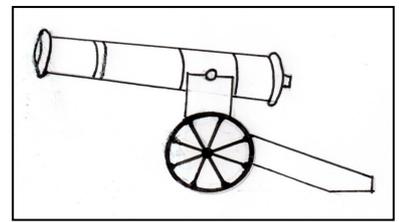




Learn, laugh, live



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THE



Retford U3A

Membership No. 822/801/10

www.retford-u3a.org.uk

NOT SO IDLE TIMES

Retford U3A Newsletter - APRIL 2020

CHAIRMANS CHATTER

Hello members

I'm sure like many of you I can think of no more adjectives/superlatives to describe what's happening globally but more importantly here at home as we enter the next phase of 'lockdown' to try and minimise the impact of this horrible virus.

The news understandably is dominated by Coronavirus and there are many different views and opinions as to how we will eventually defeat the spread. However thank goodness for the heroic efforts of those that are working tirelessly on the front line in our hospitals, care homes and many other support services to look after the sick and vulnerable as we fight our way through. I shall certainly be clapping again at 8:00pm on Thursdays to recognise their dedication and bravery.

So I hope we are in good spirits in the main and are finding lots of things to keep us occupied and involved whilst this situation persists.

Many of us are lucky to have gardens as a sort of sanctuary and at least we have been blessed with a spell of unseasonal warm weather to cheer us up despite it being accompanied by a stiff breeze at times! It has also meant that those of us who can have had good 'walking' weather to get a bit of exercise and a welcome change of surroundings.

I know too that some of the Interest

Groups have stayed in touch with their members where possible with virtual meetings and for those that are interested in finding out what other U3As around the country are doing, the centre is sending out lots of advice and ideas for you to tap into. There are links to these sites in this newsletter.

Of course this month we should have held our AGM but I'm sure you will agree that this and the programme for General Meetings and events for the rest of the year will have to remain on the back burner for the time being. In my view it is far too early to try and firm up any plans but rest assured we will keep things under regular review and be in touch when we can hopefully revert to the 'new normal'.

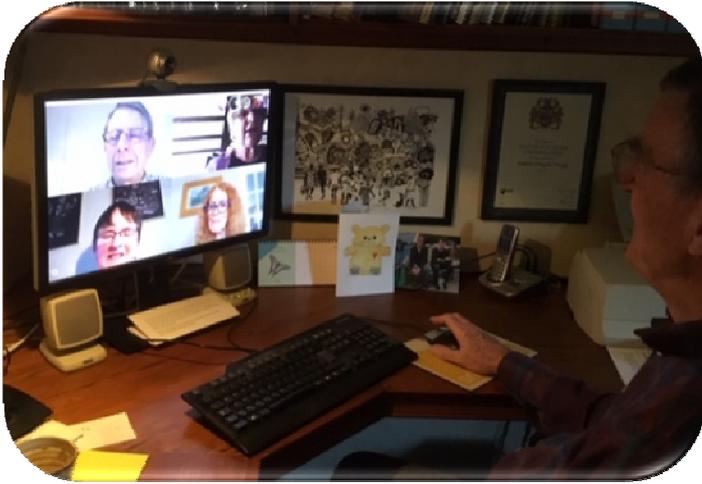
On a lighter note I am sure that many of us have had to learn new skills and abilities and to that end I can now report that Vera has become my personal, fully qualified Barber saving me a few bob in haircuts (I knew that self-grooming kit I bought 4 years ago would come in handy one day!) and I have become an expert in dyeing hair – Vera's not mine I hasten to add!

I hope all of you are keeping safe and well at this testing time and please let Christine know of any stories or anecdotes you might share with the rest of the membership through the newsletter.

Cheers

Chris

SPANISH GROUP



Not to be deterred by lockdown, our Spanish group is now meeting weekly through Skype. We just miss our coffee and cake!

KEEP IN TOUCH

The U3A National Advice line is open and as busy as ever. Even though we are working remotely in these unprecedented times, our front line staff and volunteers continue to respond to more than 2,000 calls a month.

These include a wide range of issues from how to run a U3A at this time to more general concerns on keeping connected.

U3A Advice worker Jayne said "People are calling us not only to talk through ways of how best to run a committee meeting remotely, or manage the suspension of their AGMs but on wider issues surrounding social distancing and isolation. Our members are amazing, they are so active and engaged. We are really pleased to be able to keep everyone connected. We look forward to speaking to our many callers – wherever and whoever you are – so please keep phoning us!"

Quick Links and How to Guides

National office has produced a set of How to Guides on how to use digital platforms like Zoom. The national website also has a quick links which are helpful for the latest advice on coronavirus and has quick links on how to Stay In Touch during these times.

U3A in the Media

During this uncertain time, U3As and their members have continued to look at ways to stay active and continue to raise their profile. This is important because there could be Third Agers in your local communities who may find this time quite isolating and may benefit from being a member of U3A but

have not heard of us. The advice below is to support you to keep connected with your local media and radio.

Media Brief

Research various media outlets around your community. That could be free news sheets, social media, local radio or local press. Local micro press is becoming more popular such as a free magazine delivered to a particular postcode area. Make contact, introduce yourself and show the importance of staying positive and connecting with other older adults particularly during these uncertain times.

Messages:

These may include:

- The innovative ways you are staying connected with each other
- The new initiatives you are taking part in remotely
- The way your U3A is embracing new technologies or/and social media

Contacts

You can find your local contacts by Google and by searching social media. We are always here to help so do get in touch with national office communications and we will help identify your local contacts.

Email eleanor.mair@u3a.org.uk

Telephone 020 8466 6139 - still open

Website:

for more information and links

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

Catherine Williams, a member of the Recorder Group has a niece who has written a book that is going to be broadcast soon on Woman's Hour.

