

Chalfonts U3A Newsletter No.70 September 2020



Hello everyone and welcome to the September newsletter. Although Autumn is in the air and nights are drawing in we are experiencing some lovely weather. Long may it continue! As a member of a local Pilates group I have been very fortunate to have been able to continue trying to stretch my body for the past 5 weeks outdoors in one of the group's garden. Under the shade of an oak tree I was continually being bombarded by acorns last week as I was trying to relax! Much nicer than being indoors though. Updates from Boris continue to arrive and we are fortunate in this area not to be back in lockdown with the current number of active cases reported to be **32** which has doubled however in the past 2 weeks. As highlighted below do join the COVID-19 Study. Please stay safe and adhere to the current guidelines. Walking groups are able to re start with the restricted numbers and we look forward to our first ventures out into the Chilterns. My walking boots are looking slightly dejected though and are missing the mud filled fields of last winter!

I continue to receive many stories and poetry from members and I am tempted to highlight 'Poet's Corner' as being particularly popular with our readers. You will also read that there has been one group (Tai Chi) which has joined forces with another U3A group in Bucks via Zoom so as the group could remain active following closure and this may be something other groups might like to consider.

The monthly meeting guest speaker on 9 September was Annamaria Dall'Anese a London blue badge guide whose talk given via Zoom 'Jewels of London's' Art Galleries and Museums' was very interesting and had many positive comments. Details of future speakers will be given in the next newsletter.

Chalfonts U3A Facebook Group . 90 members keep us posted on events in their daily lives and giving suggestions for us to consider eg cultural activities, updates on local news, places to visit etc. Can we make it 100 members! 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.

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 now has **4.2 million** subscribers so let's hope you are one of them. **Active Covid cases** in South Bucks this weekend is estimated to be **32**.

Existing Groups.

Family History This is from David Metcalfe who is a member of the Family History group.

I am a Metcalfe and a committee member of The Metcalfe Society - a family history society that has reached its 40th anniversary this year. Since its formation it has become one of the world's largest One Name Study Family History Societies. Part of the celebration was to produce a new society publication, which I project managed and co-edited.

The project took two years, and despite Covid-19 we still managed to pull it all together. If anyone would like to find out more about the project please contact Dave via the Family History Group.

Garden Visits. Jacqui Greenham one of the convenors for this group forwarded this invitation to the group recently.

We were very fortunate to have been invited on behalf of the Chalfont St Giles Gardens Association to a talk given via Zoom by Timothy Walker Lecturer in Plant Sciences at Somerville College Oxford entitled "Sex, Lies and Putrefaction" on 10 September. I am so glad I didn't let the title put me off! Timothy was a very entertaining speaker and drew our attention to the many different pollinators, not just bees which we all know about but for example bats, snails, ants, and other insect species and of course the wind which trees and grasses use.

Jane Barker co- convenor has forwarded this invitation to members. "**Successional Planting**" which will be delivered via Zoom by Sarah Pajwani, owner of St Timothees garden in Maidenhead. The talk on **Wednesday 30 September at 4pm** will focus on key plants and easy ways to keep the garden colourful and full of interest from March to end-October. There will be an opportunity for questions at the end of the talk. Members will be sent joining details to access the talk nearer the time.

As you know there is a charge for this talk, but all the money raised will be passed to the National Garden Scheme(NGS) and is 100% for charitable causes. As a reminder the NGS support a range of Nursing and Caring charities, the big names being Macmillan, Marie Curie and Hospice UK. The charge for the talk is £5 per screen. Please can you make your payment by Thursday 24th September at the latest. It would be really helpful if you could pay on line if at all possible and details have been sent out. Contact janebarker@chalfontsu3a.org.uk for further information

U3A joint Taichi group

Following the cessation of the Taichi class due to Covid restrictions, in a new venture Chiltern and Chalfont U3A have combined forces to keep a virtual Taichi class running on Zoom.

By happy coincidence, the leader of the Chalfont Taichi group was a pupil of the leader of the Chiltern Taichi group and so we are able each Tuesday at noon to share a familiar virtual class. We now have a following of 31 members who find the class a good weekly milestone and a great workout to keep everybody energised, stretched and flexible.

