi	Jean Kirk	Lorna Pye
Walkers	Nick and Joy Crowe	Ken White and Val Hart (Pathfinders Group)

We appreciate everything you have done and the time you have given to make your Groups as successful as they have been. In some cases, other people have agreed to take over these Groups, but where not, we would like to encourage you to take on the role. There is plenty of support available from both the Committee and the Third Age Trust who have special advisors in most subjects. Funding is also available to help with setting up new Groups if anyone feels willing and able to do this.

Finally, a great big THANK YOU to Yvonne and Mick Kennison for arranging access to Zoom for us. This has enabled us to hold the Quiz Night, Committee/ Groups / Members Meetings. Plus, on Friday we had an online games event as a substitute for our Hostess Christmas Lunch and although there were not many of us, it was great fun.

It's been so lovely seeing you all again, even if only virtually.

We also need to thank Yvonne for managing our finances so well. She has kept us financially sound and has ensured we can enjoy a 'free' year with no fees to pay, whilst making sure we can still meet our financial commitments.

Website

We have received the following request from our Website if anyone is able to contribute.

- I have recently been contacted by Dawn Spence from the Primary Integrated Community Services LTD, with ref to plans to alter Millbrook Hospital Services
- They are seeking potential support from our members to help with setting up a Service User Group to give Patients a Voice discussion group
- If you would like to contact me at the address given, I would be happy to pass on to you the information sent to me from Dawn. (kelvinfooster298@yahoo.com)
- Forest Town u3a members have been informed of this request to join in. I have sent Sandra Rogers, the Sherwood u3a (Welfare Officer), the information asking if any of the members there would be interested in joining these discussions. Now is a good time to have an input into our local Mental Health Services.

Best wishes for Christmas and New Year from all at Forest Town and District u3a

Many thanks and kind regards.

Kelvin G Foster, Welfare Officer

Poem by: Barbara Dixon

The lockdown imposed in November gives way to a quiet December.

Companionship, leisure, the things that we treasure

We'll just have to strive to remember.

Ignore all the hype and poor taste that business and commerce embrace

Buy just what you need, don't give way to greed,

It leads to stockpiling and waste.

The shop tills go ring a ding ding. Please, Boris let our church bells ring!

Be kind to a stranger, remember the manger

As old Christmas carols, we sing.

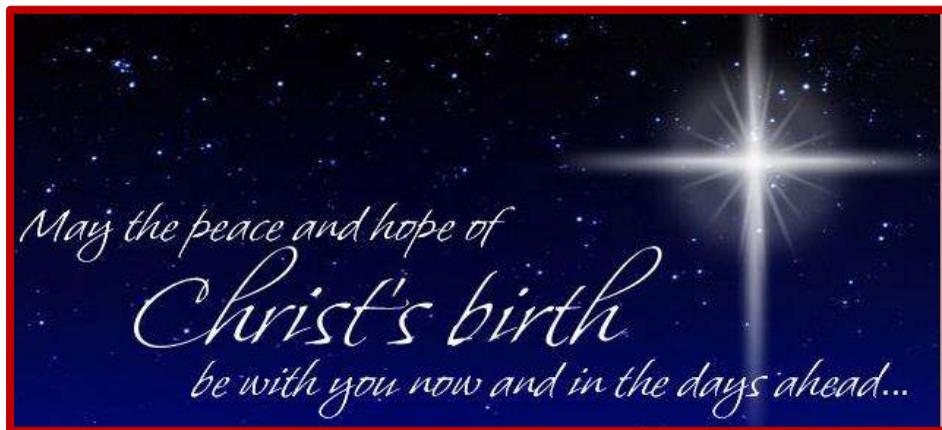
Teach children the true Christ child's story, from humble beginnings to glory.

Nativity plays our spirits will raise, bring tears to proud parents' eyes, surely.

Get-togethers we'll have to forgo, but times will get better, I know.

Complaining is folly, relax and be jolly

And pray this damned virus will go!



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Wishing you a peaceful Christmas.

