

Chalfonts U3A Newsletter No.63 May 2020 ●



Editor's Update

Hello everyone and welcome to the third edition of our Covid -19 newsletter.

Well Boris is back in the driving seat and glad he has made such a quick recovery. The amazing treatment at St Thomas's Hospital and the lovely Buckinghamshire air and country house might also have helped! I hope you too are keeping well and safe and finding the time to catch up with friends old and new. Some interesting updates for 'Members' Musings' so keep them coming in! Zoom is being mentioned so frequently now that I think we can name ourselves 'The Baby Zoomers'!!

We are hearing daily of the immense support for The NHS and other key workers who are helping to keep us safe. Today 29 April, Captain Tom Moore Second World War veteran is celebrating his 100th birthday and has been made an honorary Colonel. You will have read about how he achieved his goal of walking 100 laps of his garden and in the process has raised 31 million pounds. He is having a Spitfire and a Hurricane flypast salute in celebration. Amazing what one person can achieve and demonstrates that we are all capable of acts of kindness.

A reminder to those of you who haven't already done this. Covid 19 monitoring is being carried out by King's College, Guys and St Thomas 'Hospitals in partnership with ZOE Global Ltd a health science company. They are asking people to Download the Ask Zoe/Covid-19 app and report daily, any symptoms including 'none' to help them track the path of the disease particularly among the elderly. It already has 2.6 million subscribers.

Things to enjoy at home (I am not going to mention DIY! We want to keep you out of A& E)

On a cultural note for those of you missing going to art galleries, The National Gallery is offering <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/apr/23/uk-national-gallery-offers-slow-looking-art-lessons-for-lockdown>.

And also, from The National Gallery A curated look at: working from home on YouTube

<https://youtu.be/r1Xq4qsC5ww>

Theatres continue to offer streaming of shows on YouTube and next month there will be an event bringing together the best of the cancelled UK literary festivals with a weekend devoted to Book Lovers. The Big Book Weekend is part of BBC Arts' Culture in Quarantine, bringing the very best arts and culture to the homes of everyone in the UK It will feature video interviews, panel discussions and 'in conversation' sessions. It is taking place on May 8-10 <https://bigbookweekend.com/>

Quizzers amongst you may also be interested in The 'National Theatre At Home Quiz' with questions being asked by some of our favourite actors, just go to YouTube and enjoy. Of course you have to resist the temptation to dare I say it cheat!! Good luck.

Reminder re Bucks Libraries Although they are closed you can still access the library service and read eBooks, listen to audiobooks, read magazines and papers and find online reference materials. If you are not a library member don't worry as joining is easy, no paperwork, just go to Bucks Libraries website. The Leader of Bucks CC Martin Tett has a daily Vlog site and David Jones Head of the Library services explains all about the library's online resources <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wl2pNsk7r2E>

And finally for our 'keep fitters' a reminder Mr Motivator filmed a week long programme of exercises exclusively for U3A members which started on Monday 20th April on YouTube and he offered gentle exercises to some great tunes. What is not to like about him, so much fun without having to leave home and visit the gym!

Chalfonts U3A Facebook Group . We now have 61 members keeping us posted on events in their daily lives and giving suggestions for us to consider eg cultural activities of which there are many being streamed on YouTube. There is a link on the Website's home page to the following page: <https://chalfontsu3a.org.uk/cu3a-facebook-group/> There you will find a link to the PDF with instructions

on how to join Facebook and the CU3A group. Gary Tomlin our webmaster can help where there are any questions or issues you may have in creating a Facebook account or joining the group. He has also set up an email address facebook@chalfontsu3a.org.uk. **Computer Issue?** If you are having any problems with your computer please email support@chalfontsu3a.org.uk and we will try and assist you via email. You can also post your questions on the Chalfonts U3A Facebook page.

Now over to our 'Members' Musings'

Closer to home Chris Coteman from Chalfont Common WI informed me that they have been busy making scrubs bags for nurses to put their uniforms in and wash. A few days ago, 320 but probably more now and there are many more being sewn as new people are coming on board all the time. Although the WI started this in response to a growing need, our U3A members have also been helping with sewing, cutting, donating sheets etc ! At the time of the newsletter being sent out they have now finished this task, so the sewing machines are going to have to find another use. Slick summer dresses for our growing sizes perhaps or a new set of curtains? Thank you one and all.

Teri McAvoy has updated me on the activities of the Textiles & Crafts Group. A WhatsApp Group has been established for members to keep in touch and to share stories about their craft projects during lockdown. Several members of the group are involved in helping to make sets of scrubs and scrub bags for NHS staff, and a big thank you goes to Jane Mackay , Chris Pearcey, Heather Trobridge and Linda Kedge.

Knitters needed to help Ward 16b at Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

If anyone is looking for a knitting project, Stoke Mandeville Hospital is keen for knitters to help make cribs and crib covers for families having to deal with miscarriage. They usually have charities who help supply these items but the lockdown has cut-off supplies. The link below gives more details and includes a downloadable knitting pattern.

https://www.mix96.co.uk/news/local/3090803/aylesbury-ward-caring-for-grieving-parents-needs-knitters-help/amp/?_twitter_impression=true This is such a worthwhile project as families experiencing miscarriage can have a tangible memory of the pregnancy.

A positive story about the coronavirus lockdown by Sue Fisher.

