



WASHINGTON VILLAGE U3A MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER
(Registered Charity Number 1179094)

APRIL 2020 EDITION

Keeping in Touch

Welcome to Washington Village U3A's first monthly newsletter! We realise how important mutual support and keeping in touch is right now and hope this newsletter will help. We understand that you might feel vulnerable and isolated. If you know of any members in this position, please do let a Committee member know.

Many members are using technology to keep in touch with one another over this difficult period. If you use Facebook, there's a new nationwide group called 'U3A: Keeping in Touch'. You will be able to see what others are up to and will appreciate some of the funnies!

Some of Washington Village U3A groups are using WhatsApp – new to many of the members, so we're learning new skills whilst we're keeping socially distant.

Creative Talent

We have some very talented and creative members. One of them is Tania le Marinel who creates art glass. She's been doing this since 2018, exhibits and is having great success at the National Glass Centre. Here are 4 examples of her glass artwork:



Things to do while isolated

- Did you know that you can do virtual tours of museums? The following link takes you to one of these sites: <https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours> or <https://www.timeout.com/travel/coronavirus-virtual-museum-tours>
- Reading a new book or re-visiting an old favourite. Some of our members have suggested good books to read. Linda Wylde has suggested 'The Giver of Stars' by Jojo Moyes. It's set in the great depression in America and is the story of five remarkable women who become known as the packhorse librarians of Kentucky. Angela Nichols has suggested the following books: 'Akin' by Emma Donoghue,

‘The Dutch House’ by Ann Patchett and ‘The Mirror and the Light’ by Hilary Mantel.

- Cooking, baking, birdwatching, knitting, crochet, playing a musical instrument
- Learning a language
- Gardening, DIY
- Exercise - there are lots of YouTube workouts specially designed for our age group. Talking of exercise, here’s a photo of our own Paul Pearce missing the shuttlecock again!



- The bowling group have been up to all sorts when they have been at home. One couple are playing carpet bowls in the garden whilst one chap is using marbles to practice. A couple whose son is doing the shopping are therefore having chocolate, crisps and wine for tea.
- Drawing, painting, colouring. You can download free colouring books at the following website - <http://www.openculture.com/2019/02/download-free-coloring-books-from-113-museums.html>
- Playing board games, doing jigsaws, crosswords and quizzes.

Quiz

Here’s a quiz for you set by Brian Matthews: from our Quiz Group:

ENTERTAINMENT

1. Which city is home to Tamla (formally Motown) Records?
2. “I am the egg man” is a line from which Beatles song?
3. What have Matt Smith, Christopher Eccleston and David Tennant got in common?
4. Name the chambermaid in Fawlty Towers.
5. “Frankly my dear I don’t give a damn” is a famous line from which film?
6. Who played John Merrick in the film The Elephant Man?
7. How old will Coronation Street be in December – 50, 55, or 60 years old?
8. True or False: Simon & Garfunkel had a minor hit in USA singing as Batman & Robin?
9. Which priest often seen on TV was one half of The Communards in the 1980s?
10. Name the current host of University Challenge .

THE NORTH EAST

1. Who designed The Angel of the North?

2. Which saint's body was carried from Holy Island to Durham in 9th century?
3. Name the legendary Liverpool football manager who was born in Hetton?
4. How many columns on Penshaw Monument (that's a cracker!)?
5. True or False: Tony Blair & Rowan Atkinson were at Durham Choristers School together?
6. Give the real name of Darlington raised Vic Reeves.
7. When did the last shipyard close in Sunderland – 1979, 1984, or 1988?
8. Which Olympic Gold medallist was known as "The Jarrow Arrow"?
9. Name the Marton born explorer killed by natives in Hawaii in 1779.
10. "You'll like this – but not a lot" was a catchphrase of which Teesside born magician?

FOOD AND DRINK

1. TV chef Rick Stein is mainly known for dishes containing what?
2. What type of fruit is a Red William?
3. A sheep's stomach is traditionally used in preparing which Scottish dish?
4. In which country did Chop Suey originate?
5. In UK how many grams of fat in a MacDonald's Big Mac burger – 15, 24 or 29?
6. Traditionally Cullen Skink is a soup using which smoked fish?
7. Bombay Duck is not a duck – what is it?
8. True or False: Reg Cheese was the father of John Cleese?
9. What would a Scotsman use a spurtle for?
10. Pollo is a Spanish word for what?

POT LUCK

1. What is the more common name for the plant "Digitalis"?
2. Which Government Minister resigned after speaking about Salmonella in eggs?
3. In 2016 which British astronaut ran the marathon distance in space?
4. "George" and "Miss Rabbit" are characters in which popular young kid's TV show?
5. What type of creature lives in an Apiary?
6. Which boy's name is the capital of the Falkland Islands?
7. Which TV character from a series set in Holmfirth was known for her wrinkled stockings?
8. Which UK city's airport was previously known as Ringway?
9. Which planet is closest to the sun?
10. Name the Salvation Army's primary newspaper/magazine?