Barbara and Reg Dixon

Magi by Tracy Hatton



From distant lands
Across Eastern sands
Rich gifts they would bring
Carried by three learned men
For worship of the New Born King.

With joyful tread they set forth
In praise of a Virgin birth
Hurrying as fast as were able
They journeyed both wide and far
Led by the guiding star
That illuminated a village stable.



Through hot desert days
And the cold desert night
They continued to follow the guiding light
In their search of what angelic voices sing
A fatal mistake that they would make
Was to enter Herod's palace gate
In search of the Holy King.



Realising their error, they hurried hence
With gold and myrrh and frankincense
But alas, so the joys of Christmas went
Hand in hand with the slaughter of the Innocent.

Christmas Poem by Hilary Miller

The glasses sparkle, fizzy drinks flow
Now to party, ready set go
Fred's always early and Gladys is late
The turkey doesn't like to wait.

Name cards and gifts are set on the table
Who will I dare put next to Mabel
She always complains she can't hear a thing
Why won't she put those hearing aids in.

We do love Christmas although it's busy
Maybe the champagne will make us all dizzy
There'll be disapproving looks from you know who
And rude jokes from Daphne right on cue.

I always remember halfway through eating
The brandy sauce, and the cream needs beating
Yes, it's always an excuse to do excess
So, let's hope the party is a success.

Soon we'll be full of Christmas food
The older guests will be more subdued
The Queen's on at three we always watch
Oh, Dave's knocked his wine, can you catch.

What a good time was had by all
Out comes the games we'll have a ball
Christmas is still Christmas, let's not change it
Wherever you are we wish you all magic.



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Christmas 2020 poem by Bill Harrison

Christmas 2020, for sure it will be strange
As families won't be gathering
With nothing on the range.

There can be only one gift this year
Amongst all the trouble and strife
We hope that Santa's sack be full
Delivering the gift of life.

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire
Carols we all will sing
We wish you health and happiness
Peace and love to bring.

Please don't forget your loved ones
Who sadly won't be here
As they party up in heaven
We wish them all good cheer.

In the day's so long ago
Times we never forgot
Money was tight, we didn't have much
An apple and orange are all we got.

On the eve of Christmas
At Midnight Mass you pray
Pray that 2021, brings health
To everyone in the u3a.

So Merry Christmas to everyone
Be it joyful and full of goodwill
Have a very Merry Christmas
With love from Carole & Bill.



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WINTER WHITENESS by Susan Bell

(An Acrostic Poem)

WINTERS chill is in the air
IT comes along without a care
NEITHER man nor beast escapes its hold
THEY can but shelter from its cold
EACH one to his own desire
REACHING for lair or chair by the fire

WHEN flakes of snow begin to fall
HERALDING chaos for one and all
INERTIA soon begins to set in
THOUGH not all creatures find it so grim
ESPECIALLY children who love to play out
NOW to explore, run round and shout
EVERYONE loves a picturesque scene
SOFT trodden footprints show where we've been
SO thereby showing life does abound

As we move in our world creating barely a sound



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A STORY FOR CHRISTMAS – Yvonne Kennison

“Come, step up the pace Simon” – Stephen reprimanded his young brother – “you are such a slouchy boy.” Simon pouted and would have told Stephen what he could do with his sheep, if he had the breath to speak.

He was eleven years old and could easily have stayed at home by himself, but his parents had decided he should accompany the rest of the family on the hillside while they themselves travelled to Tekoa for the Census of Quirinius. He was angry and was missing his bed also he hadn’t prepared his clothing sufficiently to keep the cold out.

“Stephen slow up” he managed to shout “I cannot keep up with you – how much further do we have to go anyway?”

“You are a spoiled child, Simon – you will have to take over the flock from your brothers one day – it is good that you begin today. We must watch for wolves and predators – the sheep are our livelihood – you need to start to love them as we do. “I shall never love the stupid animals. I shall be a fisherman by day, so that I can sleep in my bed at night.”

