

Editor's Update

Hello everyone and welcome to the October newsletter. 7 months since we became aware of Covid-19 and it is still dominating the headlines. We are reminded on a daily basis of the ongoing battle and the heavy toll on life. Who knows what the coming months will bring. However there are some celebrations we are pretty certain will happen, Halloween, Bonfire Night, Birthdays and Christmas but not whom we will be sharing them with!!

Active Covid-19 cases in South Bucks are now **35**. As highlighted below do join the COVID-19 Study. 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. Download the Ask Zoe/Covid-19 app and report daily, any symptoms including 'none' will help them track the path of the disease particularly among the elderly. It now has **4.3 million** subscribers so let's hope you are one of them.

The new NHS COVID-19 app has now been launched. This is the 'official' NHS Test and Trace app designed to track the virus and to bolster the Test and Trace system. People with smartphones will be able to download and use the app on a voluntary basis if their phone's operating system supports it. It will mean you can get an alert if you've been near another user who's tested positive for coronavirus. You will also be able to log symptoms, book a test if you need one and will get advice on whether you need to isolate if you've got symptoms or have been in contact with someone who's tested positive. Users will also be able to use the app to 'check in' at any venue they visit, such as a pub, restaurant, or a church. The app works on an anonymous basis – it tracks the virus, not the user, using Bluetooth technology. You can find out more at www.covid19.nhs.uk.

I forwarded to you recently news of the launch of U3A Radio podcast on the U3A YouTube channel which was officially launched on 29 September. The National Office learning team worked with member volunteers who were skilled in broadcasting and you can keep listening to U3A radio wherever you are as it is delivered as a recorded podcast. This pilot featured a series of interviews and features from across the movement – for the launch - all themed around looking forward. There will be another pilot before Christmas. Please tell your friends and colleagues to tune in! If you have an interesting story to tell - get in touch. email communications@u3a.org.uk

The monthly meeting guest speaker via Zoom on 14 October at 2pm is Barrie Twyman who works for Amersham Auction Rooms. He will give a talk on how the Auction operates and some stories on the workings and costings of the sales. Sounds like it will be fascinating to hear about the 'real world of auctioneering'. Login details for this event will be sent out to members 48 hours prior to the meeting.

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.

For Members' Musings I have received some sensitive poems about the times we live in thank you to our poets. Also an enlightening tale of climbing the 3 Peaks, such determination and stamina displayed and an observation of the birds and the bees.

Proposed New Group We are launching a **Zoom Virtual Meetup group** to allow members to meet other members to have a chat and maybe make new friends. The group will not be leader driven, so members will join and then it is up to them. The meeting will have Zoom Breakout Rooms where members can be asked to be moved to if the main room gets too crowded. If you are interested email webmaster@chalfontsu3a.org.uk and you will be added to the group list. You are not obliged to attend every meeting, just turn up if you fancy a chat. Lastly, we are thinking of running the meeting on Wednesday Mornings between 11:00 - 12:00. Once we have enough interest, we will schedule the first meeting.

Existing Groups.

Garden Visits group . The group had a Zoom talk from Sarah Pajwani, the owner of St Timothees garden near Maidenhead . Sarah's talk explored how to achieve colour and interest in the garden all year round and was very well received by our members. Here is an example of the feedback.

"Very well constructed talk , her tips were excellent. I loved the seasonal photos from the same position. Her anchor points very helpful and giving the varieties rather than just names, fabulous. The fact that she was facing the same garden problems ,albeit on a larger scale, was great. She came over as a great teacher and someone who it would be a delight to meet. She has every right to be proud of her lecture." Another talk has been arranged for 18 November at 4pm entitled 'The Winter Garden'. Contact Jane Barker convenor for details .The money charged for the talk is passed onto charities supported by the National Garden Association .

Mahjong Group This update from Sam Patel group convenor, gives us a lovely boost re the future of our groups.