Answers to the Quiz are included at the end of this Newsletter.

A Poem

Our Members Liaison Officer, Marie Gallagher, has written the following poem for members of Washington Village U3A:

Oh my oh my, what a terrible Sin
 This awful plight that we are in
 With lock downs galore, all over the world
 It's so scary now our heads are in a whirl
 Our meetings and group activities all at a stand still

How on earth do we learn and share our skills
With IT and social media all buzzing around
A Facebook or WhatsApp group could keep us sound
Each group leader could host their own
For their group members and those alone
Anyone not able or not on the net
Just let me know and a card they will get
We need to share comments, keep in touch in style
As this corona witch is here for a while
We must do all we can to keep us strong
As we have been together so very long
This virus is a nightmare worse than world wars 1 and 2
We can't let it destroy our U3a that's here for me and you
Take care, stay strong, stay safe, and sound
Washington Village u3a will always be up and running around.

My most sincere thoughts are with you all,
Marie Gallagher
Members Liaison Officer

A Bit of Daftness

You may need a calculator for this next numerical exercise:

Your shoes can tell your age!

Try this and see:

- 1) Take your shoe size
(no half sizes, round up)
- 2) Multiply it by 5
- 3) Add 50
- 4) Multiply by 20
- 5) Add 1020
- 6) Subtract the year you were born

The first digit(s) are your shoe size & the last 2 digits are your age!

Its shoe ----- magic!

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Money Matters

From Lyn Bossons, Treasurer:

The Washington Village U3A financial year ended on 31st March. The financial year started with a surplus (reserves) of about £6250, which the committee agreed was too high as it was well above recommendations from both the Charity Commission and The Third Age Trust. The committee agreed to aim for a reduction in reserves to about £3500 so I am pleased to report that our surplus at the end of the 2019/20 financial year is about £4070.

The reduction is mainly due to the drop in annual membership fee from £20 to £15 last April though a number of other measures were needed, which I will describe when the accounts are published (probably in the May newsletter).

Renewing your membership

No payment is required until we know when it will be safe for us to resume normal activities. At that point in time, the Committee will review the annual fee taking into account the term remaining of the 2020/21 membership year and the likely costs that the U3A will still need to meet. You will also be advised about the various ways of making the renewal payment.

National U3A

National U3A will be having a movement-wide Shared Learning Project asking members to keep a diary of the coming day and weeks. We believe it will be an amazing example of living history. If you would like to take part, please contact National U3A at diary@u3a.org.uk. They will be sharing wellbeing ideas from members too, as it is important that members feel supported at home.

Creative writing

Here is a piece of creative writing by Richard Sidney, entitled 'Mrs Thomas':

Mrs Thomas lived at the far end of the village in a small cottage with a garden abundant with flowers, hollyhocks and lupins towering over marigolds, daisies, sweet William, and a myriad of variety of indigenous plants. She lived alone after becoming a widow in her 21st year. Her husband, a cruel and brutal man, died at sea, slipped and fell overboard one dark night. His body was never found, locked securely in Davy Jones locker. No tears were shed at his memorial service held in the village church. A pension, a very generous pension was gifted to his wife by the ship's owner leaving people with the feeling at least something good had come out of his violent life.

Ronald or Ronnie to his friends lived at the other end of the village in a farm labourer's cottage with his Mam and Dad who were both of farming stock. Decent honest hard working people referred to as salt of the earth.

"When you have finished your jobs you can go for a wander but not until then Ronald".

His mother always called him Ronald, "that's what I named him and that's what he will be called"

Soon there was a cry "finished Mam"

"Off you go be sure to be back for tea".

He followed the road as it meandered through the village chatting with various residents.

Mrs Thomas saw him coming slowly along, "Hello young man".

"Hello" he replied.

He stopped and a conversation began. Within a short while they felt comfortable with each other.

"See you again" said Mrs Thomas.

"Oh yeah" said Ronald. After a period of time they became good friends despite the age difference him being 16 and she being 30.

During one conversation she asked if he would like to do some jobs in her garden, it was just a bit too much for her even though she enjoyed the work. Sure he said he would come along after he had done his work at home. He told his parents and they agreed that it would help his gardening skills and he may learn other skills from Mrs Thomas. Ronald, as his mother and Mrs Thomas called him, was a regular visitor to the cottage where Mrs Thomas would pay him for his work with fruit and vegetables from the garden or some needle work for his mother and baking for his family.

"She is a kind woman" said Ronald's mother.

