

# RICHMOND-upon-THAMES



**University of the Third Age**

[www.u3asites.org.uk/richmond-on-thames](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/richmond-on-thames)



**Summer Newsletter 2020, Volume 55**

## Contents for this newsletter

Topic	Page
COMMITTEE & OFFICERS	3
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT	4
GROUP NEWS	5
THE LIFE ENHANCING GROUP	6
NORDIC WALKING	7
ITALIAN IMPROVERS	8
CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS	9
CYCLING GROUP	10
WALKING OUT OF LOCKDOWN	12
MOOCS	13
THE NOTICEBOARD	14
GUILTY	16
AND SUDDENLY THERE WAS SILENCE	18
CHRISTMAS 1943	20
READING THE METER	21
ISOLATION	24
ONE MORE LIMERICK	26
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	26
APPRECIATION	27

# **RICHMOND UPON THAMES U3A COMMITTEE & OFFICERS**

## **OFFICERS:**

**President:** Stephen Jakobi  
**Chairman:** Chris Hack  
**Vice Chair:** Libby Barton  
**Secretary / Editor:** Sue Wood  
**Treasurer:** John Cardwell

## **MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE:**

**Membership Secretary:** David Wood

**Groups' Co-ordinator:** Norma Cook

### **Committee members:**

Peggy Roe  
Herbert Wirth  
Chris Barclay  
Bob Litherland

## **SECTION LEADERS:**

**Art, Science & Music:** Graham Shortell

**Languages:** Norma Cook

**Literature, Drama, Philosophy & History:**

Carole Fletcher

**Recreation:** Tricia Abrahamsen

# **EVEN THE COMMITTEE GOT SOME WRONG**

How did you do? The answers to the photo competition in the last newsletter are: (drum roll and breathless pause please)

- (a) Chris Barclay
- (b) Peggy Roe
- (c) Chris Hack
- (d) Norma Cook
- (e) Sue Wood

I'd love to hear how you got on.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

I hope you are all keeping well and enjoying the further relaxation in the lockdown rules. If you read my e-mail regarding the future for U3A Richmond, you will be familiar with much of what follows, but it bears repeating. I want to let you know that I am thinking of re-starting my courses at ETNA in September on the grounds that schools will be returning so why shouldn't we. This may also apply to our monthly meetings. After all we can now go to the cinema, although not the live arts. Clarendon Hall seems optimistic that we may be able to resume our monthly meetings, while being compliant with Government restrictions, albeit without refreshments.

Of course, I realise that many of you may be exercising extreme caution, or be reluctant to travel on public transport, and therefore may not wish to risk travelling or gathering. Nevertheless, for those who feel Groups could run safely in line with Government guidelines – whatever they may be by September – you may want

to ask yourself if you are up for physical meetings again. However, it is currently unclear if government rules would allow us to do so, because, of course, we would be multiple households; this would particularly apply to those who run their courses at home. Meetings in gardens can allow up to 6 people to gather. Some may wish to offer 'Simply Social' meetings in their gardens over the summer?

In the meantime, we are very grateful to those who have kept their groups going via Zoom or other means, and I accept that many may well wish to continue with their Zoom meetings.

I want to be clear that there will never be any pressure either on Group Leaders or individual members to do, or attend anything. The choice will always be yours.

Stay safe and keep well.

**Chris Hack, [chack@onetel.com](mailto:chack@onetel.com), Chairman.**

## **GROUP NEWS**

There is plenty of information elsewhere in this newsletter about how groups are operating, either virtually or following social distancing rules, which I am sure you will all find interesting. It is a tribute to our Group Leaders that 49 groups at the last count are active. I know there are others who have been shy about letting us know what they are doing and I have had to apologise to a few of you who let me know you were functioning and I failed to write it down - fatal at our age! If you want to check who is doing what and if your group is on the list, then go to the website which we are endeavouring to keep up-to-date.

While you are there, if you have not already done so, click on the Beacon tab, where you will find the Beacon Calendar which gives you the latest information about which groups are running, when, where and what they are doing. An enormous thank-you must be given to all the group leaders who have logged on, filled in the members in their group lists and added their schedules. I know how hard they have worked but I can assure them that from now on, it will be a benefit to them, and all the members, for the successful organisation of their groups.

