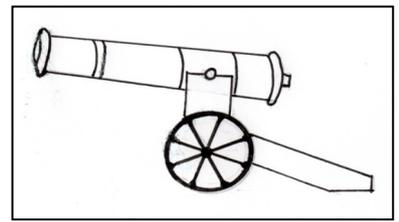




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THE



Retford U3A

Membership No. 822/801/10

www.retford-u3a.org.uk

NOT SO IDLE TIMES

Retford U3A Newsletter - MARCH 2020

CHAIRMANS CHATTER

Dear Members

Where do I start? Never in a lifetime did I believe that I would be chatting to you in these extraordinary circumstances. These are unprecedented times the like of which none of us, or very few of us, have ever experienced. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our lives has been sudden and perturbing with the situation changing by the day if not the hour. Let's hope though that the experts and Government are erring on the side of caution and that timescales will come down eventually and we can hopefully get back to something like normality sooner rather than later.

Nevertheless as a result Retford U3A has had to cancel our meetings and curtail our activities with the over 70s particularly facing the prospect of a lengthy period of self isolation, the thought of which is a bit scary to say the least. The Committee is grateful for your patience and understanding in having to make these decisions but I am sure you will agree there were no options.

However on a brighter note, thank goodness for technology which means we can still keep in touch with each other through various social media platforms which I know a lot of you already use eg. Text, whatsapp, twitter, Instagram, facetime, skype etc.. I'm certainly going to use this time to try and brush up my IT skills and there was even talk of using facebook in our household this morning – something I have deliberately steered clear of for ages. I know - pathetic really! I'm also going to dust off my lengthy 'to do' list with plans for tidying up the garage – a job I've been putting off ever since moving here seven years ago(!) - and if the weather is kind I can find plenty to do in and around the

garden, and would you believe Vera has bought flour and yeast to get into breadmaking! I don't think I'll be appearing on The Great British Bake Off anytime soon!

We will all have ways and ideas of how we will cope but let us remember that some might need more support than others' as their social lifeline has been cut off so let's try to get in touch and keep in touch and help each other cope. BBC News keeps us up to date but I find the local Radio Stations are very good too. They are reporting that in true British tradition there are lots of help and support groups being set up in local communities to help with shopping, dog walking, fetching medicines etc. or just being on the end of a phone for a friendly chat. One word of warning though – please make sure that the people knocking on your door are genuine. Sadly the scammers out there will always use these opportunities to try and dupe the more vulnerable of us.

Also for those of you who can, please take a look at the National U3A website. They are collecting ideas and initiatives from other U3A branches around the UK to provide help and support to help get us through.

I guess this will be my last Chairman's Chatter for some considerable time; as you know I am due to step down at the April AGM but obviously that will now have to wait along with other Committee changes. Rest assured that we will keep you up to date on developments as they affect us and please do not hesitate to contact myself or other members of the Committee if you have any concerns or indeed ideas on coping strategies.

Please stay healthy and alert and keep on washing your hands! Cheers Chris

NEWS FROM INTEREST GROUPS

POETRY GROUP

When meetings start again there is a change of venue for meetings from Hallcroft Centre to West Retford Hotel (or members homes if not available). The times remain unchanged

WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

The March meeting of the Wine Appreciation Group was held at Lesley an Adrian Sumners and went under the heading of "Those Were the Days". The "days" in this case being the 1960's. Members were requested to wear flowers in their hair (which was a bit challenging for some of the men who don't have much these days!) and to bring photographs of themselves from the 1960's.

It was interesting to taste some of the wines we thought so sophisticated when we were young things, such as Babycham, Blue Nun, Mateus Rose and Black Tower. Although it was good fun, we all agreed that our tastes have matured and improved over the past 50 to 60 years. (Goodness me is it really that long ago?) There were no prizes for the best headdresses but as can be seen in the photographs the men really excelled.



MILITARY HISTORY GROUP

Now our June to May year has effectively ended, I can share the attendance to our meetings figures with you.

- ◆ 2016/17 - 64 people attended at least one meeting, and 29 attended 5 or more meetings.
- ◆ In 2017/18 - 91 people attended at least one meeting, and 38 attended 5 or more meetings.
- ◆ 2018/19 - 94 people attended at least one meeting, and 46 attended 5 or more meetings.
- ◆ 2019/20 - 108 people attended at least one meeting and 52 attended 4 or more meetings (a reduced figure as we have only met 8 times this year, not 11).