Stephen smiled at his little brother, “We will be camping soon, don’t take on so much – I know this is hard for you but we will rest soon.”

Once they had found a good vantage point, they settled for the night. Lying on his back, Simon stared up at the night sky – it was as though he was seeing it for the first time – there were billions of lights to behold – he couldn’t comprehend the vastness of it all – suddenly his gaze fell upon a most wonderous star, bigger than all the rest – it was travelling slowly above him “Stephen do you see it?” He jumped up to point it out to his brothers but they were nowhere to be seen.

He settled back down and quickly fell into a deep sleep. Sudden noise and chaos surrounded him, and was soon jolted awake – “Quickly Simon gather your things we have to leave” Stephen and his brothers were standing over him. “what do you mean we have to leave; we have only just got here?” – “We have had a visitor and he has told us that we must leave – for once in your life Simon do as you are told”

Sensing their excitement, he rose and quickly followed his brothers down the hillside, “What about the sheep” he called, as he ran trying to catch them up - “They will have to take care of themselves tonight for once,” came the reply.

“Where are we going?”

“Do you see that bright star?”

“Yes, I wanted to point it out to you before.”

“Your job is to see where it is leading us – Where it stops, will be our destination.”

“Have you brought Father’s wine flagon with you? Are you drunk?”

“Don’t be so cheeky brother – we have been instructed to follow that star.”

“For what purpose?”

“The purpose will be revealed – all I can say is that we are God’s chosen people.”
“We know we are God’s chosen people – Abraham revealed the truth of that. “
“You are too clever for your own good – now be silent and see where the star leads us.”

Exhausted and tired, the small family reached their destination but couldn’t quite understand what an inn-keeper’s stable could hold that would grab their attention, but there was no doubt that the star was pointing directly above this dowdy outbuilding. Stephen grabbed Simon by the collar and pushed him towards the door – “you go inside – no-one will be surprised if a child wanders into somewhere he shouldn’t.”

Simon made to protest but quickly realised there was no way his argument would win against his brothers – so he quietly pushed at the stable door and tip-toed inside. This surely was a sight to behold – a lady sat cradling a new born child and her elderly husband busied himself laying straw inside an animal’s manger. When he saw Simon, he beckoned for him to come see the child.

The lady smiled sweetly and held her hand out for her visitor – “come child” she said, “have you come to welcome my son Jesus into the world?”

“I didn’t know what I was coming for” Simon told her, “but I am truly pleased to meet your beautiful boy” then for some unexplained reason, he felt compelled to kneel before the baby in the knowledge that from that moment on, his own life would be entwined with this special baby and that he would give up his own life for him.

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Rotational Art Christmas Style: Gordon Howlett

When asked by Bill Harrison, if I had anything for the Christmas edition of the Newsletter or was, I working on anything towards Christmas. No, but that was a challenge and I am attaching the result of this quick study. For your interest the corner pattern was the basis of the 'rotational art'.



I can't always be this quick but any time I can help do let me know.

Any members interested in learning this amazing artwork can contact Gordon on:
g.howlett@ntlworld.com

Best wishes, for Christmas and the New Year
Gordon



(photo courtesy of Bill Harrison)

A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year 2021
From Carole and Bill Harrison

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THIS FACINATING TALK BY DAWN BLUNDEN

JOIN OUR ZOOM MEETING:

Tuesday 15th December 10.30 am

(Details on joining are the same as before but will be sent out on 14th)

Our speaker Dawn Blunden has sent us the following:

A RECIPE FOR AN ENTERTAINING TALK: BY DAWN BLUNDEN

A cupful of Royalty

A sprinkling of celebrities

A pinch of TV and radio

A large spoonful of laughter

And an ounce or two of talent

Mix together and decorate with a “big” personality

And enjoy an abundance of funny stories and anecdotes.



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FOR *All of You*
AT CHRISTMAS



*Wishing all our friends in
Mansfield U3A a peaceful and
happy Christmas
Yvonne & Mick (Kennison)*

(photo courtesy of Yvonne Kennison)



(Previously known as M u3a Walkers Group)

The Pathfinders Walking group has an interesting programme of walks for the New Year, details of which can be found on the U3a website.