About 50 years ago my parents taught my friend Angela and me to play bridge. Some other friends, Christine and Sue also learnt to play. During the second half of our teens and into our 20s we continued to play quite frequently. It was always a very sociable and fun event with a few glasses of wine! Then life took over and we all went to different places and had children, so most of us didn't have the time to play. A few weeks ago, as she couldn't do her normal activities, Christine who lives in Brighton decided to arrange a game using the Bridgebase, so she contacted the rest of us: Angela, who lives in Plymouth and has continued to play bridge for the last 25 years, Sue who lives in Greece and hasn't played for 40 years, and me living in Chalfont St. Peter who like Christine, hasn't played for years until fairly recently. We have now played several times using a computer or iPad and our mobile phones to video contact each other on WhatsApp. It is a wonderful way to keep in contact from long distances and in such isolating times. Sue, in Greece, said the other day that we should continue to play weekly when this is all over as it's such a great way to keep in regular contact and have a chat while playing a game we all learnt all those years ago. So, although we have always stayed in touch, the coronavirus has brought us even closer together. If anyone wants help setting up a game on BridgeBase please contact Sue groupcoordinator2@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

Jane Barker's diary entry - an edited extract from my Covid diary for 24th March. Although still very cold in the morning we have had two days of brilliant sunshine and Spring is well and truly here . Today we went for our permitted walk at about 9am (to be ahead of everyone) and maybe met about 10 people in total . We did manage to stay away from them though . We had a coffee in the garden when we got back accompanied by the sound of our neighbour power washing the patio . After lunch I skyped my daughter and granddaughter(aged 16 months) . That was the best and saddest part of the day. They seem fine . M(my granddaughter) does recognise me but doesn't understand the technology . She got her bear when asked and tried to hand it to me though her Mum's phone . I do miss seeing her so much. Please let us all survive this and have happier times ahead.

Book Group1 Update from convenor Jane Barker. Zoom is now being used and we have also set up a WhatsApp group. If any U3A members are looking for a good read we can recommend "Where the Crawdads sing" by Delia Owens . It is an unusual story of the "marsh" girl who certainly experiences loss and solitude . It is beautifully written evoking a deep love of nature. More recommendations next month!

Italian Beginners. Update from convenor Lesley Bedford. We started in October 2019 and over some weeks we became a group of 10, all complete beginners to Italian but very keen to learn. We enjoyed meeting up every week and listening to a CD together and then discussing what we had learned. Very gradually we started to be able to introduce ourselves and ask people how they were. Then we were presented with the challenge of "lockdown". We unanimously decided that we would like to continue to learn and that all meeting up via the internet would be a great way to keep in touch and keep our group alive and well. We are managing to keep to our weekly schedule, working in pairs with a chosen topic and then coming together listening to some of the CD and/or going over what we have learned and any problems encountered. This lasts for around 40 minutes with the option of those who want to come back on to Zoom for a further 15 or 20 minutes for a chat and catch up. Zoom is working well and has allowed us to continue our learning as well as keep us all in touch. Ciao! A presto!

For Garden Lovers- In the current Coronavirus crisis, when our beautiful gardens are closed, the National Garden Scheme and its garden owners are working to bring the gardens to life for you with virtual garden tours. You can take virtual tours of many gardens, including Alan Titchmarsh's, from the National Garden Scheme website ngs.org.uk.

https://ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits/?gclid=CjwKCAjw4pT1BRBUEiwAm5QuR-ji8Y4LGnUBvodt2eEza2p_NI7V1aGUfnqbKrf8XNRU-DMfDAARvhoCnTEQAvD_BwE

And this year the Chelsea Flower Show from 19th-23rd May is also going virtual ,

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/news/2020/sue-biggs-open-letter-chelsea>

Strollers Zoom experience. Convenor Val Hadfield has a story all of us 'zoomers' can all relate to!! There couldn't be a more appropriate name: Zoom has zoomed into our lives from nowhere and taken over. Since the Coronavirus 'lockdown', U3A groups are getting into Zoom. Talk about the blind leading the blind!

My first experience was with the Cryptic Crossword group, then having successfully experienced 'Houseparty' with my family, I tried it out with my Strollers group, who were enthusiastically communicating by email. Unfortunately, in the first meeting we had experienced a strange problem, with one member receiving instructions to wait for an hour to be admitted.

The next week I tried it with 12 members and it was such a welcome opportunity to not only hear from people but actually see them ,that we tried it again the following week with equal success and now have regular meetings. It was not without problems. Many of us had not been adventurous with technology and lacked confidence so found it challenging .Inadequate technology could be a problem, with aging equipment or software unable to cope or lacking a camera facility for video. Poor internet connections can also be a problem. I think most members felt it was well worth the effort, when succeeding. When first experimenting with it, we were delighted to be told that the 40-minute limit on meetings had been suspended and was now unlimited. Unfortunately, once a certain level of reliance on the programme had been built up, the limit was reinstated. Undeterred, we decided it was convenient to take a coffee break and resume for a second meeting of 40 minutes .However, realising this was not always convenient, but was going to be a regular part of life for the foreseeable future, I decided to invest in membership at £11.99 a month, so that, with a maximum meeting time of 24 hours, and maximum participants of 100, meetings didn't need to be disrupted ! I do not know anyone else who has a membership so from total ignorance, I seem to have become the 'expert ' who can organise extended meetings. The Current Affairs group is the next target, introducing Zoom to even more apprehensive U3Aers.It is clear to me that this initiative is introducing not only new skills but new opportunities to a vast number of members, whilst also contributing to their mental wellbeing in these times of isolation, which threaten to be a fact of life for a long time. Recognising that social contact is such an important part of all our groups, whatever the topic, and actually seeing each other adds such a profound element to that, it is clear that 'video conferencing' by whatever means will grow in popularity. The U3A fulfils and extends its mission again.