We have continued to play Mahjong online with increasing success, but the ever-changing rules regarding COVID suggests that it is very unlikely we will be playing face to face any time soon but that has not deterred us. On the contrary the number of players has increased and we are now hosting four sessions a week. I am delighted that Chin Fenton has joined Alan Higson, Sue Woodcock and I, to become members of the AHT (Awesome Host Team!)

We introduced a simple scoring system but it materialised that it was not necessary. Although no longer a competitive game we continue to gain so much more from the experience.

I would like to take this opportunity once again to thank not only the POM but U3A for all their support and encouragement – it means so much.

Theatre Group Update:

Hello Dolly was due to open in August but now postponed until April 2022. We are currently in the process of refunding the members who had booked to go on 8 September 2020 and 2 February 2021 outings. Each refund is being processed individually so we are asking for everyone's patience as it is going to take time to refund 122 bookings. The remaining theatre trip is to see Pretty Woman on 30 November and a repeat visit on 15 December. Members who have bookings for these performances will be informed of any news as and when it is received. In the meantime, we send you all our very best wishes to keep safe and well during these unusual times. Sheila and Danny, Group Leaders.

Dovedale Peak District Walking Weekend September 2021

Following months of discussion, with neither us nor HF Holidays knowing what the future will hold, HF agreed to transfer the deposits of any of the 60 members booked who wished to move to 2021. In the end four of our brave souls decided to go this year maybe we will have a report when they return, most others moved to 2021.

We have again booked with HF Holidays for Peveril of the Peak, Thorpe, Dovedale, in the Peak District. We are looking at a 3 night stay from Friday 10 September 2021 to Monday 13 September 2021, with quality en-suite accommodation in the Country House, with full board from dinner upon arrival to breakfast on departure day. Details can be found on their website: <https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/country-houses/locations/dovedale-peak-district>

The hotel has very good Trip Adviser reviews and all of our walking weekend trips so far have been enjoyed by everyone, as can be testified by the rebooking numbers. The staff really make an effort to make us welcome and look after us.

In order to secure sole occupancy rooms, which we achieved this year, we need to book a minimum of 59 places. The guide price per person is £325:00, which may change somewhat, especially if we do not reach sole occupancy numbers. If we do make our numbers there will be some reduction in the cost. As the vast majority of members transferred to next year we already have enough interest to make a booking. There are a few places free and a £75:00 deposit will be required from those new members committing to attend and needs to be paid within the month. The balance will be required by 30 July 2021.

By then with a following wind we will all be full of antibodies and not have to sit two metres apart or leave the bar at 22:00!

If you have questions please email vicechairman@chalfontsu3a.org.uk.

Now over to our 'Members' Musings'

A Poem from Chalfont Lodge By Sally Day

Dear Friends One day we came to work
And things were not the same,
A virus had appeared, Corona was its name
Together we will fight it And send it on its way
One day the doors will open
And we shall welcome you again

Dear Friends,
Oh how we miss you,
Each and everyone
But that day is drawing nearer
When the virus will be done

A Long walk -

What do you do with a 16-year-old grandson who has lived in the shadow of his older brother for many years? My solution was to have an adventure, which his older brother had never done and was unlikely to do for quite some time. The plan was to attempt to climb the three national peaks of Wales England and Scotland within 24hours. I recall having done this with my own son some 25 years before and how difficult it was driving through the night. I remember holding one eye open with one hand, the other on the steering wheel as I drove up the side of Loch Lomond.

The adventure was to be kept secret from everyone until we were well on our way. I did not wish to risk a parental veto or concerns for the length of the drive from a wife who knew full well that I could easily fall asleep on the motorway.

My grandson took with him a friend of the same age so that they would be company for each other on the mountains. I elected not to climb Snowden or Scafell Pike, giving me the opportunity to rest before the long drive to Scotland.

We left High Wycombe at lunchtime on Sunday and drove to Snowdonia. The most exciting part of the drive was when I spotted a convertible Rolls-Royce with the initials DHAYE. I asked the boys if that could be David Hays the world champion boxer and very soon we were alongside waving to him and he kindly waved back.