I hear that many groups are planning to start again normally in the near future which is excellent news but of course this has to be a personal decision based on your own circumstances and your own risk assessment. I hope that the next time I am writing my article for the newsletter, there will be positive information for you all.

Meanwhile, stay safe and in touch with each other.

**Norma Cook, Group Coordinator, [norma.beagle@gmail.com](mailto:norma.beagle@gmail.com)**

## **THE LIFE ENHANCING GROUP**

Covid-19 has had a devastating effect on many elderly people. All I can say is, thank Goodness for U3A!!!

When the word came from up high that we could no longer meet in the flesh, I put out the suggestion of meeting online and somebody suggested Zoom. I also suggested we meet weekly, a suggestion which was accepted with enthusiasm and relief.

However, the idea of 'zooming' was greeted with more trepidation than enthusiasm. We're lucky to have two members who were

comfortable with the technology. It took 3 meetings before all of us were able to access it.

Now we're (almost) old hands at it though the cry of "We can't see you!" or "We can see you, but we can't hear you!" still erupts from time to time. But, apart from that, it has proven to be a life-saver!

**Sue Plumtree.**

## NORDIC WALKING

The Nordic walking group started on a dry, cold Thursday morning in the middle of January 2020 in Bushy Park. 18 members arrived with their poles and over the next 9 weeks we walked, learning the skills and making new friends. We started with 24 members on the register and suddenly we had to stop because of the Covid 19 virus, not allowing us to meet in groups.



At the beginning of June, we were allowed to meet up with 6 people outside, so suddenly I was having members asking me when we were going to start. Due to the number of members, I

decided I would arrange three meetings a week, allowing 4 members to come, so we had 5 people, including me.

Amazingly most of the sessions each week are full, members have been very sensible, keeping a distance and respecting each other. They arrive on bikes, feet and cars, all eager to carry on with their Nordic Walking. The advantages in having smaller groups, we have got to know each other better, I have been able to individually teach the Nordic walking method and I have been doing more exercise, taking the three classes!

The result of this situation has been a positive experience for the members of the group, I feel I am more jelled with the group, members have made closer friends and we have been exercising, keeping us healthy in body and mind.

**Ann Hepher.**

## **ITALIAN IMPROVERS**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> May, Italian Improvers took their first steps into the World of Zoom.

With Technical Support (husband) always available to sort out any problems, we are now Zooming ahead.

Over a double Zoom session (80 minutes) we have been able to replicate the usual structure of our group.

With thanks to the group for all their hard work and adaptability, Thursday morning Italian is thriving.

**Marianne Rybowski.**



# CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS

Zoom, something none of us had ever heard of six months ago, and now many of us are experts. Well, alright not exactly experts but we manage.

I belong to a few Zoom Groups and run two Cryptic Crossword Groups via the app. When lockdown first hit, I buried my head in the sand - I really did not want to think about what to do. My son, a teacher, suggested Zoom but the idea of it just frightened me. Then, one day, I was chatting to a friend on the phone who had used Zoom and I ended up downloading it onto my ipad, before I knew what happened I was chatting away to her on Zoom. Maybe I could cope after all.

One good thing about Zoom is that you always get to look at your own face before anyone else does, so if your hair is a mess (and whose isn't at the moment?) or you have dirt on your nose from gardening, you get a moment to clean yourself up. Having said that, Zoom is slightly more flattering than Whatsapp; my Granddaughter will insist on calling me using Whatsapp and I always look ghastly (alright the lack of makeup isn't helping) but it's the angle, one looks down at a phone, not one's best angle - where has all this vanity come from?

You see a lot of people's lampshades on Zoom. Camera angles are difficult, I have moved from the iPad, which had to be propped up on two fat books, to my laptop where I can better control the where the camera is pointing - but we are all learning as we go along. Explaining how to get Gallery view so you can see everyone and not just the person talking, it's different on a laptop to an iPad,

needs to be explained to newcomers, and is always a huge relief to us all when they get it. How does Patrick in our Pivotal History group show us pictures? Luckily, I don't need to show pictures, so I'll learn that when I need to.

The most irritating thing about Zoom is when two or more people start talking at once, then they stop talking at once, then they start again and then stop. This does sometimes happen in real life and not just the virtual world, but it happens much more regularly on Zoom where there is a slight time lag. Perhaps, through our body language that we see in person, we can judge more easily when to talk which we can't do virtually.

