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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 May broadcast centred on the theme of creative writing in various forms i.e. poetry, prose and plays.

If you have a story to share, you can email it to: communications@u3a.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP

Another 28 members have joined or renewed their subscriptions since last month, making our current total 268.

This is very encouraging and we look forward to seeing many more former members returning in the next few months as lifting of restrictions allows us to gradually resume U3A activities.

To save costs, anyone who has not yet joined will shortly be removed 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.

The 2021/22 U3A year looks much brighter. Our Walking Group is now meeting regularly and we are looking forward to restarting more groups soon.

Thank you for your patience during the pandemic and we hope to see many of you once again in the near future.

MEETINGS, ETC.

We are eagerly awaiting news that restrictions will still be lifted on 21st June as the Prime Minister planned, and are keeping fingers crossed that there won't be a further delay. There should be some clarification about this by 14th June.

Every effort is being made to get groups running again as soon as possible. The walking group is now meeting regularly and several other groups such as card-craft, Mexican train dominoes, line dancing, art and photography, plus garden and nature lovers and table tennis should all be commencing in June or July.

Dave Darby is keen to commence the Crown Green Bowls and is still awaiting the go-ahead from the venue but will resume indoor bowling sessions at Central Hall.

Once the situation regarding covid restrictions becomes clearer, the committee will assess how to progress with larger meetings and activities such as dining groups. Currently only groups of six can meet indoors at pubs and restaurants and are not allowed to mix with other guests or to book multiple tables.

There is some good news at last, as coach trips are now running and Lynne has provisionally booked a trip to Llandudno for 15th July (see page 6).

Val Greatbatch is continuing to contact venues and Group Leaders. She is also looking at risk assessments for each group and venue together with Vice-Chairman Andrew Devin.

WALKING GROUP

The next walk will be on Monday 7th June at Swynnerton, meeting at 10.30am. Meet at the Village Hall car park, just past the Fitzherbert Arms. The walk will be led by Michelle, Lindsey and Charlie the Jack Russell.

There will also be a walk on Monday 21st June but details are not yet known.

If you have any ideas for a future walk which you could lead, please contact Ali Townsend on 07450 791153 and she will circulate the details. Please contact Ali 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

GARDEN & NATURE LOVERS

Joe Beeston has sent Fay the links to a number of videos. Among them are two in particular which are quite fascinating for nature lovers. The first involves a microlight flying closely with flocks of birds, giving incredible views not only of the birds, but also the spectacular scenery below: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owiwClhc0IO>

In the second video the photography includes close up views of a wide variety of British and foreign birds, whose recorded birdsong is cleverly reproduced to represent a version of Mozart's "The Magic Flute": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMXD4h5w8D8>

There's also a video showing how trees have been trained into fascinating shapes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llkpiyW-Diw>

Quite a few of the NGS Gardens now have Open Days scheduled for 2021, but currently some have to be pre-booked. We can discuss options when we meet. The first meeting will be at 11am on Friday, 2nd June at Heath House Farm, Forsbrook and a table for six people will be booked for 12 noon. Please pre-book if you intend to come, by contacting Fay on 01782 658659 or by email to 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.**

ART LOVERS

This art group will be restarting in June at a different venue, which will be Blurton Community Centre, Oakwood Road (off Blurton Road), ST3 3AR. The first meeting will be at 10am on Wednesday, 2nd June, but due to the pandemic this will be restricted to former members of the group initially.

However, meetings will continue on alternate weeks and we will be looking to expand the group once restrictions are lifted. If you are interested in joining, please contact Lynette Bell on 01782 238712.

LOCKDOWN'S ENDING & YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO TRY SOMETHING NEW AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE LADIES BELOW!

Don't worry about lockdown having affected your mental capacity.....

Night clubs are reopening, but only vaccinated people will be allowed... 😂😂



If you ever feel like your brain is inadequate... Think of this guy!



ATTENTION!
DON'T WEAR
HEADPHONES WHILE
VACUUMING!

I've just finished the
whole house and realized
the vacuum wasn't even
plugged in.

Tip of the day: blow on **the wine** in
your coffee mug to convince the rest
of the zoom meeting that it is tea.



MAY QUIZ (Answers next month)

1. Former politician, author of 'Kane & Abel' and 'Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less'
2. Author of the Harry Potter stories
3. She starred in 'The Darling Buds of May' and was Sister Evangelina in 'Call the Midwife'
4. Author of the Jack Reacher stories
5. Christian name of Inspector Morse
6. Longest serving actor in Coronation Street
7. Who played Vera Duckworth's husband Jack?
8. Which Emmerdale character framed Charity Dingle for his own death?
9. Actor famous for his roles in 'Open All Hours' and 'Only Fools and Horses'
10. What was the setting for Stephen King's story 'The Green Mile'?
11. Who played Forrest Gump in the movie of the same name?
12. Who directed the 1998 film 'Saving Private Ryan'?
13. Which book by David Walliams is now a ride at Alton Towers?
14. Ab Fab actress well known for presenting travel documentaries
15. He played the Earl of Grantham in Downton Abbey and was also in Paddington Bear
16. Husband and wife team who were first to keep the Queen Vic in Eastenders
17. First presenter of Who wants to be a Millionaire
18. Who played the marine biologist in Jaws & was also in Close Encounters of the Third Kind?
19. What's the name of the female crime fighter in 'Murder She Wrote'?
20. Who played the crime solving Dr. Mark Sloane in TV's Diagnosis: Murder (1993-2001)

Answers to the April Quiz:

- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. May Bank | 2. Heron Cross | 3. Packmoor | 4. Werrington |
| 5. Rough Close | 6. Stone | 7. Milton | 8. New Chapel |
| 9. Clayton | 10. Hilderstone | 11. Mow Cop | 12. Talke Pits |
| 13. Trentham | 14. Longton | 15. Kidsgrove | |