Anyone interested in joining the class please contact johnbradley1907@btinternet.com with name, email address and phone number ICE

Now over to our 'Members' Musings'

Poetry Generation 2020 by Jayne Pegler

One of the most delightful activities during my semi-retirement is my involvement with the local U3A Poetry and Literature Group. We meet monthly to read and discuss poems on a particular theme, or from a specific era, or to consider the life, works and times of a chosen poet. Fortunately, we've all now just about managed to master (!) Zoom so have been able to convene during lockdown.

As so often happens, someone knows someone who is in contact with Ellie Levenson. She not only teaches Journalism at Goldsmiths but also writes books of a social and political nature and articles for The Independent, Guardian, and New Statesman. She has a young son who sadly missed his regular visits to his grandmother during lockdown, and especially her poetry readings, his favourite being C J Denis's Triantiwontigongolope. As a result, Ellie decided to gather together people who had grandchildren and encouraged us to record a poem especially for them. Hence, Poetry Generation 2020, an online library of verse for grandparents and their grandchildren.

Like every Nana, I have an adorable grandchild. Mine's called Charlotte - she's three and a half, very petite and fairylike. However, she does enjoy a good story line or poem and already has a great sense of and taste for high drama! Lewis Carroll's Jabberwocky fitted the bill beautifully.

I've had little cause to record any of my own work so was somewhat apprehensive to start. – there's a lot to lose when your granddaughter is the judge! And, I'd just have to rely on my husband - again - for his technical skills. Whilst I already knew the words thoroughly, couldn't quite bring myself to release the text with that tiny camera and invisible recording device scrutinising my every vocal and visual expression! Fortunately, Ellie offered a very positive and gracious response to it so I was invited to record another. I was, of course, delighted to and so set about my quest for another suitable poem. This wasn't quite so easy as A.A.Milne and all the obvious ones had already been read and copyright issues meant that we weren't able to include many of our marvellous modern children's poems.

We have a small water-feature in our rockery which bubbles away happily amongst the rocks, pebbles, and flowers. Charlotte loves it and we usually have to have our picnics there, listening to the sounds of the falling water, hypnotised by its movement. I'd got it! Tennyson's The Brook flowed one beautiful summer's evening from my very own garden.....

I had hours of pleasure listening to everyone else's offerings – Cally's, of course, being one of the highlights. Ruth Padel, Tony Robinson and countless lesser known but truly worthy folk delivered the most beautiful readings, some of which had, I believe, been written by the readers themselves. It was both heartening and uplifting to discover that all those people showed such love of the spoken word and think it of such value that they want their grandchildren to be able to share in the wonder of those words. Do have a look at Poetry Generation 2020 at your leisure. Those of us who attended the Swansea Conference a couple of years ago may remember the huge black and white hoarding on the main road as you approached the town centre. It read: We need more Poetry. Indeed we do....

This poem was forwarded to me by Bob Leven who is the convenor for Old Time Musical Hall group and came from a resident of one of the care homes which the group frequently visit.

We haven't got an audience, So very sad to say,

We can't get out to see you, We've all been locked away.

There'll come a time, we're hoping ,That they will set us free,

And we'll be with you straight away, To fill your home with glee.

Birdwatching Story

Our intrepid birdwatcher Tony Micallef reports back from Pen-Clawdd (that is not a spelling mistake even though it appears to refer to part of a bird's body!) in Wales where he is on holiday with his wife Imelda.

We arrived Saturday evening with the weather being bright and sunny. After settling in we took a stroll along the river estuary/salt marshes. So we had bird watching on the doorstep! It is a busy tourist town, but pleasant. It is not difficult to see birds here, but early in the morning is better before the day trippers arrive!

I have made early trips out both on Sunday and Monday mornings, and I have not been disappointed. I know gulls aren't everyone's favourite, but it is easy to see the four most common varieties in their natural environment and close up. The great black-backed gull is magnificent, there are more of them than the

lesser black backed and you can contrast them with the herring gull. However, as usual the black headed is the most common, although they have lost their breeding black heads now. There are a few waders pre-dominantly redshank, a couple of curlews and I believe a green sandpiper, along with about a dozen little egrets, and a heron.

