



### U3A RADIO

The u3a Radio Podcast is broadcast on 17th of each month but you can view them all via u3a's [YouTube channel](#).

The April episode includes discussions about u3a day with organiser Sue Stokes; experience of debates in the House of Lords, Zoom interest groups, plus other stories from across the u3a movement.

If you have a story to share, you can email it to: [communications@u3a.org.uk](mailto:communications@u3a.org.uk)

### MEMBERSHIP

It's very encouraging to see that we now have at least 80 more members than at this time last month.

Thank you to the 240 members who have renewed their subscription this year; we hope it will not be too long before you are able to enjoy the activities again.

We will shortly be removing anyone who has not yet joined from the distribution list for the Third Age Trust Magazine. If you intend to join in the near future please let Alan Stevenson know by ringing 01782 395760 or emailing [a.stevenson09@btinternet.com](mailto:a.stevenson09@btinternet.com).

The 2021/22 U3A year looks much brighter. Our Walking Group has started to meet and we are optimistic about restarting more groups in the near future as soon as venues and social distancing allow.

Thank you for your patience and understanding – it shouldn't be too long now before there's more positive news!

### MEETINGS, ETC.

At last there is light at the end of the tunnel! It won't be long now before we can meet indoors in groups of six without being limited to two households. This next stage of easing restrictions will be on 17th May.

As the Walking group's risk assessment has already been completed, they are now able to meet by walking in smaller groups of six people, allowing for social distancing, etc. Groups of six can now meet anywhere outdoors, including in private gardens. From 17th May this limit on numbers meeting outdoors will be lifted.

Dave Darby is keen to commence the Crown Green Bowls and once the venue allows sufficient access the necessary risk assessments will be completed.

Dining with table service is permitted in pubs and restaurants from 17th May, with up to six people, who will not be allowed to mix with other guests. Small indoor interest groups may be able to resume from this date, providing that a suitable venue is available and risk assessments have been carried out.

Groups Co-ordinator Val Greatbatch will contact existing and new venues to get a better idea of availability. She will then contact Group Leaders and, together with Vice-Chairman Andrew Devin, will be looking at risk assessments for each group and venue.

From 21st June removal of all social contact restrictions should allow more flexibility and it will be a gradual return to normality at last!

## LOCAL HISTORY

An interesting recent discovery involved the two surviving bottle-ovens at the Phoenix Works, King Street, Longton, which were thought to be the normal 'updraught' type, where heat and smoke passes upwards through the oven and out from the top of the 'bottle'.

Recent examination of the ovens as part of the SoT Heritage Action Zone project reveals that these ovens are the later 'downdraught' type, where heat passes up the oven chamber, is deflected back down through the ware via vents in the floor, eventually leaving the oven via a connected chimney. This type of oven was a later development, supposed to use heat more efficiently, but they were temperamental to use. Until recently, it was thought that the only 'downdraught' ovens in the city and perhaps in the whole country, were three at the former Acme Marls factory at the bottom of Bournes Bank in Burslem.

<https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/archaeologists-make-significant-discovery-former-5245902>

A number of notable articles have recently been published in the Sentinel and are available on their website, including:

The history of the Dudson pottery company, including an excellent interactive display of the museum on the original factory site in Hope Street, Hanley:

<https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/history/look-around-historic-hanley-site-5248238>

The George Hotel in the centre of Burslem is on sale for £2 million - whether anyone will be willing to offer this amount remains to be seen.

<https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/historic-stoke-trent-hotel-up-5262677>

It has now been confirmed that Caverswall Castle has been sold, so let's hope that it now has a secure future. <https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/fairytale-caverswall-castle-boasts-18-5301980>

There will be possibilities to see or travel on the Flying Scotsman later this year and you can find out more on the Sentinel website at: <https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/whats-on/whats-on-news/flying-scotsman-train-coming-stoke-5277716>

Numerous pictures of Prince Philip's visits to Staffordshire can be found at:

<https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/gallery/14-photographs-prince-philip-visiting-5050648>

Robert Kane has recently posted a short video of Longton cemetery on YouTube. It includes the memorial to the men and boys who lost their lives in the 1889 Mossfield colliery disaster:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADkpKdMi1LY>

There's more information about the disaster here: <https://www.nmrs.org.uk/mines-map/accidents-disasters/staffordshire/mossfield-colliery-explosion-longton-1889/>

Phil Rowley has confirmed that he is willing to continue leading the Local History group once the Methodist Central Hall is accessible and that, once he knows that the group can meet he'll be back like a shot! Thanks Phil!

