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# NEWSLETTER

No. 82 APRIL 2020

Dear U3A member,

Welcome to our April Newsletter,

When we look back at the Spring of 2020, we will remember it as a time when our wheelie bins spent more time outside than we did!

In these unprecedented times, our Newsletters are changing their format to provide you with news and information relevant to coronavirus. We shall also try to cheer you up and make suggestions to keep you occupied at home.

For the time being the sections concerning our forthcoming monthly meetings will be put on ice. When these meeting are able to recommence, they will still be on the second Tuesday of each month, and your Newsletter will provide full information in advance.

We know that a small number of our members do not have access to smart phones or computers. We urge you to be adventurous in exploring radio and television to find programmes geared up to helping you keep active, entertained and informed. If members have any suggestions of good programmes they'd like to share, we'd be delighted to feature them in future Newsletters.

## In this month's newsletter

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## Message from our Chairs

Dear members

We hope you are keeping safe and well in these challenging times. Whether we are lucky enough to have access to a garden or just look out on a patch of green, the renewal that spring brings is all around us. It brings us hope and comfort. The painter David Hockney has released some spring pictures for us all to enjoy and we share one here in the newsletter. It was painted very recently in Normandy where the painter is currently based.



There are many ways that U3A can help us and sustain us and it is testimony to the resilience and determination of our members that many have set up virtual interest group meetings. Although we have to keep our distance physically, we seem to be reaching out to each other and encouraging and supporting one another by phone or online. The friendships forged through our U3A activities are enduring. In addition we should all try to establish a buddy system with those who live by themselves to make sure that we reach out to each other and members everywhere feel they are not alone.

Our newsletter is not as full as in past editions, but we hope you will find it useful. For future editions we would love to hear from individual members and interest groups so that we can share stories and inspire and encourage one another.

With our very best wishes  
Anne and Sara

## Membership Renewals

### A message from Jackie Spearpoint our Membership Secretary

I'm pleased to report that over half of our members have now renewed their membership. However just under 270 have yet to do so. Those of you who have email access will have received a reminder from me earlier in the week detailing the procedure for online payment. Some of you may have noticed that in another part of the March Newsletter our bank account details were given; that was for a quite different reason, so please do not make payment direct to that account as it makes it difficult to keep track of renewal payments.

If you prefer to renew by post, send your cheque (not cash) for £15 together with a note of your membership number, if known, and an s.a.e. if you wish your new card to be posted to you, to: Jackie Spearpoint, 14 Awdry Court, St Nicolas Gardens, Birmingham B38 8BH. Alternatively your new card can be collected at any monthly meeting when we are up and running again.

Whichever method you choose, please be sure to let us know about any changes to your contact details. And, finally, if you no longer wish to be a member it is very helpful if you let me know. We will continue our practice of allowing renewals until the end of May, after which your membership will lapse.

Your committee and Interest Group leaders are busy searching for ways to help you during this difficult time, including using new means of communicating with each other – quite a steep learning curve for some of us! As well as this monthly Newsletter, we plan to publish a regular interim Newsheet and you will also continue to receive the national U3A magazine, Third Age Matters. Your renewals will encourage us to do as much as we are able – we do know how important we are to many of you. And, of course, your renewal fees will help us to keep our finances healthy.

Any questions or changes please contact Jackie Spearpoint by email:

[jackiespearpoint@gmail.com](mailto:jackiespearpoint@gmail.com) or telephone 0121 439 5824

## Social Programme

### Social Activities from April 2020

Sadly, all activities planned for April and May have had to be cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic. We will contact you either by email, phone or via the newsletter when venues re-open for business and it is safe to book.

Theatre trips: We are waiting to hear from the Birmingham Rep about refunds for tickets bought for Tartuffe (April) and A Bunch of Amateurs (May). We will contact all those who have bought tickets for these productions when we have further information.

If you would like information or advice concerning any cancelled activities or future events, please contact the relevant organiser.