Pleasingly, although I have seen magpies and wood pigeons, they are not as numerous as back in Bucks! I have seen more collared doves and large flocks of jackdaws and starlings. pied wagtails are easy to find, along with goldfinches and sparrows. Even the robin has made an appearance. I did hear a blackbird!

What has surprised me, with all the wide-open spaces around here the apparent absence for raptors! That was until this morning. I saw a dark coloured bird over the salt marshes, it seemed to hover like kestrel, but was too large for that and the tail was sort of diamond shaped, similar to the magpie, but not as long. Any Ideas?

This poem was forwarded to me by **Irene Crayden** written by one of her friends.
Don't Kill your Granny. Don't kill your Granny - Said the Minister of State –

Keep your distance and contemplate -She maybe frail, and hard of hearing –

And sick and tired of safety shielding.

She needs a hug, if truth be told, But in these times you can't be bold.

We must stay close in mind, But not in body, or we'll find –

The frail and elderly will pay the price,

And a Granny in Covid, is not very nice!

Lorna Cunningham wrote this song for her nephew – you have to imagine an old bluesy introduction...

Woke up early this morning
Wanted to git some food
Looked in all ma cupboards
Didn't do me no good
Stared into the cooler
Nothin' in there but gin
Looked all over the cellar
Didn't know where to begin
Tried to git into Tesco's
But the queue was out the door
Called on my pal Ocado
But he couldn't help no more
Mrs Next Door's bacon
Was drivin' me insane
So I called up Mr Asda
But he let me down again
The hunger pangs were bangin'
I didn't know what to do
So I picked up the phone again
And I called Deliveroo...

Jane Barker continues her quest to be a guest on 'Desert Island Discs'! "I'm into Something Good " by Herman's Hermits is her first request.

Released in 1964 , when I was only 6, this is the first single I ever bought. It must have won my parents approval, or I wouldn't have been allowed to have it. It was certainly a progression from the "Pinky and Perky" records they bought me, but it is only on the list as it is the first one I remember buying! It was played on an old mono record player, which many years later accompanied me to University! There was a record shop in Derby , where I grew up , that had one of those booths where you could ask to listen to a particular record. Sometime after I had purchased this single I bought the whole album of "The Best of Herman's Hermits " from the record shop with all my pocket money (my first album purchase) . My uncles used to give me half a crown each time when they visited. Was that quite a lot back then ?? I think my taste certainly changed in the early the 1970's when I was deeply into David Bowie and T Rex . Such a teenage cliché!

Pam Rich penned this in May.

CORONAVIRUS LAMENT

I'm sitting alone on my garden bench,
Wisteria in blossom above.
The sun is so hot and the sky is so blue...
This is the weather to love.

Now in lockdown from Covid-19
Which is the virus from hell.
Pandemic so lethal and cruel it is
But try as we must to stay well.

We fear for our families, wherever they are,
Plus many more people to name.
We use FaceTime and Zooming and Skype them all too
But not actually with them's a shame.

This surreal existence one hopes will end soon.
Celebrations will surely take place.
Our world will catch up but it may take some time to see
Planet Earth in a happier space.

Sheila Ross has sent me 2 poems this month. She would love to hear from any other poets out there and if you would send me your contact details I will forward them to her.

For Russell who swam the English Channel on Thursday!

You are an absolute Phenomenon!

Hercules! Spartacus! You Supreme One!

Flabbergasted you have left us all?

No C.V. could ever match your success

I was weeping real tears as you, like Samson
Climbed up the rocks on the French coast. Dark sky
Gazed down, amazed, illuminated by
A light from the beach, too weak to discern
Our victorious Russell in the stern
Of the courageous support boat, Sunbeam
We all shine for you, and certainly gleam!

For Lovely Peggy who is in her 90s !

Such a beautiful, highly intelligent Lady
So interesting; everything interests her too
In absolutely anything we all choose to do
Knowledge interminable, wisdom so deep, within
Spills out and about; fascinates all, over and round
If you listen, she will surely glisten, and the sound
Of the well-chosen words, spoken with such expression
Will last. She will leave an indelible impression

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