

## April 2021

The 4 million people told to shield by the Health Service are no longer required to do so.

ONS surveys show that one in five people who have had COVID-19 suffer from Long Covid.

The Easter weekend is cold and everyone is warned not to meet up inside, even if they have been vaccinated.

Everybody in England can have two free rapid flow tests each week from 9 April. There is some talk of having COVID-19 passports which could be used for gaining access to large indoor events.

Driving tests can resume.



## Community

**My Tenterden** gives news of Easter in the town at many businesses and the Churches Together programme, and announces that Stuart Reeves is the new CEO of Tenterden Schools Trust as Sally Lees retires in July.

***“ The town is coming back to life! ”***

My Tenterden wishes luck to all businesses re-opening on the big day, 12 April – the town is coming back to life! The ‘Helping in Tenterden’ team can now stand down. It has been one of the most successful community initiatives in the town’s history; more than 200 volunteers carrying out in excess of 1,000 missions in the first six months, ensuring that no-one was forgotten. Calls included collecting prescriptions, shopping, telephoning those particularly suffering from loneliness, providing advice on where to access support finance and even walking pet dogs. If the pandemic re-surges, or if there is any other national emergency, the organisation stands ready to be reinstated.

## Tenterden u3a

As lockdown is easing, some groups are either starting up again, like Pub Walks and Birding and some others are going to meet outside when possible.

The group who are working on the COVID-19 journal, namely Lindy, Anna and Jenny meet to discuss the way forward. Richard Wheeler offers to edit; Richard Archer takes on the task of proof reading and Roger Martin will produce a print ready version for the website. We are hugely grateful to them.



**9 April:** Prince Philip has died aged 99. The public are asked to sign an on-line Book of Condolence and not to leave flowers outside Buckingham Palace. All COVID-19 restrictions will be observed for the funeral.

**12 April:** The second step in easing restrictions: non-essential retail is now open including hair dressers and beauty salons. Much of the country has seen some snow.... There is, however, concern about the South African Variant and surge testing is being carried out in South London.

**15 April:** It is reported that 4.7 million people were waiting for routine operations and procedures in February. It could take 5 years to clear the backlog.

The vaccination programme continues apace and those who are 40+ can now book their first jab.

Some large public events are being held to assess safety with participants using lateral flow tests before and after the event.

An Indian variant is now causing concern.

## Personal Snapshots

### Anna Toombs:

On the 12th April most shops and services can re-open. This includes hairdressers – hooray! I can get rid of this horrid mass of hair and I will recognise myself when I look in the mirror. I have looked forward to this day for months!

### Lindy Bates:

The town is coming back to life! To help the restaurants and pubs, which can serve food for outside eating, the Town Council has provided tables and benches on the green areas by the War Memorial and on the Rec. The tables create an air of relaxation with hints of summer to come. I go to several planning meetings: for the Flower festival in the Church and for u3a Day. Many of us are growing plants for a big Charity Plant Sale in aid of The Old Schoolhouse Larder, an initiative set up to help the families who are struggling to make ends meet as the COVID-19 lockdowns begin to bite. We are selling from the doorstep in Sixfields Path but our big day is at the end of May on Tesco's forecourt. We decide it is safe to go ahead and start displaying posters. At the end of the month we have our second Pfizer jab – by 17 May, when life opens up more, we shall be well protected!

The Street Names group are discussing with some of the committee about publishing a booklet of their findings. Inspired by John Lindsey, led by Richard Parsons with advice from local historians, this is an exciting and ambitious project.

**21st April:** A small working party meets to discuss how we can celebrate u3a day on 2nd June and put posters in strategic places in Tenterden which Gina Robertson will design. It is agreed that Raymond Crawford and Roy Arnold will contact various organisations to advertise the day. Again, we are grateful to have the help of such stalwart volunteers. We shall have tea and cakes in Lindy and Alan's garden.



## May 2021

**7<sup>th</sup> May:** A new traffic light system for overseas travel is announced: green, requiring no quarantine period; amber, requiring five days of quarantining at home on return; red, requiring passengers to quarantine in a designated hotel.

*“ We are allowed to meet in groups of thirty outside. ”*

Those under 40 are to be offered an alternative to the Astra-Zeneca vaccine as it has been linked to rare blood clots.

The Indian variant has been declared a *variant of concern*.

**17<sup>th</sup> May:** The next step in relaxing restrictions: indoor hospitality can now reopen with people in groups of no more than 6. Privately, we are allowed to meet inside in groups of 6 and in groups of thirty outside. Hugging is once more permitted! There is a continuing effort to get everyone vaccinated to protect them against the Indian variant.