My grandson had not followed the kit list I had provided to the letter and turned up with a pair of trainers in place of boots. I was not amused but tried my best to control my angst. Fortunately, at 5:45pm on a Sunday evening, we passed an outdoor shop in a remote part of Snowdonia. By chance we were able to find a pair of boots that fitted his size 12 feet and I was somewhat relieved that he now had the right equipment for the task ahead.

We arrived at the youth hostel at the base of Snowden in good time to have the outside, evening take-away meal, which was a form of vegetarian Thai curry, enjoyed by all. Sadly COVID meant that we were pretty well restricted to our room, which meant that the boys did not have the full hostel experience, we all remember from our youth.

The next morning at precisely 10 o'clock the two boys set off up the first of the National Mountains. They set off at a frightening pace and admitted that when they got near the top, their legs were like jelly. They managed to reach the top of Snowdon in one hour 40 minutes and took one hour 19 minutes to descend. While the boys were climbing and as I was not feeling in the least bit tired, I elected to take a bus to nearby Llanberis. I chose to walk to a Slate Museum which was about two miles out of the village. Needless to say, on my arrival it was closed due to Covid and my plans had been thwarted.

On completing Snowdon, we immediately drove to Wasdale Head, a journey of some 5 1/2 hours, slowed considerably by roadworks along the way. The two boys set off at about 6 o'clock in the evening, up Scafell Pike in good weather, map in hand and head torch at the ready. Once again I did not feel particularly tired, so I headed off for the 2 mile walk to the pub at the nearby village of Wasdale. I sat alone, enjoying a pork pie and a pint of orange juice, wondering how the boys were progressing. On returning to the car, the skies started to darken and very soon it was totally black, with the boys still needing approximately one hour of descent. At this point an electric storm blew in and it was a little concerning that I had created a situation where two boys were on the mountainside with sheet lightning across the lake. I took the view that had I been with them, it would have made little difference.

Half an hour later, the two boys arrived, tired but elated that they had completed two of the three mountains. As they climbed into the car, the heavens opened and a most torrential rain storm soon swamped the narrow roads. We then drove on through the night to find many of our intended roads closed and having to re-route on numerous occasions. This added a lot more time to this stage of the journey, but we eventually arrived at Glen Nevis at about 5.30 in the morning. We changed once again into our walking gear and this time I joined the boys for the final stage. I warned them in advance that they would have to either accept my pace or go ahead, but in fact the three of us walked steadily, briskly even, to reach the summit of Ben Nevis in under three hours.

At the start, the weather was fine, but during the ascent, the weather deteriorated to become torrential rain. On the summit plateau, it was so wet and windy, that we hardly had time to take the required photograph before descending. On the way down, my 75-year-old knees started to suffer and one of my feet became quite painful as a result of the rocky ground underfoot. Strangely, in spite of my discomfort, I was back at the car before the boys. This worries me thinking that there may have been

an accident, but within 10 minutes they arrived, exhausted but elated that they had completed the Three National Summits in under 24 hours.

We then set off for the long drive home and before long the lack of sleep for over 36 hours took its toll. We stopped for a meal, hoping that this would revitalise, but it was insufficient. There was nothing for it but to have a proper break and I slept soundly for over an hour by the side of the road. By 8.30 that evening we reached the Lake District and stayed at the youth hostel by the side of Lake Windermere.

The two boys were presented with their medals to show that they had climbed the Three National Summits and after a quick drink in a local pub we were soon asleep. The next thing the boys knew was me waking them up at 8:30am and insisting that we were all to swim in Lake Windermere before breakfast. This had been something I promised myself right from the start and the temperature of the lake was nothing like as cold as expected. We all three swam out to the middle of the lake. From there you can see the whole of the Fairfield Horseshoe, one of my favourite Lake District walks. After a splendid full English breakfast in Ambleside we then set off once more for home.

