



July 2021

Dear Members

Welcome to the new normality (however this is defined these days!). It seems strange writing this, but the last hard copy publication of our original Newsletter went out to you over 15 months ago!

Newmarket U3A had to almost reinvent itself to ensure that we were able to stay with you as much as possible over those solitary days of lockdowns, quarantine and social distancing – words that have become everyday use in our 'New Normal'. Yet the challenge of reinventing how we both managed and communicated with our organisation was one that we all did our very best to step up to. The Executive functions continued unabated; the Groups (where feasible of course) still carried on; new groups emerged to stimulate and challenge you; and of course the Newsletter in its new digital online format of E-News came out monthly. Our Website and Facebook page continued to grow and inform - members soon embraced using both, posting thoughts, pictures and of course keeping in touch. The result was, unlike many similar organisations, this Newmarket U3A Group never went away. We used our newly acquired communication skills to continue working for and with the members. Members looked after other members who did not have computer access for E-News by delivering printed copies to keep them in touch.

This **Moving Forward** Newsletter is a one-off celebration of not only what went on during the period, but also how we are all moving forward. It contains member reminiscences on things they did during lockdown restrictions as well as information on how your Interest Groups are planning for the future. My thanks to everyone who has contributed including the sterling work performed by the Executive Committee and the Group Coordinators. After the 2021 AGM (again another online event) there will be a new group of people in many of those positions, including this Publicity Team. We hope they will appreciate and continue to make use of the legacy of and the lessons learned during the pandemic.



*Publicity Team hard at work
on Moving Forward*

In the meantime please read on and find out how Groups and friends have spent some of their time over the last 12 months or so. We hope you will enjoy it and who knows perhaps in years to come it will be a publication to be able to show to your grandchildren and say 'we were there'.

Publicity Team

(Please note all images featured in this issue have been used with kind and full express permission of the individual copyright owner)

THE VIRTUAL CHAIRMAN

In March 2020 we held our final face-to-face committee meeting. We did decide to waive the membership fee for the 2020/2021 year but apart from that things were very much on hold. Straightaway we began to make much greater use of our website. Fortunately our new website editor was not only keen but extremely able and as the months passed the website grew more comprehensive. In this she began to be assisted by Interest Group Leaders who designed new items in the shape of articles, quizzes, YouTube items and of course, the ubiquitous Zoom meetings.

The Executive Committee didn't miss a meeting and gradually came to terms with the intricacies of Zoom. As we approached the end of our year we considered the matter of the AGM – an annual legal requirement – and, with a bit of advice from the Third Age Trust, we moved the whole AGM process online. Of course, proper arrangements were made for those without internet access. Thanks to the skill and dedication of a special team, the AGM went without a hitch and indeed, had more attendees than the usual ones!

As we all looked ahead at lockdowns continuing through winter 2020 and spring 2021, more alternatives were produced for our members. The Music Appreciation Group set up a fine selection of monthly watching and listening and the Drama Group moved its annual December performance online for an afternoon concert, ably assisted by the new Cook Off Friday Group who produced (their own) refreshments for the interval. Deprived of our usual Christmas Charity Card shop volunteering, we filled shoe boxes for those unlikely to receive any gifts, and the Activities Sub-Committee joined two local Christmas Tree Festivals. The lockdown seemed to be increasing activity rather than the opposite - as we heard to be the case in many other U3As.

Into Spring 2021 and the website was going very, very well. So many activities, ideas, articles and links to all sorts of interesting places. But while the non-internet members were receiving all the E-News editions and the essential messages, they were missing out on the wealth of content on the website. The result was the 'Offline Pack': a printed selection of items from the website packed with a book and/or magazine. Quite an undertaking but apparently appreciated by the members who received it.

As the year progresses and we look with surprise at half a year that has passed, we are making plans for the summer and for the restarting of our 'traditional style' activities. While our various Interest Groups will restart as and when appropriate, we are looking forward to an official restart – the final move forward – in September. (More details of our first event will follow shortly.) Things have changed during the last 18 months and we will be providing 'chapter and verse' for everyone very soon. Some Groups have lost their leaders, others their meeting place, while others have gained a new place. Some are looking forward to meeting in person, others are rather taken with working on Zoom. There is lots to do to build back what we had in January 2020 and from that point to continue moving forward, as we certainly will.

Throughout this pandemic, an experience that none of us could have dreamed of, the members of the Newmarket U3A committees have continued to work tirelessly for the membership. My thanks to each and everyone for their unstinting hard work, support and constant good humour through it all. *Tim Young, Chairman*

VIRTUAL AGM 2020

Monday 19 October 2020 2.45pm: Tim Young, Chairman, says "Well! That was the shortest AGM I've ever attended!" (15 minutes!!).

This was of course because all the reports and voting normally given verbally to members seated in a tightly packed room at the Annual General Meeting, had already been completed in writing prior to this Zoom meeting, carried out from the comfort and safety of our own sofas at home. The virtual AGM meeting confirmed and announced the results of the members' decisions submitted prior to the meeting; a new Committee was appointed, everything approved and set up for a new term. Boom! Done - or should I say "Zoom!"?

COVID restrictions on meetings in person were the reason it was different this year of course. They meant we had to postpone our AGM usually held in July. But the pandemic went on and on, with no sign of an end, so in the interests of good governance we felt we should not put it off any longer - the Executive Committee went for it - posting/emailing information and voting papers (to make sure everyone was included), concluding with a virtual meeting via Zoom. This was permitted by the Charities Commission, in view of pandemic safety measures, and encouraged by our U3A National Office.

A small working group of committee members (headed by Captain Kath Gifkins, with Lieutenant Rosemary Foreman, Chief Engineer Barry Coles and Navigator Chris Timmins), the "Gang of Four", jumped in and worked for many weeks researching how to do this! We prepared documents to email and paper forms for those without email, we stuffed envelopes and hand delivered. We ventured into the uncharted waters of electronic forms, collated results, we put it all up on our website too - we were entering a brave new world and it worked! Our members were wonderful as usual and responded magnificently.



Current AGM Working Group enjoying their tasks!

Our Secretary Rosemary Foreman received nominations to the Executive Committee, and later received voting on the agenda items. Huzzah! Mission completed. It's over!

But wait. Oh no, it's still not over Same again this year! So see you soon - this year's AGM on 26 July 2021 will be following a similar path, for the same reasons. Watch out for messages via email and post. We need your help to get us through to our new year with a new committee. We can't wait to welcome back our members hopefully to near-normal activities and a "normal" AGM in 2022! I really hope to see you then in person.

Chris Timmins

ROLL OUT THE GREEN CARPET FOR BOWLS

When the first lockdown was announced some 15 months ago, none of us realised how long it would be before we could meet, chat and... oh yes... play a few games of bowls.

Carpet bowls may not be the most athletic of sports but as one of the most sociable it does mean tongues get a workout too.

