



**Newsletter**

**Wandsworth**



MONDAY

**11**

FEBRUARY

**2pm**

**U3A**

**ZOOM**

*How Are You*  
**Living with Covid-19?**

Extraordinary times demand recording, a moment in history more than a footnote. A book for everyone is being prepared on this year's events for and by Wandsworth U3A members. We aim to publish next year.

It will record events - your reactions - coping under lockdown and after. Things that made us feel bad; things that made us laugh; things that tried our patience.

**Everyone can contribute to the six sections:**

- A timeline of events
- Life under lockdown. If you have a short story to tell, please tell it!
- Living with social distancing. Masks, public transport – how has this gone?
- Social life? What social life?? Family, friends, neighbours. Did you meet up?
- Wandsworth U3A – how did your group fare? How was Zoom for you?
- Shops and shopping. Queues. Did you welcome those special hours? Online shopping – a necessity or a luxury? We already have three teams looking at local shopping areas in Putney, Southfields and Wandsworth Common but we very much welcome intelligence from other parts of the borough.

Please send contributions like those below in Word (it makes it easier for us to put together) to Sue Leigh at [smleigh@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:smleigh@hotmail.co.uk) Many thanks. We'll keep you posted about progress.

**30 March** I am less scared now than I was at the beginning – but still very scared! Night time is worse – what if I wake up unable to breathe? Yesterday I even thought of packing a bag for hospital like an expectant mum!

**Easter Weekend 10-13 April** We celebrated the start of the weekend by having 'corona cocktails' with neighbours in the street ... At least joining them with a glass of wine in hand and standing 2 metres apart! The weather is fabulous; the blossom is out; the cars and planes have disappeared and yet ... over 900 people are dying every day in this country.

**Friday 29 May** Feeling like a naughty teenager, I met three of my knitting pals via a side entrance into a lovely sunny garden, taking our own mug to be expertly filled with freshly brewed coffee from a 'safe social distance'. A few rows and a lot of natter later, we departed for home again. What joy!

# When Ruth took Grandad's WW1 shaving mirror to the BBC's Repair Shop

I wrote to *Repair Shop* about it but realistically thought such a dirty and seemingly uninteresting item would never be chosen. I was delighted that Suzie was willing to restore it.

As a young child I was told during visits to Granny and Grandad that Grandad's mirror, hanging on their kitchen wall (no bathroom in their house) mustn't be touched, probably because of the cut throat razor hanging on it. So it became an item of fascination.



I found it last year while I was sorting out the family home. The mirror had been made by Grandad in the trenches in France during WW1. The leather frame was made from pieces of disused horse harnesses. It hung in the trenches for him and his comrades to use when shaving.

He was reportedly on the Western Front and at the Battle of the Somme, whether in 1916, in 1918 or both we haven't been able to determine. With the help of our U3A Family History Group and Andy Crane, I've tried to trace his military history but it appears no records remain. Ironically they may have been destroyed during the WW2 Blitz.

Like so many who experienced the horrors of the trenches, Grandad never spoke about his war, so his story will remain untold. But he continued to use the mirror to shave until he died in 1957 at the age of 81. At age 11, I couldn't understand why he used a mirror with only a couple of square inches of silvering on it instead of getting a shiny new one, but his youngest daughter had obviously treasured it from then until she died in 2012. Several of his grandchildren (he and Granny had ten children) also remember the mirror hanging in the family home in Fulham, and it seems we have witnessed the emotions and the horrors of that war in the form of grandad's only way of dealing with its unrepeatable



memories - looking at his mirror. I like to think it represented a relief to think of the camaraderie and friendships formed at the time amidst other unthinkable experiences.

Thanks to the BBC, Grandad now has a shiny, completely re-silvered mirror. We will continue to treasure it with all its memories, hopefully for many generations to come. I imagine it will always be a talking point - lest we forget.

Ruth Bowdage

*(The programme aired last Tuesday week but is available on iPlayer.)*

As a vegan, I think people who sell meat are disgusting; but apparently people who sell fruit and veg are grocer.

## NEWSLETTER TEAM

Don Brind and Peter Martin are keen to hear from you  
Please email us at [u3anewsands@gmail.com](mailto:u3anewsands@gmail.com)

I like to imagine the guy who invented the umbrella was going to call it the 'brella'.

But he hesitated.