



Oswestry U3A News

September 2020

Message from the Chair

Hello Everyone,

Time has flown since I was writing to you in our first newsletter and I am pleased that so many of you have enjoyed the photographs and reports on people's activities.

Restrictions, regulations and information around Coronavirus seem to change from day to day and I'm sure many of you are as confused as I as to what we may do now; but we all know socially distancing, hand washing regularly and using face protection where necessary have become part of our daily lives and we are starting to see a new way of being part of a community.

Lockdown has eased. I hope people are finding ways of meeting up safely and those of you who have been shielding now feel safe to extend your contacts with people. As for meeting in large groups such as our Tuesday weekly mornings, this still seems a long way away. I hope that Groups such as the Monday Walkers and the Bird-watching group, which are now up and running again obviously outside, will encourage others to look at ways of opening up again.

One idea that was originally mooted by Liz, is to try a Book Swap. Many of you have found reading during lockdown a great comfort and the book trolley at U3A was always popular. We are having two Wednesday morning sessions, September 9th and 23rd, 10am to 12 noon in the Cambrian Room at the Memorial Hall for people to return books and choose others. Social distancing and hand sanitizing will be in place and returned books will be quarantined. Please bring a face covering. If this is a success, we will hope to make it a regular event. More details are included in this newsletter.

Modern technology has been a great help to many people, including your Committee. We have finally managed to hold a meeting over the internet (on Zoom)! Over the summer we have been looking at ways of holding our AGM in November as normal and we find it can be done by email/ postal voting and election.



Committee at the recent Zoom meeting.

As you know from previous Business Meetings we are looking for new members for Officer posts due to retirement or incumbents having come to the end of their mandatory years. We will need four Committee Members, including a new **Chair** and **Programme Secretary**. We also have room to co-opt two others. We desperately need people to volunteer, to be proposed and elected. If this matter is not resolved, you will lose your U3A! This would be so sad. To see the great friendships built up and the enjoyment from talks and get together being lost would be a disaster. **Your U3A needs you!** Don't worry, you will be given lots of support in any Committee role. With this newsletter you will find a form to let us know if you would be interested and a brief outline of what being on Committee entails.

We are looking to hold the AGM towards the end of November.

I hope you enjoy this second newsletter in colour. Those online see the colour version and it was felt that the hard copies must reflect this too. We have had some wonderful pictures of gardens, butterflies and close ups of lovely flowers, so I hope you enjoy them too.

I have been delighted on my walks around town that I have seen quite a few of you, it has been so pleasant to chat and hear that many of you are able now to join up with families and friends in "bubbles" and outside gatherings,

My best wishes to you all. I still miss our Tuesday mornings together but hope that we will soon see a lessening of the infection rate and the development of a vaccine so that one day we can return to some form of normality.

Marjorie



We have always known that our Committee Members are resourceful. None more so than John, a member of the Treasury Team, who likes taking wildlife photos in exotic places. During lockdown he still managed to find this *jaguar in the long grass waiting to pounce!*

Sally had only lived in Oswestry a year when the virus started to show its ugly head. Throughout lockdown she walked every day, occasionally with her neighbour or her daughter, Liz, socially distanced of course, and found paths and walks locally that, up to then, she didn't know existed. Like many of us she finds being outdoors good for well being. She got to know her neighbours better through shared VE day celebrations, clapping for carers on Thursday evenings and plying them with homemade Bara Briths.

Although Sally still walks, keeps up with her neighbours and makes her Bara Briths, the easing of lockdown has meant that she has been able to meet up with friends. She now meets her daughter at least once a week and has even been out for a couple of meals. This week she resumes her volunteering at the hospital - another glimmer of 'normality' !

She has also become involved with the Attfield Theatre. She says, *"although I don't normally do acting, preferring to remain on 'backstage duties', somehow I seem to have been drawn into some of the short pieces now being performed and videoed in a large farm barn in the middle of nowhere and shown on the theatre web site!"* (attfieldtheatre.co.uk)

She goes on to say, *"I think it will take time to get back into any sort of 'normal' life, indeed if we do, but hopefully we will be able to resume our Tuesday morning U3A meetings some time in the future and we will forget the cancelled meetings, holidays, parties that had been planned and disappointing postponements of social engagements but remember those families who have lost loved ones and those people facing a long recovery from Covid 19. Hopefully will learn a lesson as a human race but I have my doubts".*



Our very own own Boy Racer

You may have seen **Alan** riding around Ellesmere recently on his new mobility scooter.