Some eighteen of the group had already decided to holiday at Potters Leisure Resort in November 2020 to put their skills to the test, but it wasn't to be. At one time it did look as though the ever optimistic six who had decided to continue with the booking may be able to get away and they had even managed some masked and socially distanced small group practice when allowed. Then, just a few days before they were due to go a second lockdown was announced.



A real head-to-head game!



Not to be deterred, bookings have been made by 14 members for November 2021, but it may be very difficult to bowl while keeping our fingers crossed.

Rest assured we will be back in action just as soon as possible and before you know it the time will come to get the Christmas jumpers out of lockdown in time for the traditional festive fun and games!

Kath and Alan Gifkins

A MEMBER'S TALE

In March 2020 the world was turned on its head and we were all shunted into a different way of life due to what became known as COVID. After getting over the shock - well almost - we did the best we could under the circumstances, as the crisis couldn't last for long could it? This was a great opportunity to catch up with some of those boring tasks that I hadn't previously had the time for as U3A events that had kept me busy were now crossed out in the diary. Nevertheless many of our U3A groups were able to embark on Zoom meetings and email communications increased, and this was a great lifesaver for me. I spent a good deal of time on the phone to U3A members and others who did not have internet facilities so the time was passing by fairly quickly. The good weather in the Spring of 2020 gave me such a good opportunity to go for walks and explore unknown territory which also meant meeting people in neighbouring areas that I hadn't spoken to before. For the first time in years I completed many jigsaw puzzles which did become addictive.

After a year had passed, and still being under some restrictions, there didn't appear to be an end in sight. This meant that I would now have to look for something else to do. A telephone conversation with a friend gave me an idea and it was at that point that I decided to write a novel. This challenge has kept me as engrossed as all the novels that I have been reading! I am not intending to publish but it is an escape into fictitious places and into the characters' lives. Oh, dear this has meant that many chores as yet undone are now frowning at me.

Anon Newmarket U3A member 2021

ACTIVITIES SUB-COMMITTEE

Just before Christmas 2020 we had planned to advertise ourselves in a different way. This was to install a Christmas tree dressed with baubles in blue and gold, the U3A colours, in two church festivals. These were Stetchworth and Ashley, Ashley being the bigger affair. Trees can be displayed in another two churches with no further costs than the church fees.

Joanne had crafted decorations during the months prior to this - many thanks to her. With help from the Activities Sub-Committee and leaflets from the Publicity Sub-Committee plus a few hiccups around COVID difficulties, we were able to display two colourful trees with all our Groups represented on each.

Look out too for details of the BBQ which is planned for this 8 September having been postponed from last year and The Thursford Concert was postponed until this November 2021, which is something for us to look forward to. For those who booked and paid last year the tickets are waiting with me.

I stood down from any committee work and can only hope that we can all meet again face to face in the near future. See you at the BBQ. *Niddy Walpole*

SPEAKER MEETINGS IN THE AGE OF ZOOM

Taking over the as Speaker Secretary in the middle of a pandemic has meant the role has been very different from my initial expectations. Niddy, organised as ever, had booked several speakers to entertain us well in to the following year and I anticipated leisurely selecting suitable speakers to talk later in 2021. However I had been warned that not all speakers would be willing or able to present on Zoom. So I duly contacted each speaker to discover that not many wanted to talk to us on Zoom usually because their talks didn't translate so well using this medium. I envisaged having to trawl through websites to find suitable alternatives. To my surprise I have found that speakers were contacting us to offer their talks and what a vast and interesting range of talks are on offer. One of the benefits of Zoom talks is that we have been able to host speakers from all over the country as there are no travel expenses. I have also been able to take advantage of recommendations from a network of U3A groups in the region.

It has been a delight to be introduced to the world of professional speakers and getting the chance to select who we engage has been a bonus. We have had a steady 20 to 25 members linking in each month to Zoom. I look forward to meeting you all in person when we are able to resume meetings at Exning Social Club. I hope we will also welcome back members who have not wanted or not been able to join Zoom. To members who have not yet attended a speaker meeting at all I would say please come along. I think you would be surprised at the range of talks available from the worlds of comedy, music, travel and places of interest to name a few.

Trish Newell

NIDDY'S NOTES

Antiques

Due to COVID we have not met at all since last March but David has already done two Zoom links for us and another in June. He is now living in Peterborough but has agreed to continue our Tesco meetings whenever we are allowed to.

I am looking to stand down from this group and we are looking for two of you to step in please. Please let Stephanie Ellington know if you can help.

Cook Off Friday

This was created for Zoom meetings just before Christmas 2020. We cook the chosen (by me) winner's choice of recipe and have a natter over any problems that might have occurred or give each other quick tips. We regularly have 12-13 people link in. However in July and September we have booked Ashley pavilion to meet up there with our cooked goods. This means we can all physically sample the offerings and decide the winner over a coffee. Do come along.

History

Last Summer the group studied the village of Burwell which we all enjoyed and ended with a lovely printed booklet of our work. All members can access this via a link on the History webpage.

I have become more used to doing my talks by Zoom. Maybe in September we can meet face to face at the Exning Road Club again. I have taken the plunge and am attempting Powerpoint presentations in the future and again attempting to come to terms with having every picture copyright accredited, which has not been easy for me.

During this Lockdown 2021 some of the Group have researched museums of their choice which are within an hour's drive from Newmarket. It's a bit early for small group visits, which had been the aim, but we have, with Chris Timmins' help, a website map with the museums flagged on it. You click on this and read information about the museum. You might fancy small trips out on your own or with your partners? I hope this will help you to decide where to go.

My talks are on a wide variety of topics from shoes to architecture so I hope that you can find, over the year, something that appeals. Please come and join us. Email me and I can send you the Zoom link.(niddy198@gmail.com)

Niddy Walpole

HAVE FUN SCRABBLING AROUND

As soon as is permissible, we cannot wait to be back in action playing the game we love with plentiful help from the dictionary to resolve any queries!!!

We hope that you have remained safe and well during the recent very testing times, and we look forward to seeing you all in person as soon as possible.

Janet Neville & Liz Langley

LOCKDOWN ROCKS!

Tragedies etch themselves forever into our memory. For example, when Kennedy was killed, when the Twin Towers fell, or the Hillsborough Stadium disaster. But last year, as our first lockdown was announced, I can only remember just wanting to get all the ducks of my life into a neat row, and paddle through perhaps a few months of “new normal”, not realising that such inconvenient nuisance signalled perfect terror, as deaths rose exponentially.

NHS staff and keyworkers were under huge pressure, and to acknowledge their sterling efforts we started clapping on our doorsteps. This endeavour of national thanksgiving also had the effect of rekindling a spirit which has been described akin to wartime community resilience.



Folks did clap along my road, and the musician in me decided it could be a hoot to go out before the “clapping hour” and play a short set. I was initially mindful that my dear neighbours might take exception to any amplified musical intrusion. But that was not the case. In fact, they offered positive encouragement and continue to do so even now, when friends visit and we play together on the porch.

