



Facts about March

Did you know?

March is derived from the Latin word, Martius, named after the Roman god of war

Martius used to be the first month of the original Roman calendar

The month was given this name as it was the month in which Roman military campaigning got under way.

The Anglo-Saxon name for March was hylda, meaning loud or stormy

The ides of March, 15th March, ides referring to the middle of the month, was the day Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 BCE

Gemstones – bloodstone and aquamarine

Flower - daffodil



March, March

March, March, all the day,
Winds of March, please march
away;
March away with noisy drum
For the flowers want to come;
March away through every street,
Noisy tramp of noisy feet,
Noisy music all the way—
March, March, March away!

March, March, never still,

March away from lane and hill,
March away from nook and glen,
April wants to come again;
March away with tramp and
roar,
April waits outside the door;
Flowers and children want to
play—
March, March, March away!

Thanks to Marilyn Muffett for the poem and photo



Annette Wynne

Chairman's Message



New members are the lifeblood of a u3a

Do these words sound familiar? They will do if you are a regular reader of TAM . They were said by Ian McCannah, chair of the National u3a.

Somerton u3a has made its priority the retention of our existing members and I am pleased to say that over 350 of you have renewed your membership this current year. We are now turning our attention to recruitment, attracting new members. These new members will bring new ideas, new groups and new skills to the benefit of every member.

The u3a is run by members for the members .

This is where I am asking you to help with the 3 Rs of the revitalising of Somerton u3a.

Retention, Recruitment, Relaunch

We will shortly be sending out a survey to all members, asking not only for your views but also any ideas and suggestions that you think might help the committee in these tasks.

We will also need your help to set up a number of working parties to help us achieve our goals; to enhance the membership experience, to increase our

membership and to assist all members with future learning.

Somerton u3a needs to build on the skills and experience of all its members so can we ask you:

What did you do before you retired?

Have you learnt new skills since you retired?

Our plans are to develop an active social media presence so do you have PR experience?

With Zoom and YouTube now being, almost, taken for granted, do you have experience to help fellow member improve their computer knowledge and become comfortable using these tools?

Could we change our image to attract new possibly younger members ?

How would you describe your u3a?

How would you "sell" the benefits to a new neighbour?

If you feel excited by our plans, and would like to join one of one of our working parties, please contact me or any of the committee'

Many thanks for helping to make this the best u3a in the region .

Judi

01458 250280

Editor's Message

This edition marks the first anniversary of the launch of the Somerton u3a newsletter. We hope that it has provided you with items that you may have found interesting and amusing in these very challenging times. It is also a reminder that although we sometimes feel apathetic and fed up, trapped in our homes by the restrictions and the weather, as u3a members, we are not alone.

The national u3a has been working hard producing advice, links, tips and resources to help members stay connected. They have produced a leaflet, *Member Link* (reproduced here in this newsletter or also available online in the new edition of the u3a National Newsletter) which has many exciting ideas, not just for now, but also for the future, to enable the u3a to become a strong, vibrant movement again.

In the past year, u3as have had to adapt and learn new

technologies and ways of operating and when we can meet face-to -face again, these innovations can be successfully combined with previous practices, opening up more opportunities for u3as to thrive.

Somerton u3a are already busy working on their plans to relaunch when restrictions are finally eased. One of the ideas being considered is a members' survey where you will be invited to share your views on what is happening at the moment and what you would like to see happen in the future.

Don't forget to check what's on in the learning pages of the National Newsletter. There will be new learning initiatives launched in the Spring, but check *Online Events* for an exciting range of workshops, webinars and interactive sessions delivered by members for members, which are free to join.

u3a Member Link



Your regional Trustees and Team are here to support you. We know that despite everyone's best efforts, things have been challenging for many of us and there are times we may need some extra support.

This leaflet has advice, links, tips and resources to help keep us all connected, active and learning together. Whether we connect online or face to face (rules allowing) when the lockdown eases or a blend of the

two, we hope the ideas in this leaflet support us in growing a strong movement. No member should be left behind so please keep in touch with your regional trustee and team www.u3a.org.uk/board. You can find all the resources in this leaflet at www.u3a.org.uk/member-link

Stay safe and well and we look forward to talking with many of you in the coming months.

Support for u3a Members

Connecting Offline

Telephone Trees – One to one phone calls from dedicated members. You can see how Newcastle u3a used telephone trees to support its members on our blog [Sources](#)

Phone In Conferencing – You don't have to be online to join in zoom – you can call in.

WhatsApp – Talk on the phone with other members using WhatsApp groups. [Find out more](#)

WhyPay? – Offers a free telephone conference service for the price of a telephone call. [Visit our how to guidance](#)

Buddy Up with those online – Members can join others who have internet connections. Why not Volunteer to be a Buddy in your region? [Contact your Trustee](#)

Penfriends – Write regularly to other members by post in your u3a or across u3as.

Round robin Letters – Write a letter – send it to a member who will add a bit and pass it to a member who will do the same. The chain will grow.

Print and Post – A newsletter to someone not online. Sign up to National Newsletter which has a bitesize version to print and post.

Helpline – u3a has partnered with Independent Age Helpline for confidential guidance on care & support, money, benefits and health. Freephone line on 0800 319 6789

ClickSilver – Provides telephone mentors to support people to get online.

Connecting Online

National learning programme – Join one of our many initiatives, competitions or challenges – creative, history, maths, crafts and so much more. [Find out more](#)

Subject Advisers – Get in touch with our [Subject Advisers](#) for their advice and ideas on interest groups.

Events and Talks – We have so many interesting [Talks and Events](#)

Find out about online platforms Online Workshops and Tutorials [Sign up](#) for Zoom Tutorials or book bespoke workshops to help with running your u3a.

Digital Eagles – Access to [Barclays Digital Wings](#) tutorials for 'How to session on digital skills and information'. Use code 'U3A'

National Newsletter – Keep up to date with what's going on across the movement – [Sign up](#) to receive it directly to your email every month.

Sources – Our u3a blog has interesting articles to read from across the movement. Why not send us an article about what you are doing and learning in lockdown? [Sources](#)

Trust u3a – Join [Trust u3a](#) – for access to online learning groups.