Alan had to give up driving about two years ago. Although he is fortunate that his wife is still driving, he felt that he wanted to get out and about more in his local area – hence the scooter. He feels that it has given him the opportunity to maintain a sense of freedom and independence.

Now, Alan being Alan, you would expect him to look into his new mode of transport very carefully and be happy to share his research with others. He has produced an informative sheet giving tips for prospective purchasers of scooters which is available to OU3A members and is willing to talk things through. Alan is happy to stop for a chat when he is out and about in Ellesmere or you could use the contacts on the back page to get hold of the information sheet or be put in touch.



Our members are of course always willing to help out - so many of us did our bit by "Eating out to Help Out." The scheme finished on August 31st but the memories (and maybe the extra inches on the waistline) will linger.

It was a tough job but someone had to do it!



Photo Pam

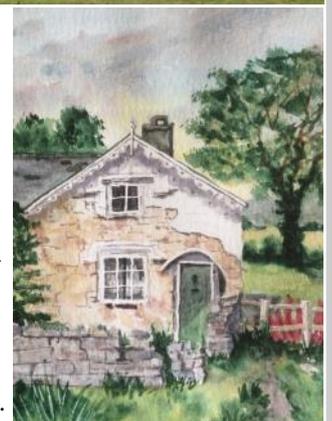
When at last the restrictions were eased, recalling A E Housman's rhyme, 'Clunton and Clunbury. Clungunford and Clun, Are the quietest places Under the Sun', **Linda** packed a picnic and set off with husband and dog to explore Clun Castle. This is her account:



"We had not been before. The sun was shining and we found Clun to be as beautiful a location as you could wish to find. People were enjoying the cafes and picnic benches, and the few who had climbed up to the Castle ruins were enjoying picnics and snacks on the grass. It was lovely at the top, the scenery was beautiful, a bit of a climb but well worth the effort. I loved this little cottage which sits near the pack horse bridge in the centre of Clun, sadly it is derelict, but could be a very pretty home.

We motored towards Newtown and pulled into a gateway overlooking the Castle for our packed lunch.

Further along the route towards Newtown, we found a car park for the Kerry Ridgeway walk. This ancient path is 15 miles long, stretching from Cider House Farm, near the village of Kerry, to Bishops Castle. It holds a long tradition as a trade and drovers' route from Wales to the lowland English markets. Overlooking Wales on the one side and England on the other, it never dips below 1000 ft above sea level, resulting in remarkable views in all directions. We took a stroll along the path with the dog. The views are outstanding and we will return to do more of this path. I would highly recommend this day out."



At home Linda produced this brilliant watercolour of the cottage.

During lockdown **Richard** made the most of his time walking in his local patch which starts from the Plane Table on Llanymynech Hill to Llyncllys, an area of about three miles by half a mile. He explored every aspect of this historic hill - caves, quarries, and workings etc. armed with his iPad to take picture of flowers, plants and views. These he shared on Facebook. He feels his knowledge of wild flowers and history has improved immensely and appreciates the assistance from Marjorie Robinson with plant identification when needed.



Honesty



Montgomery Canal

Founder member, **Marion**, used the opportunity of lockdown to practice her piano playing. Although she has had her piano for many years, she has not previously found much time to practice. Marion, who originally set up the Tuesday Art Group, has also continued with her drawing and painting and has recently been adopted by a cat.



Mary



PaintedLady

Glenda



Jim and Sandra



Eileen

We've done lots of gardening with stunning results! Thanks to everyone who sent in photos. Here is a small selection. Sorry I couldn't fit them all in - we really needed a garden supplement!