And the Crossword Groups? They are OK on Zoom, not as good as meeting in person and we have had to adapt and do things differently. We have had hiccups; one member of the group's audio was not working one week so she ended up writing on paper and putting it up to the camera. We have since learnt that she could have typed everything in for the rest of us to read. I look forward to the day when we can all meet again 'properly', but until then I will cope with Zoom.

**Esther Gould.**

## **CYCLING GROUP**

From just four members on the first ride three years ago, the cycling group has grown to twenty-two today, comprising 11 men and 11 women. It is a real pleasure to be part of such a welcoming and amicable group.

The Covid-19 lockdown has meant no rides since the start of March but, through our WhatsApp group, we have shared news of our 'lone' rides as well as a good deal of chit chat. A few Zoom meetings (with themes) have also helped us keep in touch.

Because of the growth in numbers, we now have two groups, the Monday group rides on the first Monday of each month, the Wednesday Group rides on the third Wednesday of each month. This means that we can accommodate more members. If space allows, members can do both rides, otherwise it's the first 10 or 11 to 'sign up' who get the slots on each ride. Using WhatsApp means that everyone knows who is booking the slots each month.

Rides are usually around 20 – 25 miles and follow a wide range of different routes. Routes are suggested by anyone in the group. I try to lead the Monday rides, but the Wednesday rides are led by members who volunteer for it. Our rides can involve a train journey, but we always avoid more than two or three in any one carriage so, when this can resume, distancing will be normal for us. A coffee stop is always included, and often lunch towards the end of the ride.

Our return to a sense of normality saw two rides go out on Monday July 6th, each with just 6 riders, which allowed us to keep our distance. We look forward to being able to have our usual sized groups and resume our very sociable outings.

**Stewart Perkes.**

## **WALKING OUT OF LOCKDOWN**

As the U3A “River Walks” organising duo, Joyce Dempster and I, had been observing the beginning of a global pandemic, we realised that it was becoming unsafe to venture out in groups, so on 16th March we informed all our walkers that we were postponing things for the foreseeable future. Then with complete lockdown we knew that we wouldn’t be walking in Guildford, Windsor or Greenwich anytime soon.

To remind us of our river pathways, we sent out “You Tube” videos of London walks and the wonderful trails along the Thames Path. Members detailed the walks they were exploring during Lockdown: Richmond Park, and Bushy Park figured a lot.

As restrictions eased, Joyce and I agreed to meet for a socially distanced walk around Bushy Park. We followed a circular 3-mile route, and there was coffee for sale, (but no loos). It was perfect and we wondered whether a few others might join us in a conger line around the park. Thus, our first post Lockdown walk was conceived. Richmond U3A were very helpful, informative and supportive of the enterprise.

To our great surprise, 22 members signed up. We organised ourselves into 4 groups of 6 and, to avoid public transport, we met up in the car park at Sainsbury’s in Hampton Hill.

Rain was forecast, and it absolutely bucketed down. But it was a delightful walk, although at the finish we were dripping from head to toe. A memorable moment was walking through a small herd of

young stags, who were busy eating oak leaves from the trees on our path, their new velvety antlers dripping with rain.

It was wonderful to see familiar faces and hear stories of lockdown experiences: of interesting new walking routes, of the difficulties of simple everyday life, and heart-warming stories of neighbourly support.

Adversity can generate a sense of accomplishment, and as I waded all the way back to the car and drove home – I had the feeling we had conquered Snowden.

Having broken the spell of lockdown, we look forward to meeting up and walking again. We may yet experience a second lockdown – as Leicester has done – but we know that we can get through it - and that we will walk together again.

**Amanda Rose.**

## MOOCS

MOOC must be one of the ugliest acronyms in a fairly strong field! Nevertheless, remembering the “Learn” part of the U3A motto, if you are getting fed-up with all this social distancing and want to exercise your brain a little, have a look at some of these Massive Open Online Courses at <http://www.mooc-list.com/>.

If you follow the link, you will discover free distance-learning courses run online by many universities worldwide. Usually, they are open to anyone who registers. One single course may admit even thousands of students. It is possible to study almost any

subject through this method, and dozens of famous universities worldwide are now offering MOOCs.