Let's make 2021 a year when we can improve our health by walking. Walking is known to strengthen the heart and lungs, it burns up calories, strengthens muscles and when walking with others turns exercise into an enjoyable social occasion.

Ken and Val invite you to join us on our walks, which we are sure you will find interesting and enjoyable and gives the opportunity to meet new friends.



Get wrapped up and get out for a walk this Christmas

Happy Christmas to everyone

from Val Hart & Ken White

As we are about to enter the New Year, we have a new name for the Walkers group and new walk leaders.

Joy and Nick Crowe have retired from leading the walks after six years. We thank them both for their time and dedication to the walks. I have been on many of their walks over the years and enjoyed both the walks and the all-important companionship.

Now it is the turn of Ken White and myself, Val Hart, to continue to provide walks that we hope will appeal to you. We are sure that you will find the walks both interesting and informative and look forward to seeing you in the near future.

'Pathfinders' is a walking group which provides its outings mainly in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. The group ethos is to combine a leisurely walk, with the opportunity to observe historical or other interesting landscapes, while taking the time to see and discuss the local fauna and flora.

The walks take place on the first Monday of each month, for our longer walks and the third Wednesday of each month for shorter walks. Car sharing will be organised for all those wishing to join our walks. Please see the Pathfinders walking programme for precise dates.

Information about the walks will be circulated by email and/or telephone and the walks will be graded as Easy, Moderate or Strenuous with full walking guides/routes provided to those taking part so you can repeat them yourselves at a later date.

Walks will be at a reasonable pace, averaging either 3-5 or 5-7 miles in distance, each distance will be taken consecutively every fortnight, with, where possible on the longer walks, a refreshment break at about the half way point at a café or pub and one at the end of our walk to discuss aspects of the walk and details of our next walk.

We will also be stopping briefly at points of interest along the walk. It is envisaged that the group size for any walk will be a maximum of 15 persons, so please book early. Please read your emails regularly for latest news, including late cancellations due to inclement weather, etc.

If you require any further information and/or wish to join the group and get regular updates and walk information please contact us at any time by phone or email.

For more details contact either:

Ken White – Tel/text: 07973 315050 or email ken@atrain.org.uk

or

Val Hart - Tel/text: 07745 208248 or email valerie.hart@hotmail.co.uk

Proposed Pathfinders SHORTER Walks 2021

The proposed walks listed below may be subject to change due to weather conditions and/or the success of our recce's, which we will assess the walks for suitability. Any changes we make will be relayed to you as they may occur.

Date	Walk	Distance & Grade of Walk
20th January	Ashfield Literary Landscapes, Felley	3 Miles - Easy
17th February	Bassetlaw Ordsall round walk	3 Miles - Easy
17th March	Ilam Derbyshire County Walk	5 Miles - Easy
21st April	Calverton Circular	4 Miles - Easy
19th May	Darley Abbey, Derbyshire	3 Miles - Easy
16th June	Woodborough & Epperstone	4 Miles - Easy
21st July	Besthorpe Meandering around Meering	4 Miles - Easy
18th August	Hartington and Beresford Dale, Derbys	3 Miles - Moderate
15th Sept.	Papplewick & Linby Circular	3 Miles - Easy
20th October	Lambley Dumbles & High Pastures	4.25 Miles - Easy
17th November	Teversal Trails Circular	4 Miles - Easy
15th December	Farndon Circular, Notts - Christmas Lunch Walk	3.5 miles - Easy

All walks are circular and we always try to find somewhere for refreshments at the end of the walk. Full details will always be provided when the walk is advertised.

For more information contact either

Val Hart at vale@hart@hotmail.co.uk Tel/Text 07745 208248

or Ken White at ken@atrain.org.uk Tel/Text 07973 315050

Proposed Pathfinders LONGER Walks 2021

The proposed walks listed below may be subject to change due to weather conditions and/or the success of our recce's, which we will assess the walks for suitability. Any changes we make will be relayed to you as they may occur.