Best wishes and stay safe.

Julie Alder

### Contact Details

|         |  |                      |
|---------|--|----------------------|
| Julie:  | <a href="mailto:julieallder@yahoo.co.uk">julieallder@yahoo.co.uk</a>         | Mobile 07506 720 756 |
| Tessa:  | <a href="mailto:tessabidgood@btinternet.com">tessabidgood@btinternet.com</a> | Mobile 07941 641 799 |
| Roy:    | <a href="mailto:jroystove@googlemail.com">jroystove@googlemail.com</a>       | Mobile 07786 267 682 |
| Val:    | <a href="mailto:envybaxter@hotmail.com">envybaxter@hotmail.com</a>           | 0121 444 7214        |
| Sylvia: | <a href="mailto:sylviabutler1945@gmail.com">sylviabutler1945@gmail.com</a>   | Mobile 07716806921   |

## Executive Committee Meeting

For the first time ever your Committee held their meeting online.

Below is a screenshot from the Zoom application showing the happy faces of our isolating committee members. Ken brought the virtual biscuits and coffee.

Although it took a little time to get used to, the event ran smoothly and is possibly something Interest Groups could consider as a way of communicating.



## Our AGM in May

Our AGM has, regrettably, been postponed. A future Newsletter will keep you fully informed of proposals with our constitution.

## Some recreational ideas

In the absence of our usual social programme we have received a number of suggestions that may be of interest, and keep you fully occupied. These are listed below.

### For art lovers

Available on catch up:- Scandal and the Beauty on BBC4 at 21.00hrs, narrator Mark Gatiss. It was shown on Monday 30/3/20. The programme is about Aubrey Beardsley and is well worth watching by anyone interested in art.

### Chatter Pack

This link provides a whole spectrum of suggestions to keep you occupied. It includes virtual tours of museums, zoos, places of interest and lots more. You need to take a look just to appreciate how extensive this site is. Click on link below.

[Chatterpack.](#)

### Survival tips from the BBC

Newsnight recruited a few friends to help give their tips for staying sane during the quarantine days.

[BBC Survival Tips.](#)

### Photographic Project

If you look at the national website there is a [new Photography Project – U3A EYE](#) at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/u3a-eye>. Jeff Carter and the photography Subject Adviser Peter Read, will select 15 photos from those submitted on a particular theme to go on an online gallery every fortnight. The current theme is "yellow". The deadline for the first subject is 9th of April. No excuse for photographic groups not to take pictures as they take their lonely exercise in the country or garden!

### Bird Watch Project

Then there is a [Bird Watch Project -U3A EYE](#) - this links people to the British Trust for Ornithology Bird Track project, asking members to submit photos and sighting to us also. Details at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/component/content/article/197-covid-19/575-the-great-u3a-birdwatch?Itemid=490>. This may be expanded to a more general "nature watch" depending on responses.

### Creative Writing Competition

The [Creative Writing Competition](#) will be opened after Easter on the 14<sup>th</sup> April (in order to stagger initiatives) and will ask for short submissions on a theme, which will go to regional judging panels initially. This is based on the successful competition in Wales. The deadline will be 19<sup>th</sup> June, after which all winning regional entries will be judged to come up with an overall winner. Although there is no subject as yet, do keep checking the [national website](#) and start to sharpen you pencils!

## Interest Group creation

A short story from Jenny Cousins of Creative Writing group 2

### Flood v. Pestilence

He had heard that they feared the village would be surrounded by water before nightfall, so he knew he would soon have them in his grasp. He'd decided on this little place because it was so densely packed: holiday homes, tiny streets, old people, quaint shops, a care home - all cheek by jowl. Rich pickings in siege conditions.

He watched the frantic preparations: sandbags, people bellowing to each other, hi-vis jackets, a BBC reporter. Well, he thought, if they think this is an emergency, wait 'til they meet me!