The MOOC which I know a number of you have used is called FutureLearn (<http://www.futurelearn.com>) which has a vast number of courses, some of which have a specific starting date, others can be joined at any time. They last from just a couple of weeks to six or seven.

I would be very interested to hear from members who have enrolled in any of these courses.

**Norma Cook**, [norma.beagle@gmail.com](mailto:norma.beagle@gmail.com)

## **THE NOTICEBOARD**

It seems a long time ago since there was a need to pin notices and events on the U3A noticeboard for the monthly meeting.

These days my recollections are for life BL (Before Lockdown) and AL (After Lockdown, “after” meaning “during” as well, it being difficult to guess what it will be like after). I cannot imagine the meetings of old where up to one hundred people sat side by side in a large hall in York House and where, during the break and after the meeting, they would come and take notes from the notices on the board or browse through the brochures.

I have been "doing" the noticeboard for some years now, in fact, not long after I joined Richmond U3A, the volunteer who used to do it, stepped down and I took it over. In those days it was more U3A events and an information hub of local services but it has

changed a little over the years to reflect the growing number of groups and activities while still advertising the useful services of Age UK, now numerous.

Richmond U3A having moved into the technological age so most news and information is sent out by email and this is one thing I like to reflect on the notice board, trying to collect all the new bits that come my way by email, changing them to legible type and format and printing them out to become notices on the board. Members thereby, have an opportunity to see them again and those people who do not have the technology or who don't read their emails too often can also be made aware of what is going on.

Arts Richmond sends us their newsletter, brochures and events in the Borough of Richmond every month and from Gresham College we obtain copies of the annual brochure detailing the timetable of their lectures, for display.

Other sources of information come from the U3A Trust, local libraries as well as from a visit to London's South Bank, to supplement the "what's on" in brochures and leaflets, not forgetting the valuable notification of the monthly pub lunch which is supplied by hand on the day.

All have to be pinned up and set out prior to the afternoon meeting and in this we are lucky to have the reliable assistance of Margaret whose droll sense of humour and patient pinning is much appreciated.

**Elaine Collins.**

*Don't forget if you would like to join our happy band of RUMs\* just get in touch with Sue Wood, [susan.orleans@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:susan.orleans@tiscali.co.uk)*

*RUMs = Really Useful Members*

## GUILTY

Alright. I confess my partner and I are guilty of anthropomorphism. Every morning when we go downstairs we see what looks like an angry robin, aka His Nibs, staring through the window at us with hands on hips, then, as he appears to glance at the empty food dish, we imagine him saying, “What sort of time do you call this?” And we end up saying “Sorry” as we rush to obey his command. He thinks he owns the garden and will hop into the house if we haven't noticed that he has eaten all the mealworms. Last year his father would fly in and help himself from the supply sitting on the table.



Having had two robin families nesting in the jasmine next to the French windows this year, we have had plenty of time to observe them. We have a dish of sunflower hearts protected from pigeons, squirrels and parakeets by a mesh box, peanuts and nigella seeds hanging above, and another food point on the mat outside the French windows where we put out mealworms.



Contrary to expectation, all robins are not fans of mealworms but others just can't get enough. The pecking order is immediately obvious though when the swaggering blackbird appears. Of course, we believe that his gloriously shiny coat is the product of his diet of daily mealworms thanks to our generosity and his subsequent song is meant as a personal thank you.



We have also had a bluetit maternity unit in the nesting box on the wall. With the summer days of May we often dined outside and, with such a small garden, it was fascinating to witness the frantic feeding fever as the parents rushed backwards and forwards attempting to assuage the hungry hatchlings before darkness fell.

Of course, the babies have all fledged now and we can watch their progress as they anxiously learn to land – flying itself doesn't seem as much as a problem as stopping is.

Then there are the prim goldfinches who arrive in pairs, perch facing clockwise on the nigella seed and proceed to eat voraciously but very neatly, guardedly gazing around between each peck. Then alerting us to the dwindling supply by a distinctive tapping of their beaks on the feeder.

It is almost impossible not to interpret their little arguments and interplay into human terms - the bolshie robins, the fumbling

fluffy juveniles, the housewifely sparrows tidying up any stray seeds, the squabbling teenage bluetits, the dainty goldfinches, the imperious blackbird and the persistent pigeons. And there are notable individuals within the different breeds as well as the occasional visitors such as the nuthatch we call Speedy, ..... Somehow, we just can't help ourselves.