## Community

**My Tenterden** reports on planning applications, children’s football and an appeal for the 2021 Folk Festival. From 17 May we can eat inside cafes, pubs and restaurants, the K&ESR and Smallhythe Place reopen and the annual Horticultural Society plant sale will be raising money for The Old School Larder. Also there will be a June Market on the recreation ground.

### Lindy Bates:

Six members of the Photography Group meet on a cold and very windy day in early May at Dungeness. Our aim: to take photos to accompany a poem, Wealden by Nancy Gaffield, which is to form the basis of an exhibition in Tenterden Museum.



## Tenterden u3a

**6<sup>th</sup> May:** Committee meeting – we learn that Weald u3a is going to close at the end of June unless they get nominations for the officers. Thanks to Barbara and Ian for contacting all members re continuing membership in 2021/22. U3a day plans finalised. As groups can meet outside from 17<sup>th</sup> May, Lindy is encouraging face to face meetings in June. We are going to plan a Group Leaders lunch or tea, as we didn’t have one last year. The committee agree that Richard can apply for grants for the Street Names group publication, but this needs a little further clarification which Jenny will co-ordinate. Cover is being arranged for Tom when he has his eye operation and is out of action for a while. It is Richard and Maureen’s last committee meeting and they were thanked for all their contributions.

**11<sup>th</sup> May:** Kent Network Meeting – it is stressed how important it is to use social media to recruit younger people. Various ideas have been published on the website for recruiting and maintaining members. Most u3a’s felt 2<sup>nd</sup> June was too early for u3a day and are planning Autumn events – but we have everything planned.

**18 May:** questions are being asked – why did the Government delay in adding India to the red list of countries before the new COVID-19 strain became established in England? A warning note is sounded about lifting all restrictions on 21 June.

By the end of the month, with rising COVID-19 cases, a Cambridge scientist, adviser to the Government, suggests that we are entering a third wave of infections.



It's an exciting project but even more exciting is to be meeting up with other enthusiasts somewhere other than a garden or the Recreation Ground. The COVID-19 safety regulations are evident: we only have six of us; the pub serves us coffee outside from a window; to use the toilet involves having the outside door unlocked and our names and contact details taken by a staff member. Once we set foot on the scree, lose ourselves amongst the wrecks, tangled ropes and nets, old abandoned machinery and the salt adapted vegetation we are totally absorbed – no thought of pandemics, being safe and wearing masks. It is so refreshing and life affirming. Looking later at the shots we have all taken, I think our photo book could be really successful!

**Lindy Bates:**

Where has the sun gone? All we are getting is rain and grey skies. So, I don't have to water the plants but it is somewhat depressing. However, on 17 May restrictions are relaxed again and we celebrate by going to the Horticultural Society coffee morning – thirty of us gather in the Chairman's garden – we smile, we talk, we laugh and it feels so good! The following week we meet at Merriments to walk round the gardens and have coffee – inside the café in groups of six. We record our contact details in case anyone goes down with Covid. We wear masks until the coffee comes and there is a slight air of nervousness but gradually the conversation takes over and we put any concerns we might have to one side.

Beacon might be worth looking at in the future.

Street Names booklet takes a great deal of time to agree format and publishing details. Richard is applying for grants. Tenterden u3a AGM takes place via Zoom. This runs very smoothly and Gina Robertson joins the committee.

# June 2021

**1 June:** no deaths from COVID-19 are recorded for the first time since March 2020. However, there are 3,165 new cases.

**6 June:** We learn that the Indian variant is 40% more transmissible but two vaccine doses work effectively against it. There is talk now of delaying the end of restrictions on June 21.

**8 June:** Military support is provided for COVID-19 testing in Greater Manchester and Lancashire to help control the spread of the Indian variant.

**9 June:** 7,540 new cases.

14 June: the Prime Minister accepts that there needs to be a delay in relaxing restrictions. The next date set is 19 July, allowing for another 4 weeks of vaccinating people. By then ¾ of the adult population should be fully vaccinated.

**16 June:** the variants are now to be renamed with Greek letters. So the Kent variant is Alpha; African: Beta; Brazilian: Gamma; and the Indian variant: Delta. This is avoid stigmatising countries for reporting variants.

# Community

**My Tenterden** says that new shops opening include the Cranbrook Bakery and Delicatessen. There will be a volunteer litter pick starting on the Tenterden and St Michael's recreation grounds.