Date	Walk	Distance & Grade of Walk
4th January	Clumber Park and Lake	5.5 miles - Easy
1st February	Wollaton Park, Nottingham	5.1 miles - Easy
1st March	Melbourne Hall Estate, Derbyshire	5.5 miles - Easy
12th April	Alfreton Park (Bluebell Wood Walk)	6.0 miles - Moderate
10th May	Hardwick Hall - Astwith	6.3 miles - Moderate
7th June	Linacre Reservoirs	5.8 miles - Moderate
5th July	Nine Ladies Rowsley Circular	5.5 miles - Moderate
2nd August	Gunthorpe, Hoveringham and Caythorpe	5.9 miles - Easy
6th September	Eyam - Foolow, Derbyshire	5.9 miles - Easy
4th October	Chatsworth Autumn Colour Circular, Derbyshire	6.5 miles - Moderate
1st November	Nutbrook & Mapperley Reservoir - Ilkeston	6.1 miles - Easy
6th December	Worksop Canal Circular, Notts	5.0 miles - Easy

All walks are circular and we always try to find somewhere for a refreshment break approximately half way around the walk. Full details will always be provided when the walk is advertised.

For more information contact either

Val Hart at valerie.hart@hotmail.co.uk - Tel/Text 07745 208248

or Ken White at ken@atrain.org.uk - Tel/Tex 07973 315050



The Birdwatching and Wildlife Group wishes everyone a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.



For the forthcoming year our monthly visits will mainly be to different reserves around Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. We take these outings as enjoyable days out where we can learn and appreciate more the wildlife around us.

On some occasions we have a professional photographer with us to provide help and advice for those wishing to learn more about photography and we also have one of the best birdwatchers in the UK helping us identify the birds, butterflies, bugs and other flora and fauna we may come across, we usually leave on our outings at 9.30am and aim to be back by 4.00pm unless the visit is a distance away. In this case we stop for a meal on our return.

Attached is our proposed programme for 2021 depending upon Covid rules and restrictions. Further more detailed information will be distributed nearer the dates of each of the outings. I hope to meet you all on at least some of these outings.

We operate a car sharing system for those needing transport and we calculate a suitable fee to go towards the cost for transport.

Calendar of Mu3a Proposed Birdwatching Outings for 2021

The proposed birdwatching outings listed below may be subject to change due to weather conditions and/or the success of our recce's. You will be notified of any changes we may make as they occur.

Date (All Thursday's)	Outing Location
14th January	Attenborough Nature Reserve, Nottingham
11th February	Idle Washlands, near Retford
11th March	Beckingham Marshes & Langford Lowfields, Newark
8th April	Frampton Marsh, Boston
13th May	Whisby, Lincoln
10th June	Rutland Water - Ospreys
8th July	Bempton Cliffs and Flamborough Head, Yorkshire Coast
12th August	Fairburn Ings, Yorkshire
9th September	Gibraltar Point Bird Observatory, near Skegness
14th October	Old Moor, Dearne Valley, Barnsley
11th November	Blacktoft Sands, Goole
16th December	Donna Nook, Lincs.

Further information will be sent out closer to the dates of the outings, however, should you wish to discuss any of these days out please contact Ken White.

Tel/Text Number: 07973 315050 or email ken@atrain.org.uk

STROLLERS: Sue Howlett, Val Hart

We hope all our members are keeping well and wish everyone a Happy Christmas and hope for better conditions in the New Year.

We have managed only 5 walks during 2020 due to Coronavirus. We averaged 20 people on each walk. On each occasion the weather was kind to us and we thoroughly enjoyed both the walk and the social time together over refreshments.

We are planning a programme for 2021 and will keep group members informed about when and where we can walk depending on the current COVID-19 regulations.