Whether musicians operate on a global, national or local stage, they have all forfeited bookings because of the pandemic. In my (exceptionally modest) case, the effect of COVID has prevented me playing live. Consequently, the good causes I support have seen no benefit from my music. Nevertheless, I am delighted to be able to report that now, as summer arrives, I am “moving forward” towards some fresh performing opportunities. Not to mention, finally receiving a desperately needed haircut!

Rock On !
Ian Garmston

SPENDING MY MONEY IN A DIFFERENT WAY

At the start of lockdown, I reckoned I spent about £15 per week in coffee shops, which adds up to about £700 per year. So I set myself a challenge to spend this money in a different way. I started to find out how I could switch to organic products. So far, I have only converted to organic toothpaste, which is made by a small company in the Midlands. This is now being stocked by Holland & Barrett and Boots, and I am sticking with it. As I post a lot of packages, using wine boxes from Waitrose and bubble wrap from fruit and veg, I wondered how I could exchange the sticky tape for a more environmentally friendly one. I have now come across such a product and will switch to that.

As well as the excellent Zoom talks with Newmarket U3A, I spend £1.50 now and again, on the Cambridge Independent paper and from that, I got a link to what talks are on, for the wider community, by Cambridge University. I choose the free ones, and they again are excellent.



Circa 19th century fragment of French cotton

When the first lockdown was lifted, I bought a smartphone. I also invested a couple of hundred pounds in a stationery product, relating to textiles, which I got printed by a Newmarket firm. I wouldn't say it was a commercial success, more a learning curve - but it has come out of my coffee fund.

I joined the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and visited Lackford Lakes and Bradfield Woods - both new to me. I made a first visit to Toppings in Ely and treated myself to an expensive needlework book. I buy regularly from UK auctions from around the country and in some cases have to arrange for a courier to collect for me, and post on to me. Twice I have been ripped off - but I put this down to experience, and again it comes out of my coffee money. I have got to speak with my neighbours more. One neighbour does a Tesco shop every week and she rings and asks me whether I wish to order anything. I just add about 4 items to her list, but it means we have a chat. Another neighbour and her husband have temporarily lost their business - but they came and offered to help me clear a lot of branches cut down from a tree. Her parents are elderly, and I will offer to look in on them when their business is up again and they are away. I do really enjoy a good newspaper, and buy one about 3 times a week.

I have reconnected with my sister who I haven't seen for about 7 years. We speak every few weeks and she lives in Derbyshire. My nephew Zooms me every few months with his young children, and my niece and her family joined in last time, which was lovely. I speak to friends in Newmarket about once a week; some of them have not been out since the start of lockdown. Veronica and I have walked regularly around Newmarket and on the Heath. I reckon I have achieved my challenge of blowing my coffee money!

Jan Davies

MAKING FULL USE OF OUR RESOURCES

The Resources Sub-committee like all the other sub-committees has continued to work throughout the lockdowns. The original group of Grace Crump, Liz Langley, Joan Watkinson, Tim Young and I, were aided and abetted in the last few months by Cheryl Bampton and Di Angus-Smith. We have been delving deep into the world of Gift Aid, reading and re-reading the great number of guidance notes and advice from the Third Age Trust, Charity Commission and HMRC.

Following a poll of the members we found that the many of you supported the idea of our U3A registering to claim Gift Aid on annual subscriptions. This encouraged us to pursue the idea and early this year an application was made to register with HMRC to allow us to do this. All that reading and the extensive discussions, by email, Zoom and in person obviously paid off as much to our amazement the application was swiftly granted without further queries being raised.

This means that in future the income of Newmarket U3A will be supplemented by claiming from HMRC a further 25% of the membership fee paid by eligible members, these claims can be backdated to the date we became a charity. This will go some way to offset the loss of income incurred by the offering of free membership to all existing members for 2020/21. You will notice differences to the membership form in future as we will need your signature to confirm you are willing for us to claim Gift Aid on your subscription. We must express our thanks to Chris Timmins and Barry Coles who have been instrumental in creating the new form.

Latterly we have been attempting to enter the world of online banking in order to make it easier for those of you who wish to pay your subscriptions by bank transfer and also to make payment of any bills by the Treasurer more straightforward. Unfortunately our Bank has not been making this easy with Di spending many hours on the telephone chasing up the applications as well as visiting the bank in person.

We have also been keeping a close watch on the balance in the Bank Accounts, because although we have had very little income in the past year we have had some outgoings, for example the capitation we have to pay to the Third Age Trust for each member, renewal of all the necessary licences and other incidental but not insignificant expenses including printing and Speaker fees. We are happy to say that the Executive Committee have shown their full support for recommendations we have put to them.

Kath Gifkins

WALKING GROUP MAKING STRIDES

Like most things, the Walking Group's activities during the past year have been somewhat curtailed, but members did enjoy two walks last summer. In August, Kath and Alan led a walk at West Stow Country Park – a very hot day and the refreshments afterwards at the open-air café were very welcome. They also led a walk in and around Ely in September.

With the easing of restrictions and some warmer weather, Kath and Alan also led a walk in the Ashley/Cheveley area on 9 June. This proved very popular and most of the walkers then met for lunch at the New Wellington afterwards.



Walking Group wondering how to cross this lake!

As I am no longer able to take part in the walks, we are looking for volunteers to lead walks occasionally; as walkers, you will be familiar with various walks (many in your own locality) and you only need to decide on a starting point and set the group off in the right direction, not necessarily leading from the front but making sure they keep to the right path! Please let Kath or myself know if you would be willing to help.

Rosemary Foreman and Kath Gifkins

NEW GROUP: MEMBERS ON THEIR OWN

I am starting a new group for members who live on their own as there are sometimes occasions when you would perhaps like to go somewhere but have no-one to go with or have no transport to get there. It will not be a group which meets in a room on a certain day each month – the idea is to organise visits to, say, Chippenham Park or Kirtling Towers when they open their gardens, various local museums, the cinema, a boat trip on the river Cam, an afternoon tea, etc. – and, where possible, to share transport. I am planning for our first meeting to be held at The Stable at 11.00 am on 19 August to discuss ideas and draft a programme of activities – all ideas considered! - and look forward to seeing you there. (Note: I've spoken to The Stable and they've taken the booking but it depends, of course, on what the regulations are then.)