Research and Shared Learning – [Find out more](#) including the High Street Project



Time on your hands?

Join in the conversation on our Social Media – Join us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) and find out what the movement and wider community are talking about.

Or why not join Keeping In Touch or our forums? – Join the conversation on our closed Facebook group [Keeping In Touch](#) or the [digital forums](#)

u3a Radio Podcast – Listen to our [radio podcast](#) every month to hear stories from across the movement.

Volunteer to give a Talk? – Why not volunteer to be a speaker and give a talk? info@u3a.org.uk

Contact us – The Third Age Trust is always here for you. Contact us with any issues. info@u3a.org.uk 0208 466 6139



Support for u3as

Keeping Going

Visit [Support for u3as](#) tab on our website to find help on
Advice on AGMs
u3a Covid Advice
Diversity and Inclusion
Book yourself or your committee onto a [Zoom tutorial](#)
Finance
Recruitment
Insurance Update
Network Update
My Regional Team
Find out [how Beacon can help](#) you run your u3a
Some of these are behind your password protected area of the website

Engaging with Members

Branded Resources – Go to our [brand centre](#) for resources and materials for your u3a
Hybrid ideas – [Ideas](#) on alternative ways of running groups and meetings
u3a Day – Join in with u3a Day on 2 June 2021. You can find out more on [our website](#) or join our Facebook page.
Newsletters – Using postal or online newsletters to members is an engaging way to keep in touch. You can sign up to the [national newsletter](#) to find out what's going on across the movement.
Bulletins – Read our bulletins full of ideas to keep learning.



Sharing Skills

Buddy u3as – Join with other u3as for talks, tech support, sharing interest groups and more ideas on keeping learning.



Share tips to recruit new members – See our comprehensive resources to help you reach out to people who would benefit from the u3a on our blog [Sources](#)

Join your Network – Find out more about your local u3a networks

Contact us – Keep in touch with the Third Age Trust about great ideas you would like to share

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

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SE1 8EN

Contact the National Office
Tel: 020 8466 6139
Email: info@u3a.org.uk
u3a.org.uk



twitter.com/u3a_uk
 facebook.com/u3auk



Your u3a Needs You

Financial Statements 01.04.20. to 31.03.21.

Our Financial Statements have been produced in the past by a firm of local accountants. However, due to the minimal amount of activity this year as a result of Covid, the Committee has decided that the accounts will be produced by the Treasurer in-house for 2020/21.

In accordance with the National u3a guidelines, we need to appoint an independent examiner. We would like this person to be a u3a member (either full or associate) and not a member of the committee.

You do not need to be a qualified accountant, but it would be useful if you have past accounts experience and a

working knowledge of spreadsheets.

If you would like to know more about what this would entail you can email our Treasurer Liz Short at treasurer@SomertonU3A.UK.

If you would like to volunteer to be the independent examiner, please email me at chairman@SomertonU3A.UK setting out briefly how you would fit this role.

As always, our u3a can only operate with the help and support of the members and I would like to thank you for considering this important role.

Judi
Chairman

Zoom meeting for new members

10 Feb 21

On the afternoon of 10th February the Committee held a Zoom meeting for new members, Annette and Tony Sparks, Richard Montagu, Ingrid Cayhill, Anne Sevenoakes and Sherrie-Jane Jackson.

It was good to put faces to names and learn a little about why they had joined our U3A. We were especially pleased to welcome them given the current situation. We all look forward to the time when we can meet again in person.

Any suggestions for ways in which we can continue or start new activities, whilst complying with government guidelines, gratefully received, in the meantime welcome to our new members.

Marilyn Muffett

Groups happy to accept new members Like to Try Something New?

One of the advantages of meeting by Zoom is that groups can accommodate more people than when meeting face-to-face.

The following groups have indicated that they are happy to welcome new members.

Science & Technology

Raspberry Pi

Craft

Computers

Photography

Friday afternoon Book Club (see p8)

If you interested, please go the Somerton u3a website, click on **Contact** and leave a message which will be forwarded to the group leader or use link in blue above.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/somerton/contact>





Sadly Missed

Death of Joyce Sherburn

Joyce Sherburn (Creative Writing group) died suddenly last Saturday at her home here in Somerton. Her next of kin will be her son, Michael , resident at Wellswood House, West Lydford, TA11 7BU.

No further details known as yet.

Joyce was a regular and gifted member of the CW group who added her sense of fun to our meetings. We are going to miss her very much once we start up again.

John Saunders

Mary Fox passed away

Mary died on Saturday 13th February.

She leaves a large, close family including several great-grand children.

Mary had many interests. Mary was a skilled watercolourist, frequently visited Strode Theatre, she also enjoyed a dancing exercise class in her village of Barton St David, walking regularly and played table tennis until quite recently. She had a very large garden and regularly supplied friends with fruits and asparagus.

Scrabble was one of her great loves. Before joining the new u3a Scrabble group about eleven years ago, Mary had played in and won the WI county tournament. She was not alone; Teresa, Jill and Marion joined at the same time and were equally as skilful but this standard of play was a revelation for those of us who had only played en famille previously. So from then on we only played two or three to a table, fitted in two games each session, and were well and truly beaten!!

Gradually our general standard improved and very, very

occasionally someone would take a game off Mary or one of the others.

Despite several periods of ill health, Mary stoically refused to give in to this and was always cheerful and elegantly turned out.

Here are a few comments from current Scrabble group members on learning of Mary's passing.

"We have lost a good friend"

"What a lovely lady, a very good Scrabble player"

"Lively person"

"We will all miss her and remember her with fondness".

"Let us take comfort in the knowledge that God has gained another special angel. She is home".

Jane Redgrove with additional comments from friends and fellow Scrabble players.



Speaker Programme for Spring 2021.....on.....

zoom

Fri 12th March 11.00 am

Hypnosis – Alan Jones. His talk will definitely NOT put you to sleep!