## GAS PUMP WISDOM!

Can you believe that a small petrol station in Gauteng, South Africa has become famous for the various messages written on a blackboard each day?

It's true – the petrol station has become quite a landmark with its daily #PetrolPumpWisdom uplifting quotes displayed on a chalkboard. Some people say they deliberately drive past the petrol station just to read the quotes which are said to brighten their day.



The lady currently behind this initiative is Alison Billett, who says the board was inherited from the previous owner of the petrol station and they have continued an existing tradition which has more recently been highlighted by social media.

She is frequently contacted by people who appreciate the messages which are said to inspire and motivate.



Alison says "Having people come and tell me their stories and how the quote helped them in some small way is what motivates me to keep writing!"

Many other messages have been displayed, but we thought these were particularly thought provoking.



**APRIL QUIZ** (Answers next month)

**These are all Staffordshire place names, but answers are NOT in alphabetical order:**

1. Teresa holds the money
2. Large angry Bird
3. Extra in your suitcase
4. Misspelt boot
5. Not smooth but near
6. 224 ounces
7. Sterilising fluid
8. Not an old church
9. Mohammad Ali originally heavy
10. Mrs Ogdens rock
11. Policeman cuts grass
12. Miners talking
13. River meat
14. Weight stretched
15. Small children in wood

**Answers to the March Quiz:**

- |  |                    |                          |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Sicily  | 2. Canberra        | 3. Phoenix, Arizona      |
| 4. Any two - Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, Lincoln |                    | 5. Caves                 |
| 6. Severn  | 7. Paris           | 8. 4                     |
| 11. Venus  | 10. Bashful        | 11. Tax Evasion          |
| 12. Alex Higgins                                       | 13. The Power      | 14. An octopus           |
| 15. Helen of Troy                                      | 16. Shirley Temple | 17. Florence Nightingale |
| 18. Coffee.  | 19. B. 206         |                          |
| 20. Careless Whisper, George Michael                   |                    |                          |
| 21. I Just Called To Say I Love You - Stevie Wonder    |                    |                          |
| 22. 'Highway to Hell - AC/DC                           |                    | 23. Muhammad Ali         |
| 24. Two – Anne Boleyn & Anne of Cleves                 |                    | 25. Bicycle              |

**A few more questions to think about but unfortunately we don't know the answers!**

- What if my dog only brings back his ball because he thinks I like throwing it!
- Which letter is silent in the word 'scent', the s or the c?
- Why is the letter W in English called double 'U'. Shouldn't it be double 'V'?
- Why is it that goods sent by road are called shipments, but goods sent by ships are called cargo?

## **AFTERNOON TEA**

Have you got into the habit of indulging in a cup of tea and a scone, hot cross bun or piece of cake during lockdown? Ever wondered where it started?

The custom seems to date back to the mid-19th century, and the 7th Duchess of Bedford, Anne Russell. The Duchess got hungry at about 4pm each day and complained that she had 'that sinking feeling'. As it was still four hours until dinner at 8pm, she began to have sandwiches or a small cake with her tea. Her friends thought this was marvellous, and the idea spread quickly through upper class circles. Soon, it seems, everyone in England was looking forward to Afternoon Tea, and a great British tradition was born. So put the kettle on and enjoy a nice cuppa and something tasty to go with it!

## **WALKING GROUP**

The Walking Group had their first outing on Monday, 19th April. Twelve members enjoyed the five mile walk around Rudyard Lake, splitting into groups of six to conform with social distancing. It was a lovely sunny day and Rudyard looked magical with the boats bobbing on the water and the trees just coming into blossom. Some members went off to the Rudyard Hotel for lunch and others just enjoyed a drink while admiring the view along the lake.

The next walk will be on 10th May, when we will meet just past the Blue Diamond Garden Centre entrance at Trentham for a 10.30am start. Please contact Alan and Lynne on 01782 395760 if you require any further information.

## **UKELELE GROUP**

We are looking for a new leader or leaders for the Ukelele Group, so if you feel you can help we would love to hear from you. This has been a very popular group and it would be such a shame if it didn't continue in some format.

If you don't feel confident enough to lead the group single-handed, perhaps it could be a joint effort – the leadership doesn't have to be a one-man or one-woman band!

There's no immediate rush so there's time to think about it and perhaps discuss it with fellow members, if you can help please contact Val Greatbatch on 07881 367509 or by email to [vfgreat@outlook.com](mailto:vfgreat@outlook.com)

## **FAMILY HISTORY**

This is a small group which has lost its previous venue due to closure of the Tollgate Hotel, which was quite central for group members. An alternative (with wi-fi) needs to be arranged and Fay would be happy to hold the meetings at home in Trentham once restrictions are lifted and imminent home improvements are completed.