Rosemary Foreman

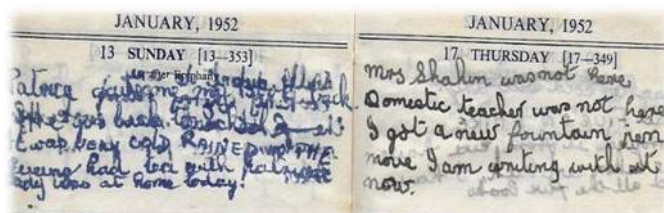
THE DISCOVERY OF HIDDEN TREASURES

Memories from a Teenage Diary: 1952



A tidy up during lockdown led to a fascinating rediscovery for Christine Scott, her *Letts School-girls Diary* for 1952. She was then a 13-year-old girl, living on Parliament Hill, Hampstead, London, right beside Hampstead Heath. Aimed at schoolgirls, the diary was designed to be both useful and educational, for example giving information on colour mixing for art work. Although space was limited, so entries were succinct, that hasn't detracted from their value when looking back at the life and times of a schoolgirl.

The events of the year started well, *"Mother and I drank the New Year in. Stayed awake a long time"*, inky entries for 1st – 15th January are hard to read, so it is with some relief we learn that on 17th January *"I got a new fountain pen...I am writing with it now."* The pen survived intact until 21st November, *"Broke my fountain pen nib, bother..."*, though thankfully the entry for 22nd restores the status quo *"...got a nib for my pen at Doves for 1/3d."*



1952 seems to have had a fairly cold start *"It snowed for the first day, not much, but Eva and I took my sledge on the heath, it went quite well..."*, and came to an equally chilly end *"Weather cold...coldest November in 72 years so I've heard"*, and *"Had a lovely snowball-fight in school, have wet gloves a lot of times."*

Throughout the year Christine recorded her own thoughts and life, together with national events of historical significance.



Pets and animals: Tony her lively dog, frequently features, *"Dropped my breakfast on floor Tony had it."* He celebrates his birthday *"Tony my dog is 9 years old today..."*, but by October things have taken a downward turn *"Didn't go school in afternoon Tony not very well I'm afraid"*, and sadly by the end of '52 *"Mum had Tony put to sleep. I think it's for the best."* Other dogs feature too *"I found a stray dog. Me and Eva took him to the police station. The policeman made me laugh"*, and *"Pip the dog found a baby mouse. It was very small and sweet. I put it on the heath"*, where she also saw *"2 bats and an owl"*.

School life: Fleet Road School (which still exists today), situated above the subterranean river Fleet, is often mentioned, although Chris's opinions varied greatly from gloom, *"School tomorrow, how awful, I wish it wasn't"*, and *"Mrs Moor had us for dancing, a boring hour"*, to achievement *"Had homework, got 7 house points, good old me!"*, and *"I came 5 in the examinations with Anne Millerwood"*; though obviously not as quickly as she thought she deserved, *"Went school, am now monitor of 3C, about time...!"*.

Christine was awarded again, although this was immediately followed by some petty law breaking *"Had prize day. I came 2 and so I got a prize...we went scrumping, got apples, pears"*. School trips were undertaken *"Went to Hampton Court. Really was cold."*, although the teacher's husband appears to have been more of a hindrance than a help, *"Mrs Sharkin's husband came, went in maze. We had to wait half an hour for him."*

Social life: Girlfriends feature regularly, and a trip out on 4th August mentions Eva, *"Went with Eva, Val, Mrs Meyer to Epping Forest"*. Eva has remained Christine's friend to this present day, and now resides in Cambridge. Mentions of friend Sheila usually include references to her television *"Went to watch TV. Smashing. Festival of Remembrance."* Encounters with boys appear but usually not in a positive light *"...went on heath with Sheila. Len pushed me on the grass twice. Beast."*, although men repairing the road of an adjacent street seemed to have caused amusement *"The workmen. O the names I've been called Pinky, Sweetheart, Cheeky. I had to pass them about 8 times."*



Christine was (and still is) an avid reader, with listings for her favourite comic *"Got my 'Mickey Mouse' this morning"*, Enid Blyton books pass between friends, the library is regularly visited *"...we went out to the library. Got smashing books on animals..."*, and a back page records books on loan to friends.

A very big part of Christine's young life was cinema going (at least twice weekly). She wrote to film stars, often with success, *"I have just wrote to Mario Lanza, and Maureen O'Hara..."*, *"Wrote to Richard Todd."* *"Got photo from Mario Lanza."*, *"Got a photo off Bing Crosby."*, *"My collection of film stars is growing."* Christine also recorded her thoughts about the films she saw. Some received a 'Smashing' rating: Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis in *'Sailor Beware'*, Betty Hutton in *'The Greatest Show on Earth'*, *'Ten Tall Men'* starring Burt Lancaster, *'The Quiet Man'* starring Maureen O'Hara, and *"Saw Tony Curtis in 'Son of Ali Baba'. Smashing. He really is handsome. I must write to him."* Only one film was heavily slated, *'Outcast of the Islands'* starring Trevor Howard, of this she writes *"Never seen such a rotten film."*

National events: Although mainly a report of daily local life, two big news stories do get an entry, the death of King George VI on 6th February, *"The King was found died this morning. The radio was not going, neither was the pictures, or TV. Queen Elizabeth is flying back to London"*, and a few days later, *"Saw the King buried. Got good view. Went pictures. Didn't go school."*, and in October *"There has been a terrible train crash. 3 trains crashed into each other."* *"We have heard there is a 100 died and still more under the carriages."* (This worse peacetime rail crash was at Harrow and Wealdstone Station, resulting in the deaths of 112 people.)

The year ends: On the 31st December her entry concludes *"Dear Diary. You are filled up with my happenings of 1952, I will keep this diary for a long time."*, which indeed she has done. 'Dear Diary' will soon celebrate its 70th birthday.

The Diary of Christine Scott
as seen through the eyes of Joanne Garner
All images reproduced with the permission of C. Scott

CAMERA GROUP KNOW JUST HOW TO ZOOM!



**January 21: Pam Melbourne
Down the Stairs**



**February 21: Phil Boggie
Mayflower**



**April 21 : Kath Gifkins
Eltham Palace River Walk**



**May 21: Barry Coles
Sparrowhawk**

When the Government announced the first lockdown there was a short period of head scratching about what the group could do now our congenial meetings were prohibited. Thanks to the digital resourcefulness of Chris Timmins, one of the Camera Group coordinators, we found a way to migrate our monthly photo challenges on line using a system called Padlet. This allows members to upload their entries to a special - invitation only website and then to vote for the winning photo each.

The coordinators also had to re-think the monthly subjects to still allow as many members as possible to join in, whatever lockdown restrictions they needed to live under. Group members have responded positively to the online competition each month submitting their creative interpretations of the monthly theme with a healthy number of high quality photos. However, we recognise this arrangement is no substitute for actually meeting up for a coffee and a chat but until our regular venue (or another) can be opened up safely for our meeting we will carry on with the online competition.



**March 21: Geoff Jones Can-
terbury**

Also in the meantime think about our next exhibition which will probably be in the newly refurbished Newmarket Library. We do not yet know when this will be but it will provide a great opportunity for us to share our enjoyment of photography and publicise our U3A, hoping to entice new members!

