

Spring 2021



From the chair...

Dear all,

This last year has tested us all and many organisations, including Wigtownshire u3a, have seen reductions in membership and activities as a result. Our committee also want to use this opportunity to send sympathy to all of our members and their families who've been affected by separation, illness or death due to the Covid pandemic. We're all looking forward to the situation getting better for everyone with the restrictions and vaccination programme improving things for us all.

Although we've been operating throughout in a limited way, we've been trying our best not only to keep things going, but also to steadily increase our activities and support by maintaining contact with group leaders who, in turn, have tried to stay in touch with their group members. We've also started holding monthly virtual coffee mornings; posting information on Facebook; continuing our monthly emails; and offering Zoom training; as well as restarting our monthly talks on Zoom.

We took the decision to reduce this year's membership fee to £5, and pay for a Zoom licence for groups, given our reduced activities and outgoings. Whilst Zoom isn't for everyone, it has helped many of us in keeping activities going, especially once we were trained and worked out how to use Zoom simply, securely and effectively, even for coffee mornings and groups that operated very differently in person.

The contributions in this Spring mailing are both group related and some of our personal experiences during lockdown. We've also included a crossword which we hope you enjoy. If you have a friend who's not online then it would be helpful if you can offer to download and print off the bitesize version which appears on our website.

Our AGM takes place on Friday 30th April using Zoom. You will have all received an invite and will soon receive the additional documents. Please try to attend so that we can take on board your views and have a useful discussion on a way forward for Wigtownshire. But if you can't attend for any reason, please let us know and tell us anything you would like to contribute.

I want to thank everyone who's contributed in any way to support our members, and I'm pleased to report that we have recently co-opted two new members on to the Committee which is great news. If anyone else would like to volunteer for the Committee, or to help organise any new or existing groups, please get in touch.

Gill Hay

Bill knows his onions!



Bill and Ginny Arnott are keen members of Wigtownshire u3a's Practical Gardening Group, and have the perfect partnership gardening-wise. Their garden is separated in two, Ginny growing flowers on one side and Bill growing his beloved vegetables on the other. As he says, "If you can't eat it, I don't grow it!".

Bill's love of gardening was passed on from his father showing him, and his younger brother Graham, how to grow vegetables at their home in New Luce. The skill came in extremely useful when his dad went off to serve in WWII in 1939, not returning until the end of the war. At that time, Bill was just 9 years old and his brother was 7, with another sibling too young to help his mother. After the war, the family bought a smallholding in Dumfriesshire and Bill started to exhibit in the children's section of the local shows.

A farmer for most of his life until 84, gardening became Bill's regular pastime and he enjoys competing with his produce including potatoes, carrots, and salad crops at local shows where he regularly sweeps the board, especially with his onions. At the ripe old age of 91, Bill also keeps and exhibits both hens (Leghorns and Welsummers) and their eggs.

Bill and Ginny enjoy the camaraderie of the Wigtownshire u3a, have joined in Zoom meetings and are looking forward to meeting their fellow gardening members face to face once lockdown is lifted.

Lesley Miller interviewed Bill Arnott

The Textile Crafts Group



The annual displays by the Textile Crafts group at the AGM exhibition regularly attract the response "... but I could never do something like that". Well, you could be surprised – this friendly and informal group often relies on the enthusiasm of its members for something seen in a magazine and their willingness to give anything a try. Certainly we also make use of the skills and expertise of our members, but even the most experienced crafters enjoy learning something new. But mainly we get together to have a sociable and relaxed morning among people with a shared interest in all things textile-related.

Over the past few years we have dabbled in dyeing, silk painting, patchwork, felt making and beading, brushed up knitting skills and learned the basics of Tunisian crochet, tatting and braiding. We usually try to find something seasonal for Christmas, and in 2018 we created a display based on book titles for the Wigtown Book Festival.

We can't wait to meet again properly and see what we have all been doing. When we do, we hope to welcome some new members to the group and we're looking forward to discovering some fresh skills to practise.