### **The Editor.**

*Having written this a couple of weeks ago it is rather out of date as we now have a garden full of fluffy teenagers sulking if they can't live on the birds' equivalent of a chocolate diet.*

## **AND SUDDENLY THERE WAS SILENCE**

In April this year I had to go to the chemist after a long time of self-isolation. As I walked the empty streets, I was hit by a sudden feeling: the eerie silence, the emptiness - I have experienced it before.

The year was 1945. During the first week of May our town had been under heavy shell fire coming from across the river Elbe. A constant, deadening noise. And then, suddenly, everything stopped. Silence.

On the 8th of May, on a hot and sunny day - I was 6 years and nearly 10 months old at that time, a little German girl - I was standing in my parents' garden, behind the white gate watching a column of British tanks rattling through the cobbled market of my home town just outside Hamburg. Despite that rumbling noise there was the same feeling in the air: eerie silence, emptiness. No

people in the streets or in the market. They must all be in their houses. Even the soldiers - in my memory - were silent, just staring ahead. This can have lasted only a few minutes. Then my parents called me in. But I remember the feeling, it is deep in me.

That day brought many changes. Like today, school stopped. The school building became a barrack for the British soldiers. Although school started again after some time it was in the woods and later in a church.

I lost my bedroom. It was commandeered for a British officer. After he had left to go home a stream of fugitives followed, all in need of shelter and food. I remember vividly a young mother with a newborn baby and two little girls on her way from East Prussia to Konstanz where her parents lived. She left with her baby in my brother's pram. Then there were Mr. Bamberger and Ms Pollok, Mrs Pauleit and her aunt, also from East Prussia, Ms Lisel and others whose names I cannot remember.

What did we all eat? Lots and lots of potatoes! My parents had a very big garden.

My father lost his job with the end of the war. He was unemployed for nearly 5 years. His attempt to start his own business failed. At last he found a job in Nuremberg, about 700km from Hamburg and a new life began.

I hope this time it will not take such a long time before life starts again.

**Elke Nauke.**

## CHRISTMAS 1943

In our house Christmas began in November. The government allowed us a “special occasion” ration including dried fruit and tinned peaches from Australia. Wow!

The first stage was The Puddings. Whilst my brother and I watched round eyed, the various ingredients went in. We were allowed to chop the nuts and glaze cherries. At last the fragrant mixture was carefully spooned into three basins, one little one for Grandma and two for us, Christmas and New Year. It was like the Three Bears’ porridge. A circle of greaseproof went on the top, leaving room for the pudding to rise (whatever that meant, I wasn’t sure). Next Mother took a large square of clean white cloth, secured it tightly with string and joined the four corners upwards into a little bundle. The copper had been lit in advance with a few inches of water in the bottom and carefully Mother lowered the basins in, put the lid on the top and breathed a huge sigh of relief! There they stayed for hours, quietly simmering away while a lovely aroma of spice pervaded the house.

Sometime later my Uncle Bill arrived fresh from his allotment, the handlebars of his bicycle festooned with bunches of onions, carrots and parsnips, but also, miracle of miracles, a rabbit oven-ready and pristine. Mother proudly hung it on the hook on the kitchen door where we could all admire it.

Christmas Day arrived at last. My stocking contained a tangerine and three nuts, with a pair of mittens hand-knitted rainbow-hued from odds and ends of wool. My brother had much the same, his

special present being a fountain pen discovered in someone's drawer and refurbished with a new nib!

The dining-room had been decorated with home-made paper chains, the fire coaxed to a rosy glow. Roast chicken there was (a rare treat) with all the trimmings. As for the Pudding – what a triumph. I got the sixpence too! Afterwards we sang carols and played cards. There was a serious moment too, while we toasted Peter, our absent family member somewhere in Germany, taken prisoner at Dunkirk when the rear-guard ran out of ammunition.

Next day, Boxing Day, we relish 'Uncle Bill's Rabbit', finally retiring to bed, happy and replete.

We had a lovely time, didn't we? And I had warm fingers all winter long!

"God bless us everyone."