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Sent in by: Mike Allen

According to an advert in the free newspaper, the News Journal, West Notts College (or Vision) are offering adult community courses at a reduced rate. 14 hours FREE! So anyone who wants to pick up a new skill, to revive an old, forgotten one or to polish up whatever they are currently doing should look at their brochure on

<https://www.wnc.ac.uk/Documents/Brochures/community-course-guide-2020-2021.pdf> and see what is offered. Of course, there will be 'ts and cs', but it could be worth investigating.

Also, in that paper, a local writer, Alan Dawson, wants budding local poets to take part in a poetry project, #madeinmansfield. The idea is to write a short poem (4 – 20 lines) of memories made in and around Mansfield.

The full details are in the article on the back page or e-mail thetownsmen@hotmail.com

Another article concerns the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway, built 200 years ago. There is a book just published about it, but also now a booklet detailing walks along the route of the railway, which is free with every copy of the book (price £5.00 + p&p) or available on the website www.mansfieldandpinxton200.btck.co.uk.

It could make a series of pleasant walks – all flat of course!

Mike Allen would like to wish all Mansfield U3A members a Happy Christmas and a far better 2021.

He is not sending Christmas cards this year, but is donating the saved money to the Trussell Trust, Send a Cow, MDC Secret Santa Appeal and the Cat Protection League.



(Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC)



December 2020

Hello everyone and hope you are all well and looking after yourselves?

Winter is well and truly with us now and gardening slows right down during the short days, but there are still things to be getting on with weather permitting. On bright day's when it's cold and crisp it's great to be outside, but I'm afraid I really don't like the dull, damp overcast days that we often get.

When you do get out, it's interesting to see what's happening in the garden. Already bulbs are starting to push through the soil and shrubs such as *Viburnum x bodnantense* 'Dawn' and *Mahonia* 'Charity' are starting to flower, which really helps to cheer you up.

Evergreens are good all year round, but in winter they come into their own and the shiny or evergreen foliage helps to add colour and structure to any garden. And don't forget berries on trees and shrubs such as holly and cotoneaster that shine in the winter sunshine.

Over the past month it's been good to catch up with several gardening clubs via Zoom meetings. This way of talking to groups, either as a slide show or live demo from my potting shed seems to be the 'new norm' and I've already got bookings through until next spring. Having talked to lots of groups, it's clear that most are not planning to meet in person until late spring or summer at the earliest!

Hopefully when the vaccine is readily available and cases of Covid-19 drop, we can all meet up for garden talks and have a proper chat and a cuppa! Until then, it's virtual talks from the comfort of your own living room.

Gardening Group: Janet Whitlam and Marilyn Dibble

Wishing everyone a very happy Christmas.

Hope we can be getting back towards normal next year.

I'm hoping to arrange a Garden Group zoom meeting with Martin Fish as guest speaker for March.

This will be my first attempt at hosting a zoom meeting!!
I'll let you know the details nearer the time.

I've sent our Christmas wishes and many thanks to Jill and Martin Fish and wishing them well in their house move.

Enjoy a peaceful Christmas and a brighter New Year.

Best wishes

Marilyn

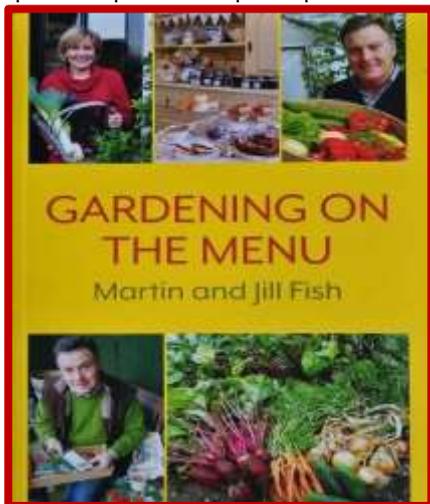
Gardening on the Menu

With Christmas just a few weeks away, if you are looking for a late Christmas present for a family member or friend, Jill and I recently had our book, 'Gardening on the Menu' re-printed. In the book I talk about growing a range of fruit and vegetables with lots of hints and tips and Jill shares her favourite family recipes and quick cook tips. Copies are available from our website www.martinfish.com or Amazon and of course we'd be more than happy to sign your book (our website only).