At the beginning of the trip, I told the boys that two things would prevent us achieving our objectives. One was the weather and the other was if I fell asleep at the wheel. Both boys undertook that at least one of them would stay awake to keep me in company. It was on this last drive home that both failed in their promise!

Overall it was great a great success and we finished with two very happy boys having achieved something quite exceptional and which I'm sure they will remember for a long time.

Anonymous author

This was penned by Pam Rich in January and COVID has aged her even more she says!

Does anyone like old age?

That face in the mirror, who do I see?

Please hear my plea:-

That's surely not me?

Believe it or not but I know that it's so.

Realising's slow,

Wow upon wow!

Inside my head, I feel the same.

Still young in my brain;

Think I'm quite sane.

Lose count of the years, they've gone by so fast.

So many have passed.

Is this one my last?

Too old now for Botox and face-lifts, I fear,

To mend wear and tear.

Pretend not to care...

2 Poems of Hope from Sheila Ross -26.8.20

Sheila would still like to hear from any other poets out there! Contact Eileen Powell who will forward your details newsletters@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

The vital ingredient of humanity

The half-full glass of all our own vitality

Without it, we fall into the abyss; - unknown

Huddle together, so that we are not alone
Resembling the ball that bounces back up again
To reach as high as the sky; to breathe freely, then
All is well, as far as we can tell, anyhow
We find hope is into our Interstices. Now.

Bruce's Poem-2.9.20

Hope is a feeling of expectation and desire
A feeling of trust- I hope you're going to do this
What a hope! Some hope!

This lovely" birds and the bees" observation is from Howard Dell.

I doubt few would disagree that these many months of Covid-avoiding isolation have resulted in more than the normal amount of watching. For some, no doubt that's been Netflix and box sets, for me it's been observing the natural history the other side of the kitchen window.

The birds seem to have had a pretty good breeding season this year, the blue tits particularly – dozens of 'em! It was amusing when they were fledging and beginning to cope on their own to see them steadfastly refuse a food offering from a parent bird, 'No thank you, I can manage!' But the reason for the great number of young ones became apparent in the days following when the remains of a sparrowhawk's blue tit lunches which were found near the bird feeder. Sadness attended the blackbird family, too. I was pleased to see that they raised a pair of young, and 'especially pleased that they were hen birds. Tragically they were both killed within a couple of days of each other when they flew into the same window – and that was despite the window having bird-warning decals stuck on it! . Prettily coloured goldfinches brighten the garden considerably now; I'd never seen them in my garden until a few arrived last year. They too, have had a successful year – a pair raised three young and now several times a day I have a flock of seven, bustling around the sunflower kernel's feeder.

As I write this, the Chalfonts are slowly drying out in a weak sun after a day and a half of near continuous rain. Mid-morning I noticed a solitary bee clinging to the outside of the kitchen door frame, arms and legs slowly waving about pathetically the way bees do when they're in deep trouble. Time for the sugar-water treatment! I mixed a tiny amount of sugar with less than half a teaspoonful of water on a saucer, and when it was fully dissolved I put the sad bee near to the edge of the solution. Now comes the task of getting the bee to see what's being offered to it by putting little droplets of the sugar water under its nose (if it has one!) with the point of a sharp knife. Eventually the penny drops, the proboscis extends and the bee drinks and drinks and drinks. You have to wonder where it's all going! And slowly then you see that the bee is regaining its strength - a miracle before your eyes.

The bee recovered sufficiently inside ten minutes to return it to the garden. It wasn't particularly interested in the couple of shrubs I showed it, so (and by now getting impatient with the creature) I poked it to make it fly off the saucer and it did two big circles around the lawn about ten metres diameter - only to land back on me! I would like to think that was for a gesture of thanks but I suspect I was the only landing place nearby on which to take a breather. Anyway, it soon flew off again, I hope to find a cosy dry hole for the winter. For me?... coffee and a warm feeling.