I would like to thank all of you who have come along, and hopefully I guess probably from September we will start to hold our meetings again. Mike Garrett is primed to give us a talk on the 'Battle of Towton Moor', and hopefully the British Legion can provide a speaker in October to tell us about the 'Role of the British Legion'. Stay safe everyone Roy Evans

QUIZ NIGHT

The quiz night has been postponed and a future date to be announced – later in the year. If members could retain their tickets they will be valid.

For information please contact
Sue Paul
sue.paul01@talktalk.net or
01777 705008

WORKSOP U3A CINEMA GROUP



The decision has been made to CANCEL our film at the Savoy on the 9th April. This will be reviewed for May.

NEWS FROM INTEREST GROUPS

SOCIAL DANCE GROUP

What a wonderful response to the idea of forming a social dance group, based on dances otherwise known as folk, ceili (Irish spelling), ceilidh (Scottish spelling), country, barn or community dancing. Over 40 people expressed an interest. It is a wonderful way to meet people, but has many more benefits.

Scientists advise that dance is an amazing form of exercise for older people, telling us it improves strength and balance, reduces joint pain and stiffness, protects the heart and "defends against dementia". Wow - and a bit of fun, music and even memory and maths thrown in too (counting those steps and remembering those shapes!).

However, what I envisage also involves a lot of hand touching and close spacing of people, so I have had to think through the best time for starting out on this venture. I have been considering the opinions of other friends and associates in the community dance world and overall we are all coming to the same conclusion - this is not the best of times for this kind of dancing and it is with regret that I have decided to postpone the first meetings. Having been in "self-isolation" myself following a chest cold, this is not something I want to risk with friends and members of U3A. My hope-for support from musicians and callers feel the same. None of us could have predicted the current health emergency but have to safeguard each other.

I am hoping, that this all diminishes in the near future and we can replan. I am still keen to get this idea off the ground. I will keep in touch with all those who provided me with email contact details, as I can provide you with some useful information in the mean time. Or perhaps you have some thoughts about dances you might like to share or music or even if you have a desire to call yourself, then do get in touch. Who knows what talents are out there? If you haven't provided an email address on the list and have one, please get in touch with me on moiraruff@hotmail.com so I can include you. I appreciate that not everyone has access to computers, so all I can say is that I will keep in touch via the newsletter if anything new comes up. Hoping to see you all in the very near future, Moira Ruff.

WALKING GROUPS

Strollers Jean Winder 01777 817777
 Email walking-strollers@retford-u3a.org.uk
Moderates David Richardson 01427 891500
 Email walking-moderate@retford-u3a.org.uk
Striders Contact Tom Bell 01777 710969 or Geoff Marsh 01777 702634
 Email walking-striders@retford-u3a.org.uk

During these hard times Tom has started a Giggles and Pictures group (GAP) this is intended to be a bit of a morale boost, even if some of the jokes get more groans than guffaws! Maybe a good way of feeling connected too.

- ◆ No! I will NOT tell you where I have hidden my tomato ketchup! I never reveal my sauces!
- ◆ Greggs have announced plans to start a delivery service using drones . All sounds a bit pie in the sky to me

YARN BOMB



The Yarn Bomb event due to take place on May 8th 2020 has had to be postponed until later in the year

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 April edition can be sent in any time but no later than Friday 20th April 2020.

Keep safe

Christine

NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Dear Members

Further to the all member email that was sent to you on Saturday the Committee has now taken the decision to cancel all Interest Group meetings for the foreseeable future. This will unfortunately include the Quiz Night on 24th April.

We are only too aware that this will cause some concern within our membership but these are extraordinary times and given the latest announcements by the Government on the real possibility for over 70s to self isolate for up to four months we feel it is the best interests of our membership. Obviously we will keep the situation under review and let you know of any further developments.

Let us all try and do whatever we can to stay in touch (by phone, email, text, whatsapp, facebook etc) with our fellow members especially those for whom this will come as a big blow to their social activities. On the plus side, nationally the U3A is compiling ideas from branches around the UK looking at innovative ways of dealing with the situation including holding meetings online etc. and it might be a good idea to look at the national website from time to time to keep abreast of things.

We are also suspending membership renewals for the time being in light of recent advice.

Don't worry if you have not renewed yet there will be plenty of time to do this when things begin to return to normal.

Please pass this information to any members who do not use email and don't hesitate to get in touch with myself or other Committee members if you have any concerns.

Cheers Chris



PROTECT THE NHS

save lives

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.



No decision about whether the Summer Soiree event will be going ahead yet. It will depend on where we are by August. Watch this space

Brenda Wilson

U3A GROUP INSURANCE

I now have an up to date copy of the U3A insurance policy and would like all group leaders to have this.

A copy of the policy was to be available at the March general meeting but as you know this has been cancelled but as soon as we re-open it will be available.

Brenda Wilson