We also look forward to our next project, which will be to host the 2021 Christmas card competition! We hope that having given some notice in the early part of the year we will get some cracking winter photos vying to adorn this year's Christmas card.

John Herring, Chris Timmins, Kath Gifkins



**August 20: Gordon Duthie
Northern Sky**



**August 20 : Angela Green
Summer Skies**



**July 20: Barry Coles
Where's My Ball?**



**May 20 : Richard Unwin
Peony**



**October 20: Gordon Duthie
Gate with a View**



**June 20: Gordon Duthie
Two Fuchsias and a Red
Light**



**Nov 20: John Timmins
Liquid Sunshine**



**Dec 20 : Barry Coles
Bee on Marigold**

Subjects were:

2020:

May - Close to Home
June - Red
July - Droplets
Aug - Sky
Oct - Wrought Iron
Nov - Food and Drink
Dec - Up Close

2021:

Jan - View from Above
Feb - Vintage Vehicles
Mar - Street Scene
April - Reflections
May - Garden Wildlife

(Winning pictures displayed)

TROUBLE AT T'MILL?

One morning my mobile phone rang and when I answered it the voice introduced himself and the topic.

"I'm sorry." I replied, *"I can't talk now, I'm at work'."*

The voice the other end rose at least an octave. *"At work?"* it screeched. *"At your age?"*

"Yes." I confirmed with some umbrage. *"I like working, I've always worked."*

"You're mad." Responded the caller. *"I'll call you later."*

I had retired at least twice but through a chain of circumstances, in August 2015 I accepted a little part time job in a windmill. There were several reasons for doing this. Firstly, a bit more money is always welcome; secondly, I have never done a really manual job - teaching is very tiring and does have plenty of physical aspects, but you can't call it 'manual'; and thirdly it gives my week a shape and in times when most facilities are open every day (outside the pandemic), I find it lovely to know when Friday has arrived. Finally, as many of you will know, I am interested in all things mechanical, hence the Wings, Wheels & Water Group in U3A. Foster's Mill is a wonderful example of a 19th century, Victorian mill. Built in the 1860s, it is an excellent example of sophisticated engineering from a pre-electrical age. Like ships, windmills are always referred to as 'she'.



The windmill at Swaffham Prior, Foster's Mill, is one of very few in the country that still produces flour by traditional methods, using horizontal stones. As such the products are quite in demand nationally and indeed of late have been very much in demand.

The job is fairly straight-forward although, as always, what appear to be simple tasks turn out to require skill or at least a knack. Such as putting flour into bags: getting it all into the bag and not on the floor is a knack and folding the tops down and taping them closed is actually quite a skill. (Flour dust and cellotape don't go together.) Initially I worked for 19 hours each month. On those occasions the shop was open and so I sold the flour that I had bagged. There might be six to a dozen customers each session. As the business has grown, so have my hours, up to 50 a month.

You remember at the start of the pandemic there were shortages and one of them was flour? Where it all went, I have no idea, but the world flocked to our door in search of flour. From maybe 20 customers on a Thursday morning, we rose to 160, queued in a single file passed the mill, down the drive, onto the main road for hundreds of yards. We spent hours milling and dressing flour and as fast as we milled it, it vanished into bags and out of the Granary door.

TROUBLE AT T'MILL? Cont'd

There were some lovely conversations with customers, generally males, which went like this:

Me: Good morning. How may I help you?

Customer: I'd like some flour please.

Me: Certainly. You've come to the right place. *(Or other slightly flippant remark.)* What sort would you like?

Customer: Oh. I don't know. What sorts are there?

Me: Well, there's White, Wholemeal, Spelt, Rye, Plain, Self-raising, *(Etc., etc.)*

Customer: I don't know.

Me: What do you want to bake?

Customer: I don't know, I was just told to go out and get some flour and nowhere else has got any.

The conversation would continue until a compromise was reached and the customer left, satisfied that he had fulfilled the task he had been given.

The original panic subsided and settled into a pattern. To start with our weekly arrangements have changed. Volunteers have been drafted in to assist and I have been promoted – if that is the appropriate word – from bagging and selling to milling. Fortunately, we have a set of mill stones driven electrically. Without these we could not have coped. They are somewhat easier to use than the wind driven ones which require the huge sails, weighing a ton each, to be turning in order to produce any flour. That also requires the wind to blow. The system has provided me with much needed exercise. Basically, milling is a 'top-down process which requires carrying the grain up sets of stairs. Creating white flour requires it to be carried up twice. Until recently that meant carrying 25kg sacks up 27 steps. We now have an electric hoist but one must still climb the steps over and over again. Excellent for the fitness I am told!

I can't say that I ever found lockdown boring. There was always plenty to do. Although my regular activities stopped, the search for alternatives began and has continued so I have always been busy. Through it all my weekly shifts in Foster's Mill have continued providing not only a weekly response to events but a seasonal one as well, because the milling business has to be based around the farming year: new harvest, new products. Experiments to see how the flour will behave. Every crop is different: every field is different. Milling is never an automated process. It is affected by weather, temperature, moisture and the settings need constantly checking to ensure the flour is of the quality for which the Priors' Flour from Foster's Mill is becoming famous.

Do try it! We are open from 9.00am to 1.00pm every Thursday, or you can buy it online go to: www.priorsflour.co.uk