# Personal Snapshots

**Tom Evans:** Everyone is looking forward to a more normal summer, but my June begins with another five days of shielding in preparation for eye surgery. NHS waiting lists for elective surgery are still indefinitely long and vitrectomy plus cataract is not classified as high priority, so it will be done privately (in the main William Harvey theatre, though). Sitting in the garden, in the sun, the day before taking the PCR test, my mobile rings: we're very sorry but there's an emergency and your slot is cancelled. So the wait – now six months – will go on. At least it will be possible to meet friends again socially, although most u3a activities are still on Zoom.

*Monday 14 June:* The French Conversation group meets in person, socially distanced in Neil and Jill's garden. This is our first chance to meet in the flesh since the pandemic started. We read an article from Le Monde about the small pleasures of life that lockdown made impossible – sharing a drink on a bar terrace, going to the cinema, meeting a friend for coffee – and add our own experiences, warmed by the sense of company and the summer sunshine.

*Friday 25 June:* Another call from the hospital: there has been a cancellation and they can offer me a slot in theatre next Friday 2 July. Yes, please! The month will end with more isolation and a PCR test. This is just the start of a saga that will run for another year and more...

# Tenterden u3a

Poster u3a Coffee Afternoon - 2 June 2021.pptx

Tenterden  
**u3a**  
learn, laugh, live

**OPEN AFTERNOON**  
**WED 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2021**  
**3 – 6 pm**

over 50's with time to spare

outings  
theatre  
trips  
thriving  
strictly  
singles

**COME & FIND OUT MORE**

Townland

Six Fields Path

Tenterden

TN30 6EX

ex NGS Garden

Contacts:

Disabled Parking - Lindy Bates 01580 764505

Information - Jenny Stevens 01580 388831

Covid Restrictions Apply



Very successful u3a Day. We have around 54 people coming into Lindy's garden during the afternoon. There are several younger people interested whom we hope will join. Four people, who've expressed an interest, are invited to the committee meeting on 30th June which can be held in

**18 June:** 18+ year olds are now all eligible to receive jabs. Pop-up vaccination centres are opened across the country.

**25 June:** Matt Hancock, Health Secretary, has been caught breaking COVID-19 restrictions by kissing a member of his staff.

**26 June:** Matt Hancock resigns and Sajid Javid is appointed Health Secretary in his place.

**28 June:** The new Health Secretary can see no reason why 19 July Freedom Day should be postponed.

Meantime, the infection rate is rising. Over 1000 Scottish football fans contract COVID-19 after attending the Scotland V England match at Wembley.

***“ No reason why  
19 July Freedom Day  
should be postponed”***

### **Lindy Bates:**

An eventful month! Although the final lifting of restrictions is put off until 19 July, we are allowed up to thirty outside and so we are able to celebrate our Golden Wedding Anniversary with a party in the garden. And then we are allowed to go away for a few nights. The new style of holiday is to find an out of the way place – glamping or isolated cottages or – in our case – a Shepherd’s Hut on the North Wessex Downs. The bliss of having different scenery is hard to overstate. In normal circumstances we would holiday abroad to enjoy a different language, culture and cuisine but now we have discovered that England too has differences that are to be celebrated and enjoyed. We chat to our landlord about his farm and how he has to diversify to ensure his income. We watch the piebald and skewbald ponies, bred to export to America, that graze in one of his fields. We discover the Ridgeway walking trail and the stones of Avebury. COVID-19 recedes into the background.



Lindy’s garden so that they can have some idea of Tenterden u3a. We’ll plan a meeting for those interested and ask them to ‘shadow’ some of the committee.

Sally White joins the committee.

We decide not to have Monthly Meetings in July/August as the committee need a break. It’s been a difficult year.

News re COVID-19 – total lifting of restrictions postponed until 19 July. We can still go to The Vine for the coffee morning but we have to sit at a table and will be served. 20 members meet for coffee.

Strictly Singles meet on the Recreation Ground.

We now have 310 members, the increase in numbers largely due to u3a Day.

***“ We now have  
310 members! ”***

## July 2021

### 19 July: Freedom Day

The Government explains the way forward.

***“Freedom Day is still confirmed.”***

Despite rising case numbers from the Delta variant reaching 50,000, Freedom Day is still confirmed. Vaccines for all over 18 year olds and even 16-18 year olds together with possible booster shots for the over-50s will help to protect the vast majority from serious illness and hospitalisation. Instead of laws controlling people's behaviour, the Government will advise people on how to protect themselves and others. Proportionate test and trace will remain in place and there will be controls at the borders.