Fri 26th March at 11.00 am

Photography - David Boag - back by popular demand after his talk in January 2020

Fri 9th Apr at 11.00 am

Manners Please Dearest!
A presentation by David Allen

Fri 23rd Apr at 11.00 am

Brilliant British humour in the forgotten art of the picture postcard: 1840-1950's

A Zoom presentation at 11.00 by James Taylor

Fri 14th May at 11.00 am

Dogs for good

Raising awareness of this assistance charity

A presentation by Rosie Blanning

Fri 28th May at 11.00 am

Japan, Bowing to tradition

A presentation by Jim Holmes

Further details of speakers and their talks can be found on the Somerton U3A website.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/somerton/events>

You will be sent a reminder and a Zoom link a few days before the talk

**where
is
this?**



Group News



Craft Group

Amanda Hooper

During February the theme was Chocolate Concoctions.



Friday afternoon Book Club

We meet on first Friday afternoon of the month on Zoom and have decided that we will change the format which also provides an opportunity to invite new members. This month we have found it very successful to share our views of any books we have been reading and this is enlarging our scope for sharing (subject to social distancing...and so on) and so this is how we will proceed over the next few months, relying on Amazon,

second hand sales outlets like Abe and Waterstones, until the libraries are allowed to open.

It is also an opportunity to invite a few newcomers to our group, so please get in touch at:

jennyolipsy@hotmail.com if you would like to join our next Zoom Meeting Friday, March 5th at 2.00pm

Garden Visits Group.....*message from the group leader, Jane Redgrove*

Garden Visits 2021

I hope you are all keeping well and enjoying the first signs of Spring in the garden.

I expect by now most of you will have had your vaccines and we can look forward to a time when we can meet again.

We do not know exactly when this will be but I'm hoping that by April or May we maybe will be able to visit some gardens.

Currently, I am researching local gardens, who intend opening to the public this year, when the easing of social restrictions allow.

Therefore I need to know if you still want to be a member of the Gardens Visit group and still want to receive details of intended visits.

If so, please email me at redgrove@btinternet.com

More garden visits on page 8.....

Group News



Garden Visits Group.....*continued....*

For those of you who can't wait for future group visits, why not try:

Broadleigh Gardens, Bishop's Hull, nr Taunton

I have just discovered this gem of a garden in Bishop's Hull near Taunton. It is a four acre show garden for a company that specialises in small bulbs. So at the moment there are swathes of snowdrops, miniature daffodils and anemones. Plus the most beautiful Hamamelis I have ever seen.

The owner, Christine Skelmersdale, tells me that the best times to visit are the end of March when the Magnolias and flowering cherries will be at their best and then August when the field of Agapanthus will be in flower.

Parking is very limited so it is not feasible to arrange a group visit this spring but they would welcome individual visitors for a donation of £2.50 to St Margaret's Hospice and, once there, social distancing is not a problem.

You can view their catalogue online at broadleighbulbs.co.U.K.

Bird watching...

2 photos

from David Perkins



*Blackcap feeding
on fat balls*

Lockdown Good Reads



Murder Most Horrid

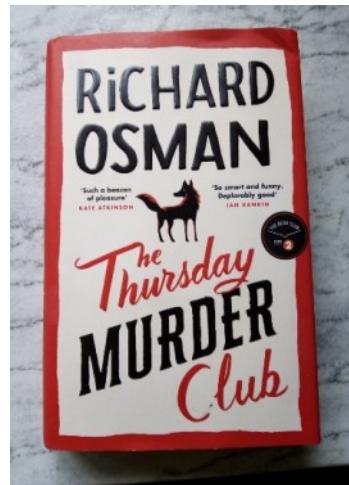
No, that's not the name of the book that I'm going to recommend to you. It's actually *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman (he of *Pointless* and *House of Games*). It's his first foray into writing fiction and it's already on various Best Seller lists with talk of no less than Steven Spielberg making it into a movie.

It opens with four residents from a retirement village meeting on a regular basis to review unsolved murders – then a real live murder (if that's the right expression!) takes place. In the spirit of *Midsomer Murders*, the book is somehow not gruesome even though bodies are involved.

The *Murder Club* members are portrayed as smarter than the young PC and the DS assigned to the case. The book has humour and pathos rolled in together to give a murder mystery with a difference. A very easy read with

a good 'reveal' at the end.

I had a further bit of fun when I had finished the book putting together a cast list for any future movie. Would be interesting to see if your list lines up with mine!!



Let's hope that Spielberg is true to the book. At the interval of the preview of *The 39 Steps*, Alfred Hitchcock is said to have asked John Buchan how he was enjoying it. He purportedly said that he was enjoying it just fine and was interested to find out how it ended!!

Liz Short

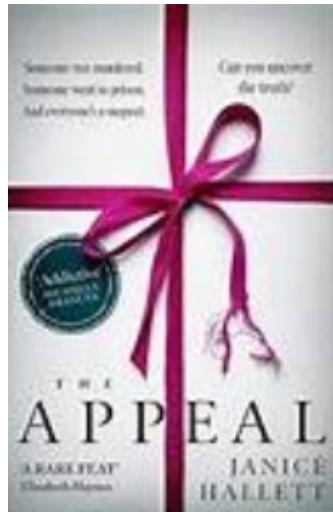
The Appeal by Janice Hallett

This is the first piece of fiction from former journalist and government communications writer and a Sunday Times Crime Novel of the Month.

"A fiendishly clever, highly original and totally gripping whodunit that trumps Richard Osman."

This dazzling original novel based around an am-dram production in a village unfolds completely through the use of emails written by some of the characters. This might initially put some readers off but as a device it allows pieces of evidence to be slowly unrealed, gradually building up to an exciting climax.

Kay Williamson



Zoom help

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>

I am starting a Zoom Group but I need to know what help you need.

Please contact me on mike.davis@silchester.org with questions/comments.

Mike Davis

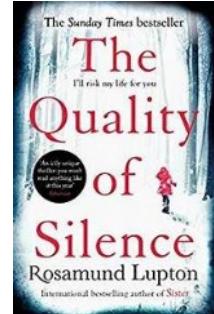
More good reads...continued



The Quality of Silence by Rosamund Upton

You should wrap up warmly to read this “relentlessly tense thriller”.