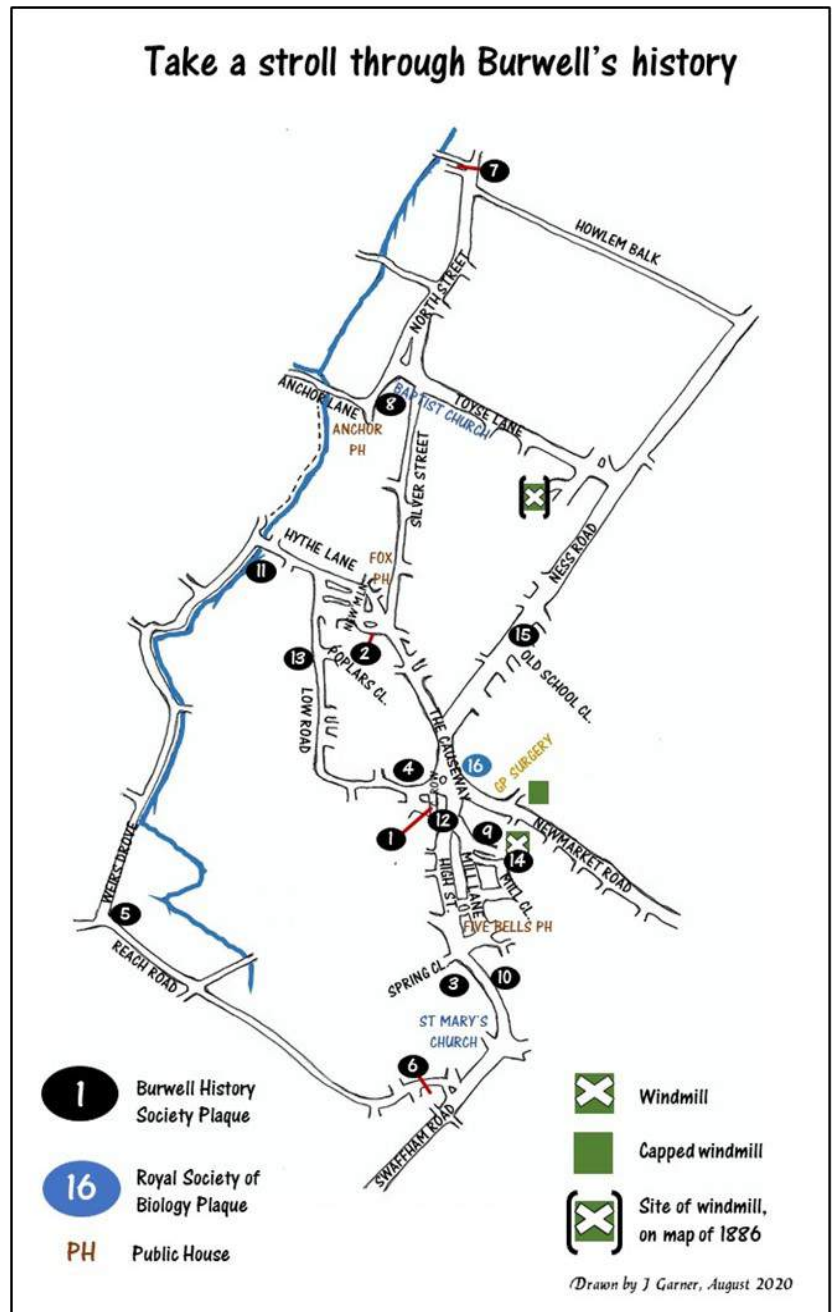
Tim Young

DISCOVERING BURWELL

The ability to get out-and-about between lockdowns gave us the opportunity to participate in the History Group's Burwell project. We had little knowledge of Burwell and were therefore eager to rise to the challenge of finding and documenting the village's historical information plaques.

With Burwell Museum closed due to the pandemic we resorted to starting our hunt via the internet. We soon found a relevant article giving details of 5 plaques, but it wasn't up-to-date. Consequently, we reverted to the traditional method of walking the streets, armed with a camera and notebook, and we eventually found 16.

We discovered Burwell's varied history and the lovely weather helped us enjoy views across the fens. Easing of lockdown allowed us to enjoy a well-earned drink outside the Anchor. Our map shows the plaque locations. Perhaps you would like to use it to get out again as we emerge from lockdown number 3. To find out more please see the History Group page on the U3A website.



- | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Barn fire | 5. The sheep wash | 9. Anglo-Saxon cemetery | 13. Edward Fitzball |
| 2. Village lock up | 6. Burwell station | 10. St Andrew's church | 14. Stevens' Mill |
| 3. Stocks Green | 7. Judy's Hole | 11. Common Hythe | 15. WWII searchlights |
| 4. Pound Hill | 8. Jerusalem Gardens | 12. Bus depot | 16. Marjory Stephenson |

Joanne and Steve Garner

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

Over the month of March you may have spotted an ageing figure clad in a bright yellow jacket and thermal cycling gear wheezing along the back lanes and by roads of the Newmarket area (probably being trailed by a flock of optimistic vultures). Well folks that was me doing my March 300 Mile challenge for Cancer Research UK. A challenge that I achieved in some style on my birthday and seven days ahead of schedule riding into Tour de France type celebrations into the Champs de Falmouth Avenue.

Now, the question that a lot of you may be asking is Why on earth did you do it? A question I have to say I quite frequently asked of myself especially when the wrong side of a long uphill stretch before I could get back home. Whatever you do, please do not believe any of those old fables about Suffolk being essentially a flat county: I never knew there were so many peaks at least the size of the Alps in this area! As the picture shows I looked pretty confident when I set out—there are very few of the return! The simple answer to the aforementioned question was that I needed to feel I was doing something different and hopefully helping others and I chanced upon the Cancer Research UK March 300 mile cycle challenge. As it meant a great opportunity to get out of the house, some exercise and having been lulled into a false sense of belief by pretty benign February weather conditions; felt that I could achieve it after being on an indoor cycle trainer during the cold winter weather; and also because I have great personal reasons to be very grateful to CRUK.



As you'll no doubt be aware, mild late February temperatures changed on 1 March to biting cold March weather. I am so glad I invested in thermal cycling gear because believe me I really needed it and if it wasn't cold it was wet. I did not venture out in the howling gales although on one occasion, when I believed it was all quite calm, I went up Well Bottom to Kentford at a very rapid rate and yet when I turned into Station Road heading towards Kennett almost came to a full top as the wind was against me. I would also advise anyone planning to cycle along the Snailwell Road and on to Chippenham

to check wind direction as that is one of the most effective wind tunnels I have been in (of course invariably with the wind blowing in the wrong direction!).



Sadly La Hogue was never open during the ride so I did not get chance to slip in for a slice of cake and a coffee so a slightly wistful picture I'm afraid. Also I couldn't help but notice all the great village signs welcoming you in. Some are very clever designs but I was a man on a mission so no pictures of those I'm afraid.

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME cont'd

The 300 miles took me through some beautiful Suffolk and Cambridgeshire villages and I've taken note of some very interesting pubs and cake shops on the way. Sadly none open of course. I rode different routes and reversed the directions too. If you want a flat ride on a bicycle then definitely stick to Exning and Burwell side of Newmarket and, if you want a challenge or two, aim towards the Stetchworth side and beyond.

The ride is complete and I managed to raise £1250 for a very worthwhile cause and thanks so much to members who contributed to the fundraising or who just wished me well on the Newmarket U3A Facebook page. It wasn't pretty but the end results made the aches and pains worthwhile and easier to bear. Next year maybe the challenge of climbing the hill to Woodditton without an oxygen mask but with full Gurkha support team? Would I do it again? Probably, although I'll enjoy the warmer summer weather first.

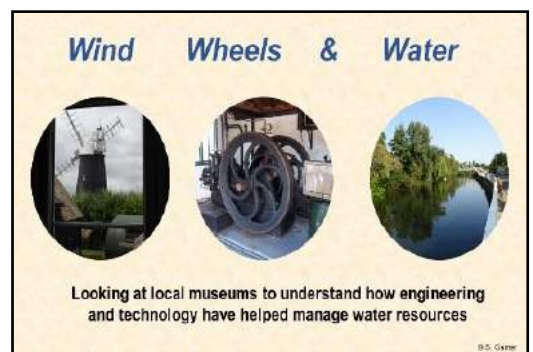
Nigel Day

WINGS, WHEELS & WATER

Throughout the pandemic the WWW Group has not only continued to run, but has also continued its evolution to encompass a wider range of subjects and greater individual participation. We moved from live meetings to placing quizzes and more articles on our website page, and then to Zoom meetings. The attendance has remained steady, slightly below the normal, but this can be accounted for by members not on the internet. These members were provided with hard copies of the articles from the website, which in turn stimulated discussion and introduced new topics.