On 30 July the BBC Proms begin – not just on BBC 4 but to live audiences at the Albert Hall!

## Community

**My Tenterden** announces the Creative Market in the market square on 3 July. The Community Art Project from the Schools Trust runs from 3 – 16 July. The theme is ‘Looking Back, Moving Forward’. The High Street will be a long art gallery, St Mildred's Church, the town station and the museum will all have displays, including a collaboration between Mr Doodle and primary school children. EC30, the Tenterden Social Hub charity shop and community café is open next to Ivy Court Surgery. ‘A Little Spirit’ festival with live music, real ale and good food is at East Cross on 17 July. The annual St Mildred's flower festival, honouring all those front-line workers and local organisations that have kept life going during 2020-21, is from 9 – 12 July. The displays are beautiful, and this year are rewarded with a large photograph in ‘The Times’ newspaper. ‘Tributes in the Park’ will be on St Michael's recreation ground. There is a report on the Tenterden Neighbourhood Plan. Tenterden is looking forward to the future!

Freedom Day sees signs outside Waitrose asking everyone to continue being careful, masks are to be worn, hand gel is still available. In the banks, masks are worn and customers coming in without one are offered one.

Connect-Up, St Mildred's daily communication features an article about ‘cave syndrome’. Arthur Bergman, an American psychiatrist, has observed that even though people are fully vaccinated and the numbers of infections are dropping, they are fearful of the virus and are afraid of breaking out of isolation and the small, manageable world they have become used to.

Bergman advises having a vision and moving gradually towards it.

## Tenterden u3a

We hold a new members' coffee morning and a tea for our Group Leaders. Amazingly the weather is perfect for both events!

Final thoughts of the end (for the moment at least) of nearly 18 months in lockdown with spasmodic restricted social meetings and much use of Zoom. We are now planning to meet face-to-face as much as possible and are investigating using St Mildred's Church Hall for hybrid (face to face and Zoom) Monthly Meetings. Groups are making their own decisions as to how they continue to operate, but several are hoping to resume in each other's homes with windows open and face masks an option. National Office tells us that Group Leaders can ask members to take lateral flow tests before attending.

The Membership has grown to 320 and is continuing to slowly rise. We start the next chapter of Tenterden u3a on a very positive note with several ‘helpers’ who are shadowing members of the committee and taking some of the load off us all. We are looking forward to the next year of Tenterden u3a with cautious optimism.

# Personal Snapshots

## Lindy Bates:

The main focus in the first part of this month has been preparing for the Flower Festival. We had planning meetings in the Church. I think we all arrived with masks and certainly made sure our chairs were well separated, but gradually we gained confidence and relaxed into 'talking flowers'. It was team work and we embraced the experience after so long. The church buzzed as gradually all the plans came together, piles of greenery and bucket of flowers were transformed into stunning arrangements. Many of us were to be found visiting the church over the three days just to enjoy and soak up the sense of community.

## Jenny Stevens:

I actually go to Hampton Court Flower Show with my sister, celebrating our mutual birthdays. Have a fantastic day and although we wear our masks and keep our distance as much as possible, life seems almost normal. Go to choir for the first time in 18 months and prepare music for Chris Goodall's celebration. Continue to see friends, and even sing at a former pupil's wedding – a great privilege.

Feelings re Freedom Day on 19th July; rather apprehensive, will continue to wear a mask as before, but good to have a bit more freedom. Still not inclined to go on a train. Numbers of COVID-19 are soaring, so we must move forward with care. What might the future hold?



Thank you for reliable deliveries from Royal Mail.

Armed Forces  
and Police



Tenterden  
Memory Cafe



The clergy



Thank you to all the  
broadcasters and  
Journalists who kept  
us informed





**On Reflection:**

Looking back over this Journal and thinking about the last eighteen months one realises what a different world we have all inhabited: from the early days when our lives were very much at risk; through three Government imposed lockdowns; times of grieving the loss of friends or family; on to the promise of relief through the discovery of vaccines and more effective medication. We are told we have arrived at Freedom Day but this does not really mark the end of COVID-19 and a return to our previous lives.

It marks instead, the acceptance that we are vulnerable to pandemics, the realisation that we cannot assume life remains the same for ever. Above all, though, it brings with it an appreciation of mutual support, a belief in community and, through u3a, a knowledge that we are not alone and together we will keep remaking life and adjusting to changes.