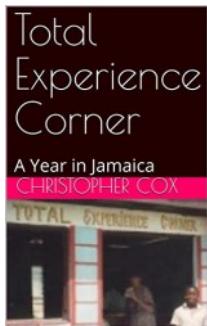
Set in Alaska in November, the story is told by 10 year old Ruby, who is deaf. She and her mother, Yasmin, have just flown in but are met by the police rather than her father. The authorities believe he has perished in a catastrophic fire which wiped out an entire northern community. Convinced that he is lost in the wilderness, this is the account of their journey in darkness and blizzard conditions to find him, pursued by someone equally determined to prevent them succeeding.



Total Experience Corner: A Year in Jamaica

by Chris Cox, a local author

You could wear summer clothes while reading this one!



In 1991 Chris took part in a Commonwealth teacher exchange. This is an account of Chris and Gemma's year in Jamaica through the letters he sent home.

Chris has published the book to raise funds for the Red Cross as the Langport Centre and theatre trips have been closed throughout the pandemic.

You can purchase your own copy from Amazon or borrow mine for a donation to Red Cross: contact Jane on redgrove@btinternet.com

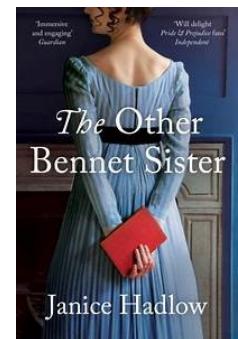
The Other Bennet Sister by Janice Hadlow

Wear whatever you would normally wear for Jane Austen!

What happened to Mary the “ugly duckling” middle sister in Pride and Prejudice when Mr Collins finally inherited the family home on the death of Mr Bennet?

I loved this and had to remind myself that it was not written by Jane Austen herself.

Jane Redgrove



By Paul Muffett

The Round the Island Race

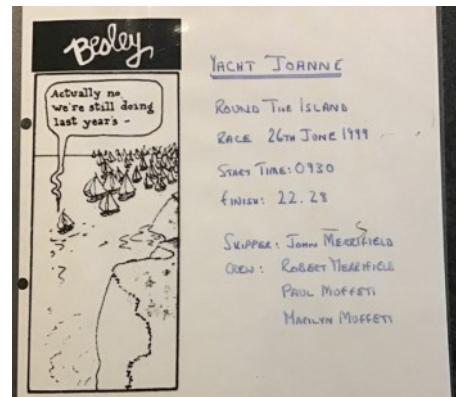
Our first attempt found us becalmed at Alum Bay with the needles lighthouse not far off. The year was 1998, and the first photograph -> shows the yacht's compliment: My wife Marilyn, myself, John our skipper, John's son-in-law Ian and, kneeling, John's son Robert. The decision was made to turn on the inboard engine and head back to Cowes.

With renewed enthusiasm the following year, we set off very early to be at the start line off Cowes determined to

compete and finish the *Round the Island Race*.

Many of the yachts got off to a good start having lined up in a line across the Solent from the Royal Yacht Squadron. On board the 23 footer was John our skipper, his son Robert, and Marilyn and me. We all settled down for what was to prove to be a very long day. Many of the multi-hulls zoom round in about 4 hours, ours was to be a much more stately voyage.

....continued.....



The Round the Island Race

By Paul Muffett

....continued.....

John was extremely proud of his 4 berth craft that he had purchased at a very advantageous discount from a friend who had built the boat many years previously from the keel up. As he got older, the original owner kept her on a swinging mooring on the River Medina, which runs from Cowes to Newport. Most weekends, weather permitting, he and his wife could be seen on board with a picnic. That sadly was the extent of its use, until he decided that they could no longer enjoy it. When offered the boat, John was ecstatic spending many hours looking after her and in the summer would often stay overnight on board. He was very proud of the fact that a couple of swans would arrive early in the morning and tap their beaks on the hull in the hope of receiving the odd tit-bit.



We rounded the Needles and were making good time. A little further on, we passed a beautiful 50 foot yacht, with about 20 crew on board, stuck

aground. A large lifeboat was standing by about 40 feet away just in case anything untoward occurred. They were in for a long wait for the tide to turn to hopefully float off and make for the finish line.

At St Catherine's Light, the most southerly tip of the island, we ate our picnic, washed down with a glass of wine. The sea off St Catherine's can be choppy where two tides meet. Just as Marilyn came up through the hatchway a wave caught us and soaked her and ruined her glass of wine. We passed Ventnor leaving a fair distance from the shore as it is particularly rocky around there. On, then across Shanklin and Sandown bay before turning west leaving plenty of sea between us and Bembridge Ledge.

In the late afternoon passing Ryde on the port side and Portsmouth and Southsea to starboard, the wind died away. We eventually reached Cowes about 10pm. The finish line, a pontoon with a shack perched on it, was deserted to witness our jubilant return. Whilst John and his son put the vessel "to bed", Marilyn and I dashed around to the race office on Cowes esplanade to find officials still there. I asked if our skipper could claim his prize for finishing the circuit. For our cheek he handed us the pewter tankard awarded to each boat that finished as per the photo attached.

Post script: I met John not long after we moved to the Isle of Wight in 1987. He and I became firm friends. I joined him as a member of the men's chorus of the Solent Gilbert and Sullivan

Society in Cowes, appearing in just about every G & S production.

We had great fun in a variety of craft from a 10 foot dinghy with an outboard, to a Drascombe Lugger, to a 32 ft Contessa, which in days gone by had crossed the Atlantic. The dinghy, perched on our mini's roof rack and outboard in the rear foot well, provided many happy trips to *The Folly Inn* halfway from Cowes to Newport. Their speciality was a "crew pot" soup for 2 persons to share, which accompanied a couple of pints of ale before we returned to one of the slipways in Cowes. The Folly had pontoons both side of the river, with a ferry boat in service during the summer months. Overnight mooring was available at a fee, with showers etc on the side of the pub. Just south of the Folly Inn is Island Harbour with a fine marina and an ever growing number of residences. To own one of these properties, one has to prove that Council Tax is paid on a property elsewhere in the UK.