Will group members please contact Fay on 01782 658659 or by email to [hflowell@live.co.uk](mailto:hflowell@live.co.uk) if you have other suggestions and would like possible alternatives to be discussed.



## **GARDEN AND NATURE LOVERS**

Quite a few of the NGS Gardens now have Open Days scheduled for 2021, but currently some have to be pre-booked. Fay will look for some ideas of places to visit this summer then perhaps members can meet at a local garden centre in the near future to discuss options.

If you would like to resume meetings during May or June and have any suggestions for future visits, please contact Fay on 01782 658659 or by email to [hfhowell@live.co.uk](mailto:hfhowell@live.co.uk)

## **NETFEST**

The national u3a have organised a number of daily, interactive events from 14th to 18th June. A flyer is being circulated with this newsletter and anyone wishing to take part will need to register online. Further details are to follow.

## **IVAN SMITH'S NORTHERN IRELAND TRIP**

Ivan Smith, Chairman of Leek u3a is arranging a holiday from 21st to 26th July 2021. This is a 6-day (5-night) holiday to Northern Ireland, including return flights to Belfast with Easyjet or Ryanair from Liverpool or Manchester. Return UK Airport coach transfers are provided by Robin Hood Coaches.

A local guide and executive coach travel is provided on day trips and airport transfers in Northern Ireland. Trips include the fortified city of Derry, the Giant's Causeway, and National Trust properties Downhill Demesne and Hezlett House. A train journey from Derry to Coleraine is included and was described by Michael Palin as 'one of the most beautiful rail journeys in the world'. The itinerary also includes visits to Stormont Castle, the Ulster Museum, the Titanic Experience, the Ulster Folk Museum, the National Trust's Mount Stewart House and Gardens, and a 2-hour cruise on Strangford Lough.

The first two nights will be at the 4\* Maldron Hotel at Derry ([www.maldronhotelderry.com](http://www.maldronhotelderry.com)) and the remaining three nights at the 4\* Radisson Blu Hotel in Belfast (<https://www.radissonblu.com/en/hotel-belfast>). A set three course dinner without drinks is included on the first night at each hotel, with remaining nights on a bed and breakfast basis.

The train excursion on Day 3 and cruise on Day 5 are included, but gratuities and entrance fees to places of interest visited as part of the itinerary are extra. However, entrance to National Trust properties is free to anyone who is a NT member.

A deposit of £100 is required to secure the booking and the final balance is due 56 days prior to the tour departure date. Travel insurance costs £29 per person. The trip costs £894 (single supplement £149) and is based on a minimum of 30 paying passengers.

If you are interested in this holiday please contact Ivan direct by telephone on 01538 382998 or mobile 07860 633988. Alternatively, you can email [smith.ivanc@gmail.com](mailto:smith.ivanc@gmail.com)

## **NATIONAL U3A NEWSLETTER**

You can still sign up on the national website at <https://u3asites.org.uk> to receive the National Monthly Newsletter by email and it's worth a look. The latest edition includes the following but there's much more:

### **Yoga**

The learning team are throwing a spotlight on Yoga as part of their [Learn, Laugh, Move initiative](#). Peter Burton, Subject Adviser for Yoga, is featured together with a few Yoga group leaders to offer a series of Yoga workshops via Zoom, with advice for starting out, for trying new styles of Yoga and details of the many social & health benefits. You are also invited to share your images and own tips for practising Yoga.

### **Creative Writing Competition**

The Creative Writing Competition is back - given the popularity and success of last year's competition, we are encouraging members to get writing again. The theme for 2021 is 'Unexpected'. Please make sure to read the competition rules fully, including deadlines and information about the judging process, before submitting your entry online. You can also read last year's Winning Entries for inspiration. Find out more on the national website.

### **Click and Save**

Members have expressed an interest in having a discount scheme, where you can save money so the national office have partnered with member benefits specialists, Parliament Hill Ltd, to provide a discount scheme called **u3a Click and Save**.

Members will receive cashback when shopping with brands such as Sainsbury's, M&S and Costa Coffee. More information will follow when the scheme is ready to launch.

*Please try to stay in touch with fellow members. Even a phone call can lift the spirits of someone who is feeling isolated. If any of your friends don't have access to the internet, it would be very helpful if you could let them have sight of this newsletter.*

**Items for publication in the next newsletter will need to reach Fay Howell by Friday, 21st May, 2021. Tel: 01782 658659 or email: [hfhowell@live.co.uk](mailto:hfhowell@live.co.uk).**