Then he saw that an old woman, her jacket caught on a branch, was dangling from a tree, water swirling all around. She was calling out weakly and waving a free hand to no avail, the branch ever nearer the rising torrent.

A group of teenagers, idly kicking a ball back and forth, spotted the trapped woman. They yelled and pointed and started running. The reaction was immediate: people ran, ropes were thrown, a dinghy was launched, women came with blankets. The woman was rescued, weeping with relief. The villagers cheered.

Chastened by this sight of goodness and solidarity, he turned his back and ambled on over the fells.

©Jenny Cousins

## Interest group notices

### History Group

History group members interested in an online history group are asked to contact history group member Liz Rasheed at [erasheed@hotmail.com](mailto:erasheed@hotmail.com) and she will attempt to set up an online group. Anyone who would like to help please also email Liz. Hopefully Carey will soon be back in charge.

## Cryptic clue solving

### Last month's answers

You may be as mad as this with someone at the tea party. (1,5,4). A March hare.

Beware first of March...first to decay?(8). Mistrust - first of March 'M' - first '1st'- decay 'rust'.

### This month's clues

Well streams possibly with early bloomers. (6,7).

March follower mugs unsuspecting victims. (5,5).

## Useful sites for news of Coronavirus

It is important to watch and listen to BBC and ITV news programmes to receive the latest updates. Additionally the sites below are also very helpful.

### Government web site

Here you can access the latest information and advice.

### NHS web site

For latest information and advice from National Health Service.

### West Midland Police

See some crime prevention tips from West Midlands Police specific to the outbreak of coronavirus.

Times like these can bring out the best and worst in people. While some will be looking out for vulnerable relatives and friends, a small minority will be looking to profit from worry and concerns.

### Guardian Web Site

Some useful advice about fake news. Get the facts rather than the rumours.

### Silverline

One of the members at our Coffee morning recommended [Silverline](#) (Child line for Older people). She has a Phone Pal via this, never met and talk every week at the same time, it also offers advice etc. tel:0800 4708090

### Birmingham Council News

This site provides useful information about council services.

### Moseley Together

Community support for Moseley - [www.moseleytogether.org.uk](http://www.moseleytogether.org.uk). tel 07796668257



## Recent Local photos by our members



Young fox - new life in Ken Fisher's garden



Sara Meyer's Amaryllis has bloomed to cheer us up



Dodgy looking heron by the pond in Sue Stokes' garden.



Primroses - the harbinger of Spring in Ken Fisher's garden

## Contact information

**Interest Group enquiries** - please contact one of the Interest Group Coordinators:

- Brenda Bingham      0121 444 6295      [brbingham@hotmail.com](mailto:brbingham@hotmail.com)
- Roy Stove              0121 459 8604      [jroystove@googlemail.com](mailto:jroystove@googlemail.com)

**Membership enquiries** - please contact:

- Jackie Spearpoint      0121 439 5824      [membership@mkhdu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@mkhdu3a.org.uk)

**Social events enquiries** - please contact:

- Julie Allder              07506 720 756      [julieallder@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:julieallder@yahoo.co.uk)

**Newsletter**

- Ken Fisher              [ken@ken-fisher.com](mailto:ken@ken-fisher.com)

**General enquires** - please contact:

- Sara Meyer              [sarameyer@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sarameyer@hotmail.co.uk)
- Anne Crerar              07881 702 305
- Mike Clark              0121 689 2765
- Or email                      [enquiries@mkhdu3a.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@mkhdu3a.org.uk)

## Your Committee

- Co-chair                      Anne Crerar
- Co-chair                      Sara Meyer
- Business & Communications Secretary      Ken Fisher
- Treasurer                      Tessa Bidgood
- Social Secretary              Julie Allder
- Interest Group Co-ordinators      Brenda Bingham and Roy Stove
- Membership Secretary      Jackie Spearpoint
- Monthly Meeting Co-ordinator      Sylvia Butler
- Advisory Member              Mike Clark