Our other excursions included day trips to Yarmouth, Lymington or Fishbourne. We usually moored alongside at the sailing club pontoon. John signed the visitor's book with our names followed by "JYC" (John's yacht club). We often travelled to Warsash on the Hamble (where the TV drama "Howard's Way" was filmed many years ago). Another of our favourites was Ashlet Creek, immediately behind the Fawley Oil Refinery, also off Southampton Water. Usually once each year we would cross the Solent to the Beaulieu estate and spend a few hours with a pint or 2 at *The Master Builder*, making sure to be aware of the state of the tide and weather to ensure a safe trip back to Cowes.

Maybe this has given you a taste of my leisure-time enjoying day trips around the Isle of Wight.

Image one: A Besley cartoon printed in the Isle of Wight County Press weekly newspaper. Besley was a regular cartoonist for the County Press. I copied the cartoon and added the narrative to give to John.

Image two: this shows the crew for the aborted race in 1998.

Image three: shows John and myself enjoying a joke in the stern of "Joanne".

Image four: shows the tankard given by the Island Sailing Club to each skipper who completes the race. John's son Robert visited me some months after John died and offered me the tankard as a momento. It was an extremely kind gesture and one of my treasured



Are Books of Our Childhood Still Appealing?

By Mary Beth Greenop

Since last April, the Evening Readers' Group has successfully transitioned to Zoom meetings. One of our objectives, apart from having a social and often heated discussion about the book we have read, is to source our books through Somerton Library. The various closures in library services have made this challenging and occasionally we have had to purchase copies.

However, this month we decided to individually choose "A Children's Classic" to see if it stood the test of time and would still appeal to today's young readers.

What fun for most of us to have the reason (or dare I say excuse) to indulge in childhood nostalgia and revisit a time of innocence and unworldliness.

These are the books we chose – would you be tempted to read or re-read any of these?

***The Bell Family* by Noel Streatfeild**

(better known for her book 'Ballet Shoes')

It is a tale of vicarage life for a lively but not well-off family in S E London in the 1950s. Originally written as a series of radio broadcasts it would seem dated to today's children but retains a charm and nostalgia of the period. It stands as a piece of period history featuring jam sandwiches, enforced politeness to an unlikeable spinster and ones position in village society.

***The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett**

This is the story of spoiled Mary Lennox and the magical effects of a hidden garden. Although published in 1911 this was a tale that works for adults and, although dated; possibly thanks to a new movie release, may still captivate children. It continues to entertain gardeners for the literal and metaphorical transformation a garden can bring. It should definitely remain a children's classic.

***The Wind In The Willows* by Kenneth Graeme**

One initially thinks of this as a top Children's Classic as it focuses on four anthropomorphised animals: Mole, Rat, Toad, and Badger. They live in a pastoral version of 1908 Edwardian England. What was intriguing when doing some additional research was that (apart from being a quintessentially English book written by a Scot) *The Wind in the Willows* is not a children's book at all - neither

the author nor the original publishers ever suggested that it was. Nor is it an animal story: the characters are, as one of the original reviewers, the novelist Arnold Bennett, observed, "meant to be nothing but human beings," The humour and eccentricities of the characters survive the passage of time and our reader thoroughly enjoyed the book (when it wasn't being snatched away by someone else...).

'Anne of Green Gables' A 1908 novel by Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery was written for all ages, and has been considered a classic children's novel since the mid-twentieth century. Set in the late 19th century, the novel recounts the adventures of Anne Shirley, an 11-year-old orphan girl, who is sent to live with a middle-aged brother and sister who had originally intended to adopt a boy to help them on their farm. Set in the fictional town of Avonlea in Prince Edward Island, Canada, our reader so enjoyed being emersed in Nova Scotia life she wants to visit the area (when it's warmer) and has gone on to read several sequels. The TV series appears to have conveyed the essence of the novel well.

***Moon Fleet* by J. Meade Falkner**

A swashbuckling yarn written in 1898 but set in 1757, it is a tale of smuggling, skulduggery and adventure on the Dorset coast. While it is an adventure story that translates well as a period piece on television, the writing style may not appeal to children today.

***Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe.** Written in 1719 yours truly was astonished this book is still being read. While well-known for the storyline of a castaway who spends 28 years on a remote tropical desert island (off the coasts of Venezuela and Trinidad), who encounters cannibals, rescues Friday and finally returns to England; the heavy biblical God-fearing content and involvement with the slave trade was a revelation! I found it a struggle and needless to say when offered *The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, declined to read it!

Let us know how you get on!

Editor's Note: If reading this article has stirred your memories, please tell us which books thrilled you as a child so we can feature them next month.

Also, it would be interesting to hear if you have ever been tempted to read a particular favourite book again as an adult.

Did it live up to your memories, did it stir up your original feelings towards the book or were you left feeling disappointed?

MY LIFE WITH MUSIC

Enid Thresher

My mother always said that from birth I slept fine while music was playing but as soon as it stopped I would wake up howling. That should have told them something. At the age of four I started Sunday School and it was found that I had a singing voice that was true in pitch and had tremendous power - even at that age. The Christmas before my fifth birthday in January I sang my first solo, *Away in a Manger*.

Every Christmas thereafter I sang that carol in the school nativity play. I came to hate it as it meant that I was always the innkeeper's wife and never had a chance to be an angel even! I grew to dislike it intensely though I've grown out of that a bit since then.

At the village school we sang hymns every morning and we also had those wonderful BBC radio programmes, *Singing Together* and *Rhythm and Melody*. These programmes introduced us to folk songs, rounds and simplified versions of operatic arias, one of which was the *Birdcatcher's Song* from *The Magic Flute*. (I'm not going to become too pompous with true foreign titles at this point!).

I joined the church choir at the age of seven, long before the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) recognised girl choristers. Girls were encouraged but not recognised; no equality in the 50s. My choir master taught me the rudiments of music theory so I could read it and I learned quite a few of those marvellous old hymn tunes and a great number of plainsong chants. So I progressed in the church choir until age nineteen. Each festival gave me a solo part and I eventually ended up as actual, but RSCM unrecognised, choir leader.