"Oh aye she is" commented his father.

One day he arrived early at the cottage where upon he was asked to run an errand by going to the village shop for certain articles.

"Here is the list".

He muttered something unintelligible. What's the matter he was asked by Mrs Thomas and she instantly regretted asking as she realised he could not read.

"Sorry I will go" she said "you carry on cutting the hedge".

Taking the note and leaving on the errand she left him with the chore. Upon her return she apologised and offered to show him how to read and write. This would take place after he had completed his work. Ronald said yes, he rushed home to inform his mother and father who were equally delighted with this offer.

The lessons began and he would be in a daydream sometimes thinking of the new world that had been opened to him. One day in the garden thoughts were rolling around in his head as he attended to the hedge, Mrs Thomas was kneeling nearby manicuring some primula when he glanced towards her. Her head was bowed as she concentrated on the job in hand Ronald noticed her breasts and the crevice that they formed he quickly looked away embarrassed he may have been seen. Quite soon this happened on many occasions and an accidental glimpse turned into a gaze. It was inevitable she would notice if she hadn't already. The time came.

"Ronald if you don't concentrate on your job there may not be time for your lesson" she smiled at him, he blushed, turned, and carried on with the task in hand.

A year or so passed his work was going well and his lessons had enabled him to read with some skill, but the two together with his work at home made for a long day. Rather than waste time it was suggested that he stay overnight on the days he worked there. He would sit by the fire and read while she did jobs around the cottage.

One evening she decided she would have a bath in the zinc bath that normally hung by the back door. She carried it through the room and to her bedroom placing it next to the fire, pacing forwards backwards to the stove the vessel that held hot water was carried to her room.

"Finish reading your book while I bathe".

Continuing to read he heard her body enter the water then quiet followed sometime later by a light splashing of water.

"Oh dear" she exclaimed.

"What's the matter?" Ronald asked.

"I left the towel warming by the stove could you bring it in?"

Without thinking and in innocence Ronald took hold of the towel and entered the room where her back was to him at that moment she rose from her bath water cascading down her ample form which subsided to rivulets of soap infused water pursuing gravity over her buttocks. She turned to collect the towel to cover her modesty but not before he had he

had viewed the beauty of her Rubenesque form. Wrapping the towel around her was akin to bolting the stable door. She smiled again.

“Better finish your book”.

He bowed his head pink faced he returned to reading. Little was said when they had a light bite before retiring.

Ronald lay in bed staring at the ceiling for what seemed like ages. A hazy face appeared round the door.

“Come Ronnie, come share my bed”.

He left his bed and entered her room she lay smiling lifting the blanket she invited him into her arms gently pulled him to her, their limbs became entwined and they were comforted.

Ronnie awoke in his own bed. Hearing activity around the stove he got up, poured water from the jug and washed his face.

“Porridge is ready. I have something to tell you Ronald. Today I am leaving to live with my sister in Aberystwyth. She has problems in her life and I am going to help her”.

He left hurriedly, heart broken.

That night he ran back to the cottage surely she hasn't left. The cottage was empty. By the window was a letter addressed to Ronnie he opened it.

” I will always remember you”.

Holding it to his lips as streams of tears ran down his face, he could smell the delicate fragrance of lavender, the fragrance she always wore.

Back Street Football

A Washington History Society contribution from Ged Parker:

The back lane and street ends were our football and cricket pitches and it was there that we developed our skills. Cricket was played mainly in the space between the ends of the terraced houses but football was our main back-street activity. The narrowness of the space between the brick walls and the high wooden garden fences opposite meant that tackling was frequent and robust, whilst dribbling, ‘screening’ and ball control became essential skills to develop. Tackling, tripping, ‘hacking’ (shin kicking), colliding and general rough play toughened us up and it should come as no surprise, therefore, that good footballers emerged from our back lanes. One of my brothers became a schoolboy international and made a career in the professional game whilst the other played to a high level in non-league football.

The football game which we usually played we called ‘doors’ (or, sometimes, ‘gates’). ‘Doors’ could be played by two or more players and usually involved the use of a tennis ball or something of a similar size. In one version of the game, each player ‘adopted’ a door which he would defend whilst trying to score a goal in someone else’s door. Another version, only used when there were a lot of participants, was where the players formed two teams which each defended its own door whilst attacking the other. This, of course, led to passing the ball - a luxury and skill not available when it was ‘every man for himself’.

Goals were scored by kicking, flicking, back-heeling or heading the ball so that it struck an opponent’s door. The door itself had to be struck and arguments developed if there were disputes as to whether or not the ball had struck the door frame which was deemed to be a goalpost or crossbar so disallowing any claim to a goal. This problem could be alleviated if

the doors could be left open so that the ball would go into the back-yard and confirm that a goal had been scored. This arrangement was preferred as long as sufficient 'friendly' doors were available for all players. I say 'friendly' because some householders objected, quite vociferously at times, to their door being used as a goal. Some never allowed their doors to be used but, on those occasions when the inhabitants were known to be 'out', we might take the opportunity to make use of their doors. I'll refer to these as 'unfriendly' doors.