Julie McGlashan

We will survive!

We are all looking forward to the time when we can meet up again with relatives and friends. Fortunately, thanks to David Sumner, many of us in the Exploring Literature group have at least been able to meet every Monday morning since March 2020. It's good to be able to look forward to seeing the others each week, even if it's only with Zoom!

I don't suppose anyone wants to lose our u3a but it simply can't continue with only a few committee members. If you want to see all our groups and monthly meetings fully up and running again, you can help! Positive action is urgently needed and there must be some of our members out there who are willing to give it a go. Believe me – former committee and u3a experience helps, but the biggest requirement is enthusiasm and willingness to keep Wigtownshire u3a alive and well.

You can do it! Don't think it's for someone else to volunteer – you know what will happen if everyone thinks that.

Anne Dunford (Since Anne wrote this we've had two new co-opted Committee members but we still are looking for more!)

u3a Exploring Literature – our experience with Zoom



When the first lockdown started, just about a year ago, we could no longer meet as a group, but wanted to keep going nevertheless so we kept reading and exchanging emails regularly. Then someone in the group suggested we try Zoom. So with my son's help, I set up a Zoom account and we had our first meeting on May 18.

We have met weekly ever since, (twice as often as before lockdown), mixing reading aloud with discussion. In one session we even read a play (which I had cast in advance). Obviously you don't get the unique chemistry of a face-to-face meeting but it's a whole lot better than not meeting at all.

At present we're reading 'North and South' by Elizabeth Gaskell. There has certainly been some lively discussion, most recently about 'Things Fall Apart' published in 1958 and set in a Nigerian village at the end of the 19th century, The book was chosen by a member of our group who had lived and worked in Nigeria so she was able to provide a lot of useful background information.

To any group which is contemplating setting up Zoom meetings, I would strongly recommend it and would be happy to help.

David Sumner

u3a Day



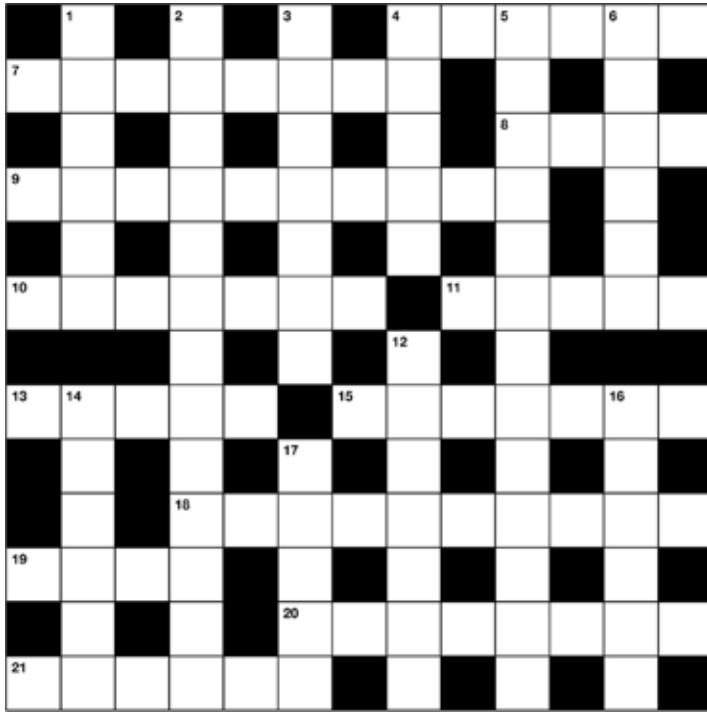
After two cancellations due to Covid last year, the first national u3a Day is due to take place on Wednesday, June 2nd, come hell or high water. We have an enthusiastic team to help plan the Day which we hope will lead to a much wider appreciation of our u3a and what a positive contribution it makes to people's lives.