Rose



Tortoiseshell

Julie



Marjorie



Wendy



Anita and Mike



Vivienne and Alan watched a pair of wood pigeons bringing twigs to a low branch on their willow, six feet above the ground. Vivienne recalls, "I needed shade on sunny days, so sat under their branch. They sat on a very flimsy nest, and flew to and fro without worrying about us chatting, mowing and gardening nearby. Alan felt the two warm eggs and photographed the bird on the nest, only a foot away from her. She did not worry or move. After they hatched, we were able to photograph the chicks sitting on a branch. They were large! After two days they flew into the silver birch nearby, and roosted there with the parent bird. Later, Alan was walking across the garden and one flew down, brushing his hair with its breast and wings. Three days later, the big chicks flew into the open conservatory. One flew out quickly. Alan picked up the other. It remained calm and flew off safely. We have so enjoyed watching this family, and wonder if they will return to us in 2021."

Travel Group

We have had to cancel the trip to Hay on Wye, but hope to do this in June 2021.

The 5 day Trip to the the Tenby area was also cancelled - originally planned for first week in September. Likewise the Mystery Trip in September has been cancelled.

The Autumn Lunch at Llangollen in early

November is currently on hold, we are likely to make a decision on this in mid September.

The Xmas trip to Chatsworth in late November is still in limbo. We are currently awaiting information from Chatsworth, as to the Xmas festival going ahead. **Jim**

Christine reports that the **Birdwatching Group** hopes to meet up on 2nd September when members will take their binoculars to the Racecourse.

Nature Group

A new group has been formed to share sightings of British flora and fauna via email. Members have spotted some very interesting and beautiful things over the last few weeks.

(Photos Christine)

Walking Group

First Walk after Lockdown 20/07/20

The last time we had met was in March in a very surreal atmosphere; we were approaching Lockdown due to Covid-19 and left each other saying- mock jovially "Happy Christmas"! Gwef and Kath had decided to step down as Group Leaders just before then so Julie, Jill and myself stepped into some very wonderful shoes.

More recently after tentative discussions, risk assessments completed and hand gel in rucksacks we were reunited today. A lovely sight to behold - 14 happy faces met by The Scout Hut in Oswestry to do a familiar and now an even more special circular walk from Pen y Lan Lane via Woodhill.

The weather was kind but hearing the familiar chatter was even more uplifting

despite the slight awkwardness of having to adhere to Social Distancing. Everyone had stories to tell of how they had coped, we shared lots of similar experiences and all expressed gratitude to the location in which we are fortunate enough to dwell. At "banana break" Christine took this fabulous photo of us all.

The New Normal? Well at the least it was a very good start.

Di



Brimstone

Llyncllys



Common Blue

Llyncllys



Slow worm

Fyll Penarth

Lynne, the leader of Book Reading Group 2, reports that her husband Brian, also a member of OU3A until last year, has been busy writing books. He started his first book, 'Fighting for Survival', in September 2018. Set in Shropshire, it is about a global pandemic! He has now published two further books in the series. *Fighting for Survival* achieved number one best seller in the Amazon Kindle free books list and Brian is proud that he now has international readers.

Lynne says, "Yes, it is about a virus killing off a large portion of the world's population but it is not depressing as it is about their innovation and ability to survive in a new world order without a lot of the things we currently take for granted. None of those horrible mummies and rabid dogs which you get in some survivalist stories but it does have some life changing moments". Further details and of course the free book are available on the Amazon website.

Lynne hopes that her Reading Group will be able to restart on the 24th September.

Contact **Liz** if you would like to be involved with the Nature Group.



At last - It's back!

The **book trolley** will be putting in an appearance on September 9th and 23rd September from 10.00 to 12.00 in the Cambrian Room at the Memorial Hall. Note that these are **Wednesdays** when the Hall is open for the Country Market.

This will be an opportunity for you exchange those books you've been stockpiling over Lockdown and maybe meet up with a friend to take over the road for coffee. To ensure everyone's safety we need to pay strict attention to social distancing so only a limited number will be allowed in the room at any time. We will provide hand sanitizer but please bring your own face covering.

Look forward to seeing you!

Contact us

OU3A Website: <https://u3asites.org.uk/oswestry/welcome>