LETTER TO LOUIS by Alison White, published by Faber & Faber, available in hardback, paperback, kindle and audio. Shortlisted for the Audie awards 2019. Also, shortly to be broadcast, in abridged and dramatized form, as the book of the week at the end of Woman's Hour on Radio 4, on the week commencing 27th April. I cannot in all honesty write the review myself, the reason being that Alison is my eldest niece and goddaughter. She has a very disabled son, Louis, and this book is about her life bringing up Louis. However, what I have done is gone to Amazon and copied and pasted the first 4 readers' reviews of the book. All the reviews are 5* reviews. So, you might reasonably ask, why haven't I put an at least slightly less favourable review? The reason I haven't is because every single review on Amazon is a 5* review.

Reviewer 1

"Don't be put off by the idea of this being some kind of - 'unbearably harrowing thank God it's not me tragic life - sort of a book, because it's not. It's wise, witty, moving, beautifully written, full of outrage and optimism, and like all good memoirs, it transcends the purely personal. We really get to know something essential about the life of that little boy gazing out of the big blue watery front cover, and of his mother, and of those close to them, and we close the book wanting to know more. Buy two, one for yourself, one as a gift; it's that kind of a book."

Reviewer 2

"I was truly captivated by this book. "Letter To Louis" describes a family's life with a child who has severe disabilities. Written with an understated simplicity which is powerful, the author tells of the joys and difficulties of being Louis' mum. I was gripped, pulled into

the author's story and life. I read it in one sitting, unable to put it down. Not many books have an emotional impact on me, but I laughed and wept while reading this. Highly recommended – this has leapt into my 'favourite ever books' list."

Reviewer 3

"Simultaneously heartbreaking and uplifting it is impossible to put down. There are parts that will make you cry tears of despair while others will restore your faith in humanity. You are taken on the author's incredible journey and are with her every step of the way. I would highly recommend 'Letter to Louis' to all parents, those in the caring professions and in fact anyone at all."

Reviewer 4

"Once you start reading this book, you won't be able to stop. By the end of it, you are left in awe of Alison White's talents as a writer and her devotion to Louis. Funny at times, poignant at others, it charts Louis' life from birth up until the age of 18. Along the way, there are moments of joy and kindness from family members, friends and others who meet Louis and discover his determination and mischievous sense of humour. At other times, it lays bare the shocking attitude of some towards those with disability and the toll that caring for a disabled person has on family life. Beautifully written, this memoir has been receiving rave reviews in the press and from other authors. Having read it, I can see why. I cannot recommend it highly enough."

Reviewer 5, Sheila Massey, Chair of Worksoop U3A and editor of the newsletter .

I first read this book a couple of years ago, and I have just finished re-reading it. I very rarely read a book twice, and I would like to add my recommendation. So moving, so beautifully written.



LOCKDOWN LAMENT

Well, the U3A's suspended,
 What are we going to do?
 The Groups are off,
 The walks are done,
 So, let's all have a brew
 And think about this enforced time
 Of home, and families too,
 Of those we love and cannot see,
 Good friends, to name a few.

The car is in the garage,
 There's nowhere we can
 Apart from trips to Tesco,
 But getting in is slow.
 The garden looks amazing,
 There's not a weed in sight,
 I've even been Spring cleaning
 To ease my soulful plight.

I'm listening to music,
 To plays and newsreels too,
 But they can be depressing
 And leave me feeling blue.
 Now, if I were that bit younger
 I would volunteer my skills
 Be back, helping the public
 And do away with pills.

However, I keep walking
 A chat across the lane,
 Baking cakes and pottering
 To try and keep me sane.
 I wonder if our lifetime
 Will see our Country grow
 Back to its former glory,
 Or, would we want it so.

Is not this time of lockdown
 A period to care
 About what really matters,
 A Society that's fair.
 I'm not at all unhappy,
 I have all I could need
 But when we're back in action
 I'll be very glad indeed.

Brenda Wilson

WHAT DO YOU CALL AN
 ALLIGATOR IN A VEST?



AN INVESTIGATOR

Three cheers for Tom Bell
 who had kept us amused
 with his weekly emails of
 giggles and pictures.
 Well done Tom.

HELP WHILST SELF-ISOLATING

A new website called [Greysnet](http://www.greysnet.com) has just been launched with the support of the National Lottery Community Fund to help older people all over the country to stay connected and keep mind and body active during the current Coronavirus lockdown. It's called [Greysnet](http://www.greysnet.com) and you can find it at www.greysnet.com

Greysnet is a dedicated online space where older people can chat with one-another through a public forum and find out about all sorts of events and activities they can get involved in while self-isolating

NATIONAL U3A DAY

The decision has been made to postpone our first national U3A Day from 3 June 2020 to 1 October 2020 which is International Day of Older Persons. (June 3rd just falls within the estimated 12 weeks of advised social exclusion).

Many U3As have invested time and energy into planning creative and informative events to raise the profile of the movement. We have a long lead-time for this new date so plans can be reviewed and rearranged including venues and guests. As you are aware, U3A Day is planned to maximise the opportunity to raise our profile nationally. Nationally, we will work towards signposting media attention to 1 October 2020, once that date is confirmed as safe and appropriate.

NEWSLETTER CONTACT

Design, Production & Printing - Christine Cook
 Contact:- newsletters@retford-u3a.org.uk

For the foreseeable future I will still be publishing a monthly newsletter and will appreciate any articles etc.

If you know a member who doesn't have email etc please print a copy of the newsletter and pass it on or for members who do not have internet or email contact me as I am willing to post a copy of the newsletter to those members (a sae included).

Contact me on 01777 870583. Items for inclusion in the May edition can be sent in any time but no later than Friday 22nd May 2020.

Keep safe

Christine