At eleven I went to the local grammar school. There we had a flourishing school choir which I joined and an extremely active English master (born in Dublin) who, apart from being able to instil a liking and an understanding of Shakespeare and Chaucer in a lot of his pupils, also produced, every two years, a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. These I didn't take part in, being so involved with choirs, but I enjoyed watching them.

I married and had children which prevented my taking part for many years but I avidly listened to operetta first and then gradually through Mozart I progressed to Verdi and Puccini. I can now manage short bursts of Wagner; although I tend to agree with Rossini that "Wagner has many great moments but awful quarters of an hour". (Pace Wagner lovers). I also loved listening to instrumental music of all kinds. The radio was almost never off.

Although my parents had been advised to provide me with singing lessons, funds were not available. So, in adulthood I started singing lessons myself. I had already taught myself while young to be able to play the piano enough to learn a new song or hymn so this helped. Once the children were older I joined choirs again where I sang everything from pop to religious classics to secular classics including Handel, Mendelssohn, Schubert, jazz, Abba and the Beatles. I also started singing at weddings, as a soloist for visiting male choirs and other such events. I even sang in a pastiche on the life of Nelson for a Trafalgar Night dinner at the wardroom of the local Royal Naval Air station where I worked. I joined the local Am Dram and appeared in pantomime and music hall with them.

In 1989 I began an Open University (OU) degree course. I decided on *European Humanities* being very interested in history and the arts and music was a large contribution. But I also took music as a "side dish" studying first the theory of music, then Baroque to Romantic and the works of Beethoven. I also took *Religion in Victorian Britain* which had a large chunk of classical church music in it as well as the Salvation Army songs.

At the summer schools the musical element were expected to put on a show and so, as well as being in a choral piece, I also sang solos. Two of them were *The Sun Whose Rays* from *The Mikado* and *Che Faro Senza Euridice* from *Orfeo* by Gluck.

At the end of the 90s I discovered I was having difficulty singing without coughing. I had been a founder member of our local twinning association with an Italian commune and I found I had no trouble there in the Apuan Alps but at home it was a different matter altogether.

Doctors discovered that I have developed an intolerance to air pollution - traffic, cigarette smoke - you name it. So, after singing Mozart's *Laudate Dominum* at the official Italian twinning ceremony here, that was it. No more singing for me.

However, over the years I have collected a huge library of vinyl, CD and DVD performances and I can enjoy them at will now I am retired and, unfortunately, widowed. I found that, although usually I don't enjoy the music of, for instance, Britten or Poulenc, if I had to sing it (which I did on many occasions) I discovered a liking for the piece. Therefore it seems that understanding a work goes a long way to inducing a liking for it. Though it didn't happen with Stockhausen's *Stimmung* which we had to study in the first year OU!

MY CHRISTMAS DAY

Viv Winterburn

My day started early – 6am! - with a real treat watching the Royal Opera House's 2014 version of the Nutcracker Ballet on Sky Arts TV – so grateful this can be seen on Freeview now – one of the few advantages of being in Lockdown. I am a huge Ballet fan and I have watched a lot online during the past year so this was a wonderful way to begin my first ever Christmas day alone.

The timing was perfect as I had agreed to have a Zoom session at 10am with my brother & his family in Queensland, Oz {all 5 of them} and my son David with his wife Layla joining us later on from Kent – a fabulous hour's chat all told.

A few days previously I had seen Cynthia Curtis by coincidence whilst delivering Christmas Cards to one of her neighbours. We had a brief chat which included her asking what I was doing on THE DAY – In consequence, she very kindly contacted Jo Stradling, one of the organisers of lunches held on Christmas Day at Huish Episcopi Academy for those alone. Cynthia was & is one of her many volunteers and thus knew that although it was impossible to hold the lunch at the school because of the COVID virus regulations, the Langport Community Volunteers intended to plan a “cook & deliver” Christmas Lunch & for them to be delivered individually at homes this year. Despite it only being a couple of days before, I was delighted to receive a call from Jo offering such to me – she rang to say I would be included as a recipient & to check what choice of vegetables & pudding I would prefer & to inform me of the approximate time of delivery – wow – just how amazing was that?!

Shortly after midday, a couple knocked on my front door with my dinner together with written instructions how to heat & serve it all. Imagine my surprise then to be handed a bag of goodies including the following items – mince pies, mask, a large slice of Christmas cake (delicious especially as I'm not normally a fan), sweets, chocolates, pen & notepad, crossword book, long-handled mop duster, tea-towel & more as you can see from the photo. Incredible & so uplifting as I wasn't expecting to have any presents, let alone from such a source – so generous – a very caring organisation.

The Christmas dinner was so tasty as well – yet another photo to view – in fact there was so much turkey that I saved some and had it in a sandwich for my tea – super. The trifle that I chose was lovely as

*Photo of
Christmas box
given to Viv
Winterburn,
part of
Christmas
dinner from,
check
organisation*



well and ended up feeling very full and thankful.

Naturally I rang Jo to thank her so much for this very welcome service and asked for more information about it. Apparently there were 8 teams delivering 42 meals together with the goody bag of practical small gifts all free of charge. The meals were cooked & prepared at The Bridge Cafe in Langport, which became their base to coordinate everything from. Jo was awarded a grant by the Somerset Community Foundation for this year to help their costs. She stressed that many local people also donate both time & money each year as this service started around 5 years ago & has steadily grown in numbers each year ever since. Although their annual Christmas event had to be cancelled this year, the volunteers hope that it can happen in 2021 & wanted me to let all u3a members know that if they will be alone this coming Christmas for whatever reason, they would be welcome to attend – although all aware that this year's arrangements may have to be repeated sadly.

Afterwards I was of course so replete that I mostly watched more TV for the rest of the day – including William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* from the National Theatre, Matthew Bourne's *The Red Shoes* Ballet on BBC2, *Call the Midwife* and an All-Star Opera Gala from the ROH in the evening as well as another chat via FaceTime with David & Layla late afternoon – thank goodness I now have an iPad – an acquisition Christmas Eve 2019.