This Interest Group reflects absolutely the tenets of the U3A and the principles set out when it was established 40 years ago. Founded by one individual, the group built up a regular attendance of between 20 and 30 members for each monthly face-to-face meeting. From time to time they were set, voluntary, 'homework tasks' and from this another member became a regular contributor. Through his contacts he built up connections with a U3A group in Scotland. Shortly afterwards another member volunteered to lead a session and created a contact with a group in Wales.

This has meant that the variety of subjects discussed has increased, going beyond a general theme of 'machines and transport', to including things like extraordinary wartime engineering feats, and technological innovations for handling water resources in the Newmarket area. As a result, during the pandemic, we have become a trio of presenters, providing the Group with a wide range of topics and of styles of presentation. This has kept the group enthusiastic and lively during the dark days of lockdown. We already have one new guest presenter booked for the next U3A year and look forward to others in the time ahead, allowing us to broaden our outlook and the range of topics we examine.



Tim Young and Steve Garner

NEWMARKET U3A SPREADS ITS WINGS

Members often use personal visits to shows, exhibitions, and museums to pursue their interests which they subsequently chat about with their U3A colleagues, or even give talks. The COVID pandemic has obviously prevented such outings, but members have found other ways to broaden their knowledge, share their interests, make new friends, and highlight Newmarket U3A's activities.

Three members of the Wings, Wheels and Water (WWW) Group have used the 'free time' forced upon them by periods of lockdown to use on-line facilities to further pursue their interests, establish new collaborations, and publicise our U3A.

Steve Garner had fond memories of a holiday in Orkney. Although planned to experience the archaeology and wildlife, perhaps the most vivid memory of the holiday was visiting a life-size reconstruction of a submarine, *HMS Otter*, inside a local resident's house. Steve discussed this with the WWW Group just prior to the first lockdown.



Standing Stones of Stenness, Orkney

Being confined to home by the COVID restrictions Steve decided to learn more about Orkney and re-contacted Tim Wright, the coordinator of a photography group in Orkney U3A. Tim was able to provide Steve with over 40 photographs, and personal anecdotes that enabled Steve to produce talks on Scapa Flow and military aviation in Orkney. Steve learned that like himself, Tim had spent a career in the NHS and they were able to share stories. Furthermore, thoughts about their activities before COVID and keeping busy during lockdown combined with a video provided by Tim suggest that like Steve, Tim has an interest in the music of Chuck Berry! Our members will have to wait until the next face-to-face WWW Group meeting to see and hear about this mutual interest! Overall, Steve felt that the restrictions brought by the pandemic had opened up a new world, where he learned about how other U3A organisations work, and was able to spread the word about Newmarket, all done by email.

Pre-lockdown, after a request was put out by Tim Young to help with the WWW Group, David Soanes volunteered to write an article. David had various ideas, but the main one was driven by remembering something about what had happened in wartime in the small town of Conwy, North Wales, where he lived in the early 1940s.

When the COVID restrictions came in March 2020 it led David to look for something to take up the spare time that was available. David had never had to write speeches, yes, he had spoken at meetings and even chaired them, but to have to prepare something to interest an audience, however small, was a new challenge. With the encouragement from his wife Pam, he started on a new adventure. The information he found using the internet and search engines was mindboggling. His research taught him a lot about a local Welsh consulting engineer whose tenacity and perseverance led to construction and use of Mulberry Harbours, one of the most extraordinary wartime feats.

NEWMARKET U3A SPREADS ITS WINGS cont'd

From his family home in Deganwy the engineer had the most wonderful views across the water, towards Conwy. A picture of Conwy, its castle and the harbour, as seen from David's own bedroom window is included in this article.



Conwy

David's talk on Zoom was quite scary, as talking via video was a new concept, but he overcame the nerves to give, what was considered by the audience to be a good performance. Sadly, Pam had died before he could give the talk. He felt that she would have been proud of the presentation, and she had contributed to the writing of the article and edited the full story. Such was the success of the talk that David is repeating it for Sawston U3A, and next Spring he is booked to travel to North Wales to give the same talk to the Deganwy History Group. It was an article on their website that led him to produce this initial talk.

The writing led David to discover and use further information for another presentation on war time underwater pipelines and the moving of fuel around the country; a national infrastructure system which is still used today. David is now preparing the way for two more talks and the research is just as fascinating. David says 'thank you Newmarket U3A for the opportunity to explore'.

Meanwhile Tim Young, having formed the WWW Group in 2015 and delivered monthly talks in person, decided to embrace on-line technologies like Facebook and Zoom as alternative ways of both spreading the Newmarket Group's influence, and delivering his talks to a wider audience.

Tim's lively comments on Facebook about the roles of female pilots during WWII led to him being invited to give his presentation 'Ladies of the Air' to the West Lakes U3A in Cumbria. After subsequently answering the question 'Do you have any other topics,' Tim received bookings to talk to other groups from across England, Scotland and Wales, covering subjects ranging from 'Agricultural Revolutions' to 'Hovercraft'. It was however, by no means a one-way traffic of information exchange, as Tim learned much from the 'local knowledge' of his new audiences.

'It was a wonderful experience,' said Tim, 'I was constantly broadening my knowledge and understanding of my topics, thanks to the members of the various groups. That of course is what U3A is all about'.

Now, although demand for Zoom talks in the UK is reducing as the summer months approach, a new challenge has emerged, with the possibility of presenting to a group in Sydney, Australia being discussed. It seems like Tim has highlighted the potential for providing talks to any group, anywhere in the world. Now that's an idea worth exploring!

S Garner, D Soanes, and T Young

DRAMA GROUP

December 2019 the Drama Group presented its annual Christmas performance, a collection of comedy items designed to amuse and promote the seasonal festivities. As the new year began we started on a new programme, destined perhaps for U3A DAY or for a performance later in the year. We gathered a series of items with an animal based theme, 'Toad of Toad Hall', Winnie the Pooh and TS Elliot's 'Cats'. We held two rehearsals in our regular venue, Tesco Community Space, before suddenly everything was stoppedCOVID!

Everyone had discovered Zoom and, like most groups we began to use it for our monthly rehearsals but it was difficult!. The workings of electronics meant that conversation and dialogue, was difficult, gaps appeared where they weren't supposed to be and the view switched from person to person according to the sounds being produced. A cough, the scrape of a chair or perhaps, a car door slamming would divert the picture and divorce it from the sound.

We struggled on and then, wonderfully, we were allowed to meet outside in groups of six. We met: firstly on Lambton Field – a rather barren, unprepossessing acting space; and then in one of our member's lovely garden – just the place for Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends.