**Oubliette.**

## **READING THE METER**

### *A LESSON IN TECHNOLOGY USE FOR THE ELDERLEY*

Back in October, I started to worry about my energy consumption. The gas company suddenly announced they were about to double the charges. When I called to complain, they discovered that the meter was faulty and said they would hold off and install a smart meter.

The smart meter duly arrived. I was fascinated at first, but fascination quickly turned to horror as the dials spiked and soared,

indicating that the revised bills were quite on target. I kept meaning to read the manual but never got round to it and eventually consigned it to the plastic envelope with all those other unread manuals. Every time the meter caught my eye, I looked away hastily to avoid raising my blood pressure in line with consumption.

So, when my friend came round and suggested a change of energy supplier, I happily agreed. In due course the new supplier contacted me to obtain a meter reading. Now, somehow, throughout my long life, I have managed to avoid meter reading. “ACT NOW to avoid double billing”, growled the email ominously. Fine, I thought, I can do this. The meters are in an outside cupboard, so I open up the cupboard and start hauling out the old garden supplies, the Christmas tree stand, and oh! A whole bag of Memories – wow, what’s in there? First up, my father’s diplomas – oh that’s where they were. Then my son’s school report from when he was 10; I’d forgotten he was that clever in junior school... Now, woman, get a grip. Leave memory bag. Read the meter.

Oh damn, I can’t see the dial. Why do they put the thing so far back? Get the ladder. Climb up the ladder and lean in. Haul out the sack of fertiliser and the broken lawn mower. Still too far back. Can I climb into the cupboard? It’s 3 feet off the ground, a bit high for me. But I can do it! I will not be a wimp and call the neighbours. But even so, it is dark and cobwebby in the cupboard. Flashlight! On my phone! But where is the phone? Crawl back out of cupboard, go to look for phone. Not in kitchen, hallway, not in living room... try calling it from landline. It’s somewhere upstairs, so up I go. It’s ringing, but where? Not in bathroom,

spare room... bedroom? No... eventually track it down in dressing gown pocket. OK. Back downstairs, with phone. Trip over the memory bag. What is that sticking out? My youngest daughter's first scrap book. Oh look, how cute, these are her cards, here is a telegram (try explaining telegrams to the grandchildren). I start rootling in the bag. STOP! Read the meter!!

Outside, up the ladder, crawl shakily into cupboard. Ow, a two-inch splinter has skewered finger. Stop to swear and suck finger, will probably get blood poisoning from old rubbish in cupboard... At last! I can reach the meter. I can see the meter! Press button A, press button B, and presto! There is the reading. Great – write it down. On what? Back out of the cupboard, down the ladder. Find old envelope and pencil. Up ladder, into cupboard, puffing and feeling more than a bit frazzled. Am sure there is a spider in my hair. The gate creaks. “Oi, luv, can you sign for this please?” WHAT!! Bloody postman. Reverse out of cupboard, cobwebby and blood streaked. “Just sign here”, he says, thrusting machine at me. “Are you OK, luv?” “Of course,” I say nonchalantly, dripping blood onto his device. He departs, obviously chalking up another weird old bat on his list. Back to the meter. Press button A, button B, turn on torch on phone, read meter, write it carefully on envelope. Back down ladder, put back Christmas tree stand, sack of fertilizer, broken lawn mower. Shouldn't I throw that out? No, I have had enough. No trip to the dump, no more rubbish left in the yard. Shove it back in the cupboard. Phew! By that stage, back has given out and am barely able to return ladder to kitchen. But I have the meter reading! Need a cup of tea and perhaps a little lie-down. Oh, look, there is the smart meter! What are smart meters

for? Oh no, I could have got the reading from that ... fish out instructions and figure out how to do a reading. And 2 minutes later, there is the reading, exactly the same as the one obtained with so much blood, sweat and tears from the meter cupboard....

**Julie Valentine.**

## **ISOLATION**

I am sitting pretty on this hill

Whilst the world unravels.

Like a child protected from harm:

“Don’t go there. Keep away from them. Don’t touch that  
It’s for your own good”

I am not a child.

Nevertheless, I am cosseted.

Food is delivered.

Kind neighbours are solicitous.

“Take care”,

They say

“Take care.

Stay well”.

As if I could do anything else

Up here, in my spacious house and garden.