*Photo 2 of Viv
Winterburn's
Christmas
dinner 2020*



Review of the Zoom Talk, Magicians in Pictures, by Ian Keable,

Friday 12th February

Hello all you unlucky people who did NOT attend the u3a talk on Friday Feb 12th when Ian Keable spoke clearly and all very entertainingly. His topic was, "Magicians as Depicted in Pictures".

Ian was an accountant who then turned professional magician 30 years ago.

As a fellow magician this talk immediately appealed to me , and, as there were about 45 others zooming in, it must have appealed to them as well!!

Ian took us from Egypt 2000 BCE with paintings engravings, and cartoons in Punch and its French equivalent, Charivari published in Paris 1832 to 1937. The cartoons were my favourite e.g. showing famous people pulling various things out of a hat.

How many of you knew Prince Charles is a member of the Magic Circle? !!

Ian thought they must have lowered the barrier a bit, but he did successfully demonstrate the cups and balls routine. This trick was probably one of the first routines to be recorded, as was the pea

under a thimble; used as a gambling trick to persuade unsuspecting persons to part with their money!

We saw images from 1479 and 1494, all cups and balls trick, which I am able to perform , but not as well as Ian , who continued with a SINGLE cup and ball , disappearing the latter several times , and eventually changing it into an orange under our very eyes, with all of us watching very close up..

Amazing...I know how he did it but I could not see HOW he did it!!

It is hoped that by the time you are reading this newsletter more and more of you will have tuned in on Friday February 26th to Bob Mizon , a retired teacher and now astronomer, talking to us on " Is there anybody there?

He offered to do the talk in French!

Maybe next year. !!!! More of that anon.....

Dr David Robins,
Speaker co-ordinator and amateur magician

Ernest Hemingway and a few of his contemporaries were challenged to write a story using less than 10 words. He **wrote**,

" For Sale. Baby shoes. Never Worn".

This is my version of his story.

To say that he was always immaculately dressed was an understatement. Not only was he the sole owner of the large, well-situated shop where, "tailoring for discerning ladies and gentlemen" was prominently advertised, but he was a constant example of what he sold in his store. Even more, he was confident in buying and selling everything and was not afraid to take a risk. All in all, Leonard Hammond was a very wealthy man and was known in the west Riding as being "warm".

He lived in a comfortable villa in Upper Croft on the road to Bradford, just far enough out of Becksfield to escape the smoke and smells from Hadley's mill and adjoining dye works. The Hammond household was small and attentive – a man servant who doubled as valet and butler, a housekeeper, a parlour maid and a cook, who ruled over her kitchen, as well as an over-timid kitchen maid. The outside staff was a gardener and a groom.

" For Sale. Baby shoes. Never Worn".

.....continued.....

Most mornings Leonard was driven in his carriage to the store but, either in the carriage, on horseback or walking, Leonard would either avert his eyes or stare with morbid fascination when he came to a certain bend in the road. This was where, after only eighteen months of wedded bliss, his beloved wife, Alice, had died.

Alice had been in her governess cart when a motor car had careered round the bend, frightening Alice's pony and she had been thrown from the cart as it overturned. Labourers clearing a ditch nearby raised the alarm but Alice was dead when help arrived.

"It were Mr Hadley's car, Mr Hammond. I knows it was. I saw 'im as clear as the nose on your face and I'd swear as 'e knows what he'd done, as 'ow he stopped and then went on".

"Are you certain?" asked Hammond and the man said he would go to court and say so.

Leonard Hammond's face was as dark as the sky that winter's day when he demanded to see George Hadley. Ignoring the butler, Hammond went straight to the library. George Hadley, whisky in his hand, felt his face turning red when Leonard Hammond challenged him.

"You're not thinking straight, Hadley had blustered. "You can't think I had anything to do with what happened to Mrs Hammond. I know you're" and he stopped short as Leonard moved towards him.

"Don't soil my wife's name by speaking of her", Leonard told him in a cold voice. Then, as he turned to leave, "Just remember that I have a long memory and have every intention of having a long life". Hadley found his hand shaking as he poured himself yet another whisky and soda.

Leonard allowed himself six months mourning for Alice and then slowly he went out into society again. Many a Mamma paraded her daughter in front of him while more than one widow cast her net, but to no avail for Leonard had only one aim in like. To that end, he checked his plans with his solicitor before opening up a special bank account and ledgers, which he alone dealt with and before he began to indulge his passion for buying and selling. Only this time there would be

no, or very little, selling.

At first nothing but small purchases were made and for three or four years he agonised over the slow progress until the day when he realised he had that one all important extra share. He was the largest shareholder in Hadley's business.

In a matter of six months Hadley had been removed from the Board of Directors and barred from the mill and the dye works. Hammond did not stop at that. A word here, a knowing glance or nod there and quickly it was rumoured that Hadley was not financially reliable. Starting with his account at Hammond's store, his credit began to be withdrawn. Then the day came when Hammond was summoned to his bank. The customers in the bank stared at an uneasy, once confident Hadley waiting to be summoned into the manager's office. no matter how he twisted this way and that trying to find a way out of his difficulties, there was no solution

A year later, he was declared bankrupt and everything he owned was sold off. He was left with nothing.

It was a warm spring day when he had to leave his house. The grounds, although a little neglected, were a delight. A local hackney cab was waiting at the door. No noisy car now. George Hadley's few pieces of luggage were in the cab when he noticed the carriage in the drive and realised who was sitting there.

"What are you doing here Hammond?" Come to enjoy my misery? Come to gloat? Well, you're too late for any pickings. They went weeks ago. A split second passed between them. "It was you, wasn't it? You bastard! You're responsible for this!"

Leonard looked him in the eyes, "You took everything that was precious to me, George Hadley and I have repaid you. With interest I hope."

Hammond watched as the cab drove slowly down the drive and then looked down at his lap. He was holding so gently, a pair of baby shoes, never worn.

Thelma Jones



Entertainments

A Puzzlement

A little silver-haired lady called her neighbour and asks, 'Could you possibly spare me couple of minutes? I've got a very difficult jigsaw puzzle and can't seem to get it started'. 'Of course. What's it going to be when it's finished?' he asks. 'It's going to be a cockerel,' she tells him. 'There's a picture of it on the box.'