Drama Group in action and in the sunshine

It didn't last of course, soon we were locked down again and it was back to Zoom. To try to make the most of the medium we tried some radio plays. Finding the right material was rather difficult but we did find two BBC New Writer's pieces to make a start on. More problems! Radio plays rely heavily on sound effects to bring the action to life. Zoom doesn't allow you to have layers of sound – only one at a time.

So it was back to the scripts inspired by animals, and some good work followed but it still isn't easy. For some Zoom is ideal: no going out, comfortable seats, refreshments as required. For others it is hard, resulting in stilted speech and the inevitable glitches as the electronics have hiccups. We have a little while to make up our minds. Meanwhile we are looking for some plays. A whole play, not the excerpts that we have been doing up to now. A short play or two, where the cast can really develop the characters and the situations. There is much to look forward to – together with some new members, please.

Tim Young

MY LOCKDOWN ACTIVITIES

I have read just over 50 books, completed 2 x 1000 and 2 x 500 piece jigsaw puzzles in between extensive gardening and housework.

This is quite tame to what my eldest daughter has done. To add to her University degree and MA degree she studied for a PhD which she obtained with no trouble, so she can add Dr. to her list of awards: BSc (Hons), MBA (Distinction), MA and Member of Chartered Accounts. I'm so proud of her I had to mention her success.

My husband John has just about finished making another tall pendulum clock (which is not quite a grandfather clock) like the one in the picture.

Rita Macro



Tall Pendulum Clock

DISCUSSION GROUP

When the Government announced the first lock-down and that our meetings would be prohibited we reluctantly took the decision to suspend the Discussion Group.

A significant proportion of our regular attendees did not have on-line access so the 'Zoom option' was not felt appropriate. We await news of when our former venue at Newmarket Day Centre may be able to welcome the Group back and look forward to resuming our meetings when that time comes.

Ann Lay and John Herring

GARDEN GROUP BLOOM!

During the past year many of our green fingered friends have had more time than ever to lavish attention on their plots. Members have been encouraged to take a wander around their own garden at the beginning of each month, note plants in flower, take pictures and post them on Facebook.

We tried a few meetings via Zoom, not always a success, notably when Kath tried screen sharing pictures of some of the gardens the group has visited over the years. Why is it that everything goes perfectly in rehearsal but crashes and burns when the big day comes?

We chatted 'over the virtual garden fence' and took a poll of our members asking what they hated and loved in their garden. We also had a very interesting talk via Zoom from a speaker whom we intend to try to book for a physical meeting next year.

Two plant sales have been held, one on a very cold, blustery, wet afternoon last October and another on a rather brighter day this May. Thanks to the generosity of those who both brought plants and bought these managed to raise a total of £110 which will be used to pay for speakers.



Bill and Ben re-emerge after lockdown

Looking forward we have managed to book one of our favourite speakers, Andrew Sankey, to give three talks next year. These will be longer than usual and give the opportunity for him to go into greater depth. His subjects will be: Ellen Willmott of Warley Place, a notable gardener of her day who experimented with many plants, Miss Willmott's ghost being named after her. Then he will speak on the plants featuring in two of Shakespeare's plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *A Winter's Tale*, which give a fascinating insight into Elizabethan plants and their uses. His trilogy will end

with a talk which tackles the unusual features which have cropped up in gardens from Roman times until the Victorian age. Needless to say we can't wait to start making our visits to gardens near and far once again.

Kath Gifkins & Rosemary Foreman

SOME POETIC LICENCE !

Can it really be, its well over a year
Since we were consumed by such abject fear
That even our loved ones must not come near
For fear that a virus might shortly appear

We shut all the doors and stayed close to our homes
The pundits instructed 'make use of your phones'
'You should take daily exercise' the government decreed
'Go to shops fully masked if there's items you need'.

But that was all then and we've coped every day
Now new vaccines have altered the scene, and the way
we can easier breathe now restrictions receding
but beware! as the virus mutates and keeps breeding

There's a version named Alpha which used to be Kent
Beta came from South Africa, Gamma, Brazil kindly sent
Now India's the latest which WHO labels Delta
Let's hope we stop there and the virus won't alter.

(If we get to Omega we're really in trouble
And the number of vaccines we need more than double)
The goal posts keep shifting but so far the vaccine,
Allows families to visit and loved ones be seen.

For us double jabbers the protection's OK
Keep fingers and toes crossed to keep it that way
A little more patience is all that's required.
We're quite used to that since we're mostly retired.

The government says there's a boom on the way
And freedom will come very soon, so they say
We can then get together and share the same room.
As soon as allowed our group meetings resume.

So U3A members you must never despair,
We're very nearly, well, almost very nearly, there !!

Anon Newmarket U3A member 2021

AND FINALLY .. OUR FIRST 2021 OPEN EVENT

Our eager members have already started moving forward with an alternative summer event Open Day featuring 14 gardens. Visitors were able to take a look at some members' wonderful garden displays. Here are some pictures of some of the gardens on display and many thanks to all who opened up for 'public viewing' and also to the other members who came along to take a look.



Rosemary Foreman - Cheveley



Ann Cant - Isleham



Annemary Robinson - Cheveley



Kath Gifkins—Newmarket



Debbie Garrity - Ashley



Eve Graham—Isleham

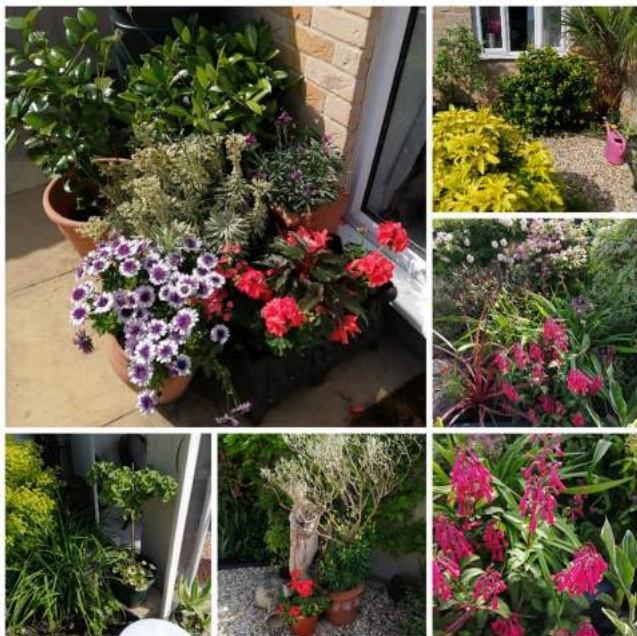
AND FINALLY .. OUR FIRST 2021 OPEN EVENT



Glenda Preece—Isleham



Patricia Lovett—Exning



Niddy Walpole—Soham



Pam Melbourne Exning

THANKS FROM ALL THE PUBLICITY TEAM