On those occasions when the ball went over a wall into an 'unfriendly' back yard, someone had to be designated to retrieve it. The procedure was, usually, that the last person to have touched the ball had to retrieve it. This led to disputes at times but there was generally someone among us who would be brave or precocious enough to open a gate and rush in and out quickly. Some volunteered because they enjoyed the challenge and didn't mind too much if they were shouted at.

Unfortunately, some back-yards contained sheds, piles of timber, dog kennels and other 'stuff' making finding the ball, let alone retrieving it, not always easy. If the ball had entered an 'unfriendly' yard, one solution was to gain access to a 'friendly' yard and climb the wall separating the yards – usually by means of a strategically placed dustbin - to try to determine the location of the ball. Once the ball had been 'spotted', a plan of quick retrieval could be plotted. If the ball could not be seen in these circumstances, guesses had to be made about its likely whereabouts. Under sheds was always a problem because you rarely knew what was under the shed and whether or not the ball was stuck. On such occasions, a stick of some sort was often needed on retrieval missions. Often the ball had rolled onto a drain cover which were usually located quite close to the window of the living room or scullery (kitchen) so that recovering the ball unseen was unlikely. Occasionally a ball could become wedged in gaps under coal-house doors. Even more difficult were those back-yards where balls could roll under lavatory doors.

We got to know back yards pretty well and games were rarely stopped altogether because a ball could not be found and retrieved. There were, however, a few gates which were usually bolted and ball-recovery from these had to be effected by climbing over walls or, occasionally, by climbing onto the slate roofs of the outside buildings (coal-houses and lavatories). Only the daring climbers, and I was not one of them, went on such missions to those yards. As I recall, my friends Keith and Bob, were among the leading exponents of such ventures.



I mentioned the variations in the 'doors' game and, of course, the more the participants, the longer the stretch of street that was needed for the individual door game. It was surprising how easy it usually was to resolve problems such as the close proximity of individual doors and on a willingness to 'change' doors because some were easier to defend than others - some had a concrete step which required a shot which lifted the ball off the ground. So we adjusted the game to suit the differing ages and skills of the players.

We faced similar problems in retrieving the ball when it went into the allotment gardens on the other side of the lane. Most of our fathers were coal-miners and many spent lots of their leisure time in their gardens growing vegetables and keeping hens and sometimes rabbits. Some men resented kids entering their gardens and possibly damaging plants which had been carefully nurtured. We learned to take care and to walk on garden paths until the ball could be located and retrieved with minimal damage. Similar approaches to ball-retrieval had to be adopted to 'unfriendly' gardens as we used for back yards. When plants were flourishing and in 'full leaf', retrieving a ball would prove impossible and days elapsed before it would mysteriously reappear.

Occasionally we would set up a game of football at the street end. Two teams were organised with jumpers for goalposts and a ball larger than a tennis ball was used. These games required goalkeepers whilst passing the ball became more important because the pitch was longer and wider. The street end, however, was mainly reserved for playing cricket. But that's another story!

If you want to read more from the history society here is the link to the site <http://www.washingtonhistorysociety.co.uk/community/washington-history-society-12965/home>

Next Issue

The next Newsletter will be issued on 7th May (the date we'd normally have our monthly meeting). If you have anything you wish to share with fellow members, are doing anything that you'd like to tell members about, or have any suggestions please contact Sandra Graham.

Quiz Answers

ANSWERS – ENTERTAINMENT

1. Detroit
2. I am the Walrus
3. Dr Who
4. Polly
5. Gone With The Wind
6. John Hurt
7. 60
8. False (but they did have a minor hit singing as Tom & Jerry)
9. Richard Coles
10. Jeremy Paxman

ANSWERS – THE NORTH EAST

1. Antony Gormley
2. Saint Cuthbert
3. Bob Paisley
4. 18
5. True
6. Jim Moir
7. 1988
8. Steve Cram
9. Captain Cook
10. Paul Daniels

ANSWERS – FOOD & DRINK

1. Fish
2. Pear
3. Haggis
4. USA
5. 24
6. Haddock
7. Fish
8. True
9. To stir (porridge, stews, soup etc.)
10. Chicken

ANSWERS – POT LUCK

1. Foxglove
2. Edwina Currie
3. Tim Peake
4. Peppa Pig
5. Bees
6. Stanley
7. Nora Batty
8. Manchester
9. Mercury
10. The War Cry