Being a good neighbour, he immediately goes round to help. Once inside, he immediately sees the pieces spread all over the table. He looks at them for a moment before saying, 'I'm awfully sorry but I'm afraid I can see no way to make these pieces into a cockerel image. Now why don't we sit down with a nice cup of tea? And then we can put all the cornflakes back in the box.'

Sarah Kamm

My Job Search

1. My first job was working in an orange juice factory, but I got canned . Couldn't concentrate .
2. Then I worked in the woods as a lumberjack, but just couldn't hack it, so they gave me the axe .
3. After that, I tried being a tailor, but wasn't suited for it, mainly because it was a sew-sew job.
4. Next, I tried working in a muffler factory, but that was too exhausting.
5. Then, tried being a chef - figured it would add a little spice to my life, but just didn't have the thyme.
6. Next, I attempted being a deli worker, but any way I sliced it.... I couldn't cut the mustard.
7. My best job was as a musician, but eventually found I wasn't noteworthy.
8. I studied a long time to become a doctor, but didn't have any patience
9. Next, was a job in a shoe factory, tried hard but just didn't fit in.
10. I became a professional fisherman, but discovered I couldn't live on my net income.
11. Managed to get a good job working for a pool maintenance company, but the work was just too draining.
12. So then I got a job in a workout centre, but they said I wasn't fit for the job.
13. After many years of trying to find steady work, I finally got a job as a historian - until I realized there was no future in it.
14. My last job was working in Starbucks, but had to quit because it was always the same old grind.
15. SO, I TRIED
RETIREMENT
AND I FOUND I'M
PERFECT FOR THE JOB!

Original author unknown

Judi Powell

"We All Need Our Beauty Sleep"





Jokes?

A couple in their nineties are both having problems remembering things. During a check-up, the doctor tells them that they're physically okay, but they might want to start writing things down to help them remember...

Later that night, while watching TV, the old man gets up from his chair, 'Want anything while I'm in the kitchen?' he asks.

'Will you get me a bowl of ice cream?'

'Sure.'

'Don't you think you should write it

down so you can remember it?' she asks.

'No, I can remember it.'

'Well, I'd like some strawberries on top, too. Maybe you should write it down, so as not to forget it?'

He says, 'I can remember that. You want a bowl of ice cream with strawberries.'

'I'd also like whipped cream. I'm certain you'll forget that, write it down?' she asks.

Irritated, he says, 'I don't need to

DANCING PENSIONERS TO GO ON NEW ROAD SIGN



write it down, I can remember it! Ice cream with strawberries and whipped cream - I got it, for goodness sake!'

Then he toddles into the kitchen. After about 20 minutes, the old man returns from the kitchen and hands his wife a plate of bacon and eggs. She stares at the plate for a moment. 'Where's my toast?'

An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house. After eating, the wives left the table and went into the kitchen. The two gentlemen were talking, and one said, 'Last night we went out to a new restaurant and it was really great I would recommend it very highly.' The other man said, 'What is the name of the restaurant?' The first man thought and thought and finally said, 'What's the name of that flower you give to someone you

love? You know, the one that's red and has thorns.'

'Do you mean a rose?'

'Yes, that's the one,' replied the man. He then turned towards the kitchen and yelled, 'Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?'

Hospital regulations require a wheel chair for patients being discharged. However, while working as a student nurse, I found

one elderly gentleman already dressed and sitting on the bed with a suitcase at his feet, who insisted he didn't need my help to leave the hospital.

After a chat about rules being rules, he reluctantly let me wheel him to the elevator.

On the way down I asked him if his wife was meeting him.

'I don't know,' he said. 'She's still upstairs in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown.'

A senior citizen said to his eighty-year old buddy: 'So I hear you're getting married?'
'Yep!'
'Do I know her?'
'Nope!'
'This woman, is she good looking?'
'Not really.'
'Is she a good cook?'
'Nah, she can't cook too well.'
'Does she have lots of money?'
'Nope! Poor as a church mouse.'
'Well, then, is she good in bed?'
'I don't know.'
'Why in the world do you want to marry her then?'
'Because she can still drive!'

A man was telling his neighbor, 'I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me four thousand dollars, but it's state of the art. It's perfect.'
'Really,' answered the neighbor.
'What kind is it?'

'Twelve thirty.'

Morris, an 82 year-old man, went to the doctor to get a physical.

A few days later, the doctor saw Morris walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm. A couple of days later, the doctor spoke to Morris and said, 'You're really doing great, aren't you?' Morris replied, 'Just doing what you said, Doc: 'Get a hot mamma and be cheerful."

The doctor said, 'I didn't say that.. I said, 'You've got a heart murmur; be careful.'

One more.....

A little old man shuffled slowly into an ice cream parlor and pulled himself slowly, painfully, up onto a stool... After catching his breath, he ordered a banana split. The waitress asked kindly, 'Crushed nuts?' 'No,' he replied, 'Arthritis.'

Picture Quiz answers



25	ANDY WARHOL
26	PETER O'TOOLE
27	LUCILLE BALL
28	(MARSHALL) (PHILIPPE) PETAIN
29	NELSON MANDELA
30	ROBERT KENNEDY
31	TOMMY COOPER
32	ROBIN DAY
33	DORIS DAY
34	ROY ROGERS
35	DARCEY BUSSELL
36	DEAN MARTIN
37	WILLIAM SHATNER (Capt Kirk)
38	GABBY LOGAN nee YORATH
39	BENNY HILL
40	CLARE BALDING
41	DAVE ALLEN
42	SALVADOR DALI
43	JACK DEE
44	JAMES GANDOLFINI (Tony)
45	BRENDA BLETHYN (Vera)
46	PETULA CLARK
47	PAULINE COLLINS
48	JANE ASHER

Please send all articles for the Newsletter to the editor

kaywilliamson46@hotmail.com

Deadline for the April edition...20th March

No entries can be accepted after this date.

Pictures welcome, but keep script brief

Minimum formatting please...no pdfs!

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