With views of the town in the valley

And of the moor,

A kaleidoscope of colours,

Ever changing with the seasons and the weather.



This morning the wind is gusty  
Blowing clouds across a briefly sunlit sky  
And birds in flight are tossed about in a space they have all to  
themselves.

I am not ill.  
Nor am I likely to be, tucked up here.  
I have no financial worries,  
Unlike so many others.  
Are they sacrificing themselves for me?  
“No! Saving the NHS.”

So, my strange sense of calm continues  
Birds chorus from dawn to dusk to welcome Spring.  
I tend my garden  
And rejoice on seeing a tiny violet lifting up its head.  
All nature is oblivious to humankind’s distress.  
And here I sit,  
In splendid isolation,  
Up on my hill.

**Liz Beardsley, April 2020**

## ONE MORE LIMERICK

There was a young lady of Norway  
Who caught her big toe in a doorway  
She gave a great shout  
“Let me out! Let me out!  
Or my metatarsus will be in a poor way.”

**Rosemary Monk.**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sue and Committee

Just to say - I was very pleased to receive the Newsletters and to say thank you very much for all the hard work you do to keep U3A going. Also, thanks to all contributors – enjoyed reading the articles etc.

So far, I have kept going with help from neighbours with shopping but getting easier in ‘full cover-up’ to venture out to nearby shops. However, I enjoyed the peace and quiet and fresh air – trying to forget all the chores I should do – with plenty to read. Also keeping in touch via telephone and e-mails with friends.

However, I look forward to the monthly lectures, when all of us are allowed to meet again.

Keep well and out of the ‘virus’ way.

Best wishes

**Monika Skinner.**

# APPRECIATION

A real delight, thank you so much - amazing local talent to give us so much pleasure.

**Prudie Mennell.**

Thank you, and all else involved, for the newsletter. Just what was needed! Very best wishes.

**Denise Davis.**

*As a final note, I would like to reiterate the thanks of these members to all who have helped to make these extra editions possible, notably David Wood (no relation) who prepares the text for printing, Norma Cook who chivvies the Group Leaders for their entries, and all the wonderful contributors.*

**Sue Wood, Editor.**

OUR LAST EXTRA NEWSLETTER IS COMING UP IN OCTOBER so please let's make it a good one. I have been very encouraged by the response of members in helping me to fill the pages so far. So please let me have your offerings, grumbles, wish lists, letters, limericks etc., etc. by September 20<sup>th</sup>.

You will shortly be receiving your membership renewal reminders by email where available and we would appreciate a response to acknowledge whether you wish to continue or not.

As you know we are planning to hold our first monthly meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup> all being well and groups are opening wherever possible. The Committee have worked hard to keep in touch with all our members and look forward to welcoming you back to more normal times.

## **RICHMOND U3A SPEAKERS SEPT 2020 – JAN 2021**

*Dependent on Government advice we intend to recommence our monthly meetings in September. You will be notified of any cancellation as early as possible. Otherwise we look forward to seeing you there.*

Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month at 14:30 at Clarendon Hall, York House, Richmond Road, Twickenham, TW1 3BZ. It is on bus routes 33, R68, R70, H22 and 490.

### **30<sup>th</sup> Sept: Dr Vanessa Jenkins – Historic Jewels with Fascinating Histories**

These include the Peregrine Pearl owned by Mary Tudor, Napoléon III and Liz Taylor. Vanessa's career has encompassed medical adviser to the government and working on cruise ships.

### **28<sup>th</sup> Oct: James Loch – Lifting the Mystery from the Mysteries**

James talks about the history of the ancient City Guilds through to the Livery companies that underpin the City of London Corporation today.

### **25<sup>th</sup> Nov: Diane Burstein – The Hidden East End**

Diane has 20 years' experience working as a London Blue Badge Tour Guide.

### **16<sup>th</sup> Dec: Georgina Lock – Lady in a Veil**

Georgina's subject is Lady Mary Wortley-Montagu, 1689 to 1762, writer and wife of the British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, who was responsible for the introduction of smallpox inoculation in 1720.

### **27<sup>th</sup> Jan: Dr Jackie Bell – Becoming an Astronaut**

Jackie was chosen from over 3,500 applicants on the BBC series Astronauts: Do You have what it Takes? to undertake tests used to select astronauts at space agencies around the world.