LOCAL HISTORY

The BBC recently repeated a 2011 programme about the creation of the Festival of Britain in 1951. It is now on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Vmzq1s7xgE>

The Sentinel has a number of interesting items on the 'Way We Were' section of its website:

Photos of the lost railway stations of Stoke-on-Trent and former loop line at:

<https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/lost-train-stations-stoke-trent-5377351>

Photos of Princess Margaret and the children of Biddulph Grange:

<https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/gallery/princess-margaret-children-biddulph-grange-5375916>

20 photos of lost cinemas in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent:

<https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/gallery/20-photos-lost-cinemas-staffordshire-5380465>

An article about the 1986 Garden Festival with some excellent pictures at:

<https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/gallery/remembering-stoke-trents-national-garden-5438491>

Also on the Sentinel website is news of the Spitfire gallery, nearing completion at the

Potteries museum: <https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/iconic-spitfires-return-major-tourist-5437837>

There's an online article about how the six towns got their names, although the Sentinel don't mention that Longton used to be the name of the small community around Longton Hall, rather than the main population, which was previously known as Lane End.

<https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/how-stoke-trent-towns-names-5439973>

One piece of welcome news is that the former Harry's Bar in Glebe Street, Stoke is to be renovated and converted into student accommodation, with the cost of external works being partly funded by the Stoke-on-Trent Heritage Action Zone.

St. Modwen, who own Trentham Gardens have been taken over by American private equity firm Blackstone. This may have important implications for North Staffordshire as St. Modwen are also involved in other local projects. You can view the Sentinel article at:

<https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/trentham-estate-owner-st-modwen-5460566>

The Lunar Society was formed in the 18th century by a group of industrialists and creative thinkers who met in their homes. Its name is due to meetings being held on nights with a full moon, when travel would be easier on unlit roads. Leading members were Matthew Boulton, James Watt and Josiah Wedgwood. A virtual version of the society has recently been launched and there are plans for several events in the next couple of years.

Phil Rowley would like to hear from members of the Local History group who are planning to return to the meetings. Phil can be contacted on 01782 330337

COACH TRIP

Lynne has provisionally booked a coach for Thursday 15th July, which will be for a day trip to Llandudno.

This is a great opportunity to get some sea air after the long lockdown. Llandudno is normally a popular destination due to the long promenade and pier and there's the Great Orme for those who prefer a more strenuous scenic walk. You may prefer to take a leisurely ride to the top on the cliff railway which allows you to enjoy the views without expending so much energy, but don't forget to transfer to the second train at the mid-way station or you'll finish up back at the starting point!

If you are interested please contact Lynne Stevenson on 01782 395760 or by email to a.stevenson09@btinternet.com Further details will be circulated once Lynne is sure we have sufficient interest to confirm the booking.

INDOOR BOWLS

The indoor bowls sessions at Central Hall are due to resume on Monday, 7th June. The group meet weekly on Monday afternoons on the second floor from 1.30pm to 3.30pm.

For enquiries or further information, please contact Dave Darby on 01782 317408.

FAMILY HISTORY

This small group lost its venue during the pandemic due to closure of the Tollgate Hotel, which was quite central for group members. However, we are now aware that the Tollgate is re-opening under new ownership so we will try to negotiate new arrangements.

Otherwise we will need to arrange another venue and Fay would be happy to hold the meetings at home in Trentham subject to completion of some home improvements and impending road works in the vicinity, but other suggestions would be welcome.

Fay can be contacted on 01782 658659 or by email to hfhowell@live.co.uk

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 news about preparations for the first u3a day on 2nd June. In Stoke South we are considering an open day of some kind at a later date rather than trying to arrange anything too soon.

The u3a brand centre have added round-necked tee shirts to their list of available merchandise and plan to include polo shirts in the near future. You can find out more about the items available at <https://u3abrand.org.uk/> but you will need to register in order to use the site as it is separate from the main u3a website.

READ EASY NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE

A new group, which aims to support adults who struggle to read, has been launched in Stoke-On-Trent and surrounding areas. Read Easy North Staffs is part of a national organisation that delivers one to one reading coaching for adults who struggle to read. It has recently recruited a local management team and is now looking for front line volunteers. One or two people are needed to become coordinators along with a larger number to be reading coaches. More than seven per cent of adults in England never learnt to read at school, which equates to around 2.4 million people.

Management Team member Sue Bell, from Cotes Heath said: “It often comes as a surprise to learn that around one in six people in the UK have very low reading skills.” That means around 80,000 people in North Staffordshire alone struggle to read anything other than simple texts on familiar subjects.

By coaching adults who struggle to read on a confidential, one to one, basis, Read Easy North Staffs hopes to increase their confidence, help them with day to day reading tasks and increase their chances of finding and keeping work. The group is aiming to roll out their programme across the whole of the North Staffordshire area but is starting in Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent.

Initially they need one or two coordinators, who will bring together the volunteer reading coaches with people wishing to improve their reading skills. The role is occasionally demanding but it is also very rewarding to see readers progress and achieve goals. It’s a great role for someone with strong organisational and interpersonal skills.

Once they have their coordinator they will be looking for volunteer reading coaches who can give a couple of hours each week to help people improve their reading skills. Read Easy UK provides tried and tested materials for coaches and readers to follow.”

Anyone who would like to find out more about being a coordinator or reading coach is encouraged to contact nspublicity@readeasy.org.uk, or visit the Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/ReadEasyNorthStaffs>, or website www.readeasy.org.uk.

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, 18th June, 2021. Tel: 01782 658659 or email: hfhowell@live.co.uk