Our price £12.95 (r.r.p.£15.99) plus p&p

Well, that's it for 2020 – a year we'll never forget! Jill and I would like to wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and we'll be back in 2021!

Martin & Jill



Jobs for the garden with Martin Fish

If you buy or are given a poinsettia for Christmas, make sure you keep it in a light, warm position. The poinsettia originally comes from Mexico and needs a little TLC to keep it healthy and growing. If positioned in a cold, draughty room or unheated conservatory it will very quickly drop its leaves. As for watering, keep the compost moist, but not soggy as it dislikes wet roots! In the right position it will look great into the New Year and many people keep the plants growing for two or three years!

Rake up the last of the wet leaves lurking in corners and add them to the compost heap along with other soft garden waste.

Now is the perfect time to start planting bare root roses, fruit bushes and hedging plants in well prepared ground.

If you've got a pond or water feature, check the pump to make sure it doesn't freeze in cold weather. If not in use, remove the pump for winter.

Stand foliage houseplants in a light position and keep the compost moist, but not wet.

Deciduous hedges such as hornbeam, beech and thorn can be given a winter trim to help develop or maintain a good compact shape.

Check the ties on young trees to make sure they are firm and secure to hold the tree steady during windy weather.

If you still haven't planted your tulip bulbs, try to get them in pots or the ground as soon as possible, as long as you plant by mid-December, they will still grow and flower well next spring.

Check apples in store and remove any that are bruised or starting to rot. They should be kept in dry, cold conditions.

Make sure outside taps are either turned off at a stopcock or insulated to prevent them freezing in frosty weather.

Leeks, parsnips, cabbage and Brussels can all be lifted or picked from the garden several days before you need them and will be fine if kept in a cool shed.

For more weekly gardening tips and advice from Martin visit "Pots & Trowels" on Facebook or subscribe on YouTube for free.

Happy gardening

Martin Fish.
www.martinfish.com



(photo courtesy of Marilyn Dibble)



Santa's Little Helpers Christmas 2019



Santa's Little Elves 2019

Learn, Laugh, Live

Christmas, is one of the jolliest times of the year.
So, what better time to roll out some Christmas crackers.

How did Mary and Joseph know Jesus' weight when he was born? They had a weigh in a manger...

What did Santa do when he went speed dating? He pulled a cracker!

Why was the turkey in the pop group? Because he was the only one with drumsticks!

What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck? A Christmas Quacker!

Why did no one bid for Rudolph and Blitzen on eBay? Because they were two deer!

What does the Queen call her Christmas Broadcast? The One Show!

Why don't you ever see Santa in hospital? Because he has private elf care!

What do reindeer hang on their Christmas trees? Horn-aments!

Why are Christmas trees so bad at sewing? They always drop their needles!

How will Christmas dinner be different after Brexit? No Brussels!

How does Christmas Day end? With the letter Y!

Which TV Christmas special is being filmed in Brussels this year? Deal or No Deal!

"I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked for my autograph." – *Shirley Temple*

Sent in by Alan Miller

Most seniors never get enough exercise. In His wisdom God decreed that seniors become forgetful so they would have to search for their glasses, keys, and other things, thus doing more walking. And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God saw there was another need. In His wisdom He made seniors lose coordination so they would drop things, requiring them to bend, reach, and stretch. And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God considered the function of bladders and decided seniors would have additional calls of nature, requiring more trips to the bathroom, thus providing more exercise. God looked down and saw that it was good.

So, if you find as you age, you are getting up and down more, remember it's God's will. It is all in your best interest even though you mutter under your breath.

Poem by Spike Milligan sent in by Sheila Whalley

Smiling is infectious,
you catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today,
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner
and someone saw my grin.
When he smiled, I realised
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile,
then I realized its worth.
A single smile, just like mine
could travel round the earth.