Lord Lieutenant of Wigtownshire, Aileen Brewis has agreed to officially open the event most of which will happen virtually this year. Ideas to date include littlerpicks, talks on various topics via Zoom such as local geology, a French conversation taster, an outdoor 'readathon', virtual wine tasting and (hopefully) a presence in libraries and community centres to showcase what we're about. If you want to help by joining in the activities, handing out leaflets, dress windows or talking to people about our u3a we'd be pleased to hear from you! We're also looking for family recipes to put towards Wigtownshire u3a's 'Recipe for Success' so please get in touch with yours.

The event is part funded by a grant provided by Killgallioch Community Benefit Fund administered by Foundation Scotland.

Lesley Miller

Cryptic Crossword – Marian Reeve



Across

- 4 Visible, audibly, stir up (6)
- 7 Drat! Sand subsidence is normal (8)
- 8 Nero and Neville were gutted to get nothing (4)
- 9 Ed's minions made measurements (10)
- 10 Notices misshapen piece (7)
- 11 Heighten senses – taut inside (5)
- 13 Quality art is backed with it (5)
- 15 Grain is hot from the West Country (7)
- 18 Waited idly as teacher corrected the clocks? (6,4)
- 19 The middle of a disco record is the centre! (4)
- 20 Makes allowances for dons once reinstated (8)
- 21 It's a nuisance carrying the French grinder (6)

Down

- 1 I treat damaged clothing (6)
- 2 Working Internet meant amusement (13)
- 3 Humanity is back working to find a place to live (7)
- 4 The fool! Every second, lied, hit out (5)
- 5 Back into care of state gives concern (13)
- 6 Is new net needed for this sport? (6)
- 12 Disoriented sovereign (ie lost) is in charge! (7)
- 14 Flower holds the record for tranquillity (6)
- 16 Inside the harem, music reflected the season (6)
- 17 Be without breakdown assistance for support (5)

The trials and joys of adopting a rescue dog – Kath Holt



We lost our beautiful lurcher, Willow in October last year. She was cheeky, clever, funny and loving but was suffering from lymphoma and we knew we had to let her go. We agreed that the space she had left so painfully vacant should be given to another rescue dog that desperately needed a home.

After checking the website of the local canine rescue centre regularly, one day, there she was! A four year old lurcher bitch, looking out across the fields, alert and ready for action. We discovered that she had been used to produce litters of puppies but sometimes let go to fend for herself in between.

We soon became aware of just how much she had needed to forage for food. She kept trying to open the bin, ready to steal whatever she could find but that has waned now she is fed regularly. She is affectionate and funny and now has a safe home. The joys are greater than the trials, without a doubt.

Learning Sanskrit – Jane Edwards

Having been a linguist all my life I had heard of Sanskrit as an ancient Indo-European language; I knew that the terminology of yoga came from Sanskrit, but that was about all. I decided to enrol in Sanskrit module 1.1 consisting of 10 lessons as a good way of passing the time at home during lockdown, and keeping my brain active!

Sanskrit was a spoken language around 5,000 years ago, and first written about 2,500 years ago. Considered a sister language to Latin and Classical Greek, it is generally thought of as a dead language, but is still spoken in parts of India today. It contains the sacred knowledge of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, as well as secular ancient Indic knowledge.

This is not the usual type of language course where you learn vocabulary connected with visiting a country on holiday, but rather it is an interesting introduction to a fascinating world of ancient knowledge and literature which has had a major impact on our modern languages and cultures of today. I am looking forward to the next module.

English	IAST	Devanāgarī script
My name (is)	Mama nāma	मम नाम
I live in London.	Aham London nagare vasāmi	अहम् लन्डन् नगरे वसामि
Where do you live?	Tvam kutra vasasi?	त्वम् कुत्र वससि
What are you studying?	Tvam kim paṭhasi?	त्वम् किम् पथसि
The moon shines in the sky.	Candraḥ gagane bhāti	चन्द्रः गगने भाति
The fish swims in the water.	Mīnaḥ jale tarati	मीनः जले तरति