So, if you feel a smile begin,
don't leave it undetected.
Let's start an epidemic quick,
and get the world infected



Poem sent in by Sheila Whalley

T'was a month before Christmas,
And all through the town,
People wore masks,
That covered their frown.

The frown had begun
Way back in the Spring,
When a global pandemic
Changed everything.

They called it corona,
But unlike the beer,
It didn't bring good times,
It didn't bring cheer.

Contagious and deadly,
This virus spread fast,
Like a wildfire that starts
When fuelled by gas

Airplanes were grounded,
Travel was banned.
Borders were closed
Across air, sea and land.

As the world entered lockdown
To flatten the curve,
The economy halted,
And folks lost their verve.

From March to July
We rode the first wave
People stayed home,
They tried to behave.

When summer emerged
The lockdown was lifted.
Many folks drifted.

Now it's December
And cases are spiking,
Wave two has arrived,
Much to our disliking.

Frontline workers,
Doctors and nurses
Try to save people,
From riding in hearses.

This virus is awful,
This COVID-19.
There isn't a cure.
There is no vaccine.

Till the New Year
It's true that this year
Has had sadness a plenty,
We'll never forget
The year 2020.

And just 'round the corner
The holiday seasons
But why be merry?
Is there even one reason
To decorate the house
And put up the tree,
When no one will see it,
No one but me.

But outside my window
The snow gently falls,
And I think to myself,
Let's deck the halls!
So, I gather the ribbon,
The garland and bows,
As I play those old carols,
My happiness grows.

Christmas is not cancelled
And neither is hope.
If we lean on each other,
I know we can cope.

Great to see Mary on Keyboard
and Joseph on vocals, on this
year's Christmas Stamp



**NO MATTER HOW OLD YOU
ARE, AN EMPTY CHRISTMAS
WRAPPING PAPER TUBE IS
STILL A FUN THING TO BONK
SOMEONE OVER THE HEAD
WITH!**

YOU DON'T STOP DOING THINGS BECAUSE YOU GET OLD

YOU GET OLD BECAUSE YOU STOP DOING THINGS



IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION FROM YVONNE KENNISON

NEW AND EXCITING NEWS FOR MANSFIELD & DISTRICT u3a

First of all, here's hoping that everyone is keeping safe and well. If anyone is struggling or needing any help in any way, please don't hesitate to let me or any of the Committee know. We will do our best to help in any way we can.

Email treasurer.mansfieldu3a@gmail.com or businesssec.mansfieldu3a@gmail.com



(Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY)

**Mansfield and District u3a
Committee would like to wish all of our members
Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year 2021**

Subscriptions 2020/2021. Current members: £12 New members: £14. Associate members £8.50. Cheques payable to Mansfield and District u3a.

The Membership Renewal Form can be downloaded from the website or will be available from the Treasurer at the monthly meetings.

Please Note: All current members must complete all sections of the Membership Renewal Form to comply with Data Protection laws when paying their subscriptions. Thank you.

Online Banking is now available to members to pay their subscriptions online. As publishing details for this facility has compromised its security, members are asked to apply to the Treasurer.

treasurer.mansfieldu3a@gmail.com

Event and Visit Payments

Members are reminded that deposits and payments for events and visits organised by Mansfield u3a and its interest groups are non-refundable, but places may be offered to others.

Please note: if you go on a trip/visit organised by a company, cheques for the event must be made out to the company, not Mansfield u3a.

Changes of Address, etc. Please contact the Membership Secretary, Jean Hatton on (0793 5707582) if you've changed your address, phone number or email recently so that she can update our records.

Disclaimer

The views expressed here are those of the contributors only, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, the Committee of Mansfield u3a or the Third Age Trust. Nor can any responsibility be accepted for members' announcements or any errors that may occur.

Please send contributions for the next issue to bill20newsletter@gmail.com or by hand to Bill Harrison as soon as you can and by the 1st of the month at the latest. Thanks!

Editor: Bill Harrison: 01623 462188 / 0784 9966962

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