

## **Newsletter No.78 April 2021**



**Editor's update** Welcome to the April edition and this month we will celebrate both the birth of William Shakespeare and St Georges day on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and I asked you for any sonnets or hero stories. As usual you didn't let me down!

We will also be celebrating the life of The Duke of Edinburgh who sadly died on Friday 9 April. He demonstrated that none of us are past contributing to society no matter how old we are! The u3a as an organisation is a very good example particularly over the past year where people have gone the extra mile to help others.

Our lives will return to some normality as lockdown starts easing with opportunities to meet up with family and friends, non -essential shops opening, pubs and restaurants, but only for outside use and everyone who visits will have to check in on the NHS's Test and trace app. Good news for me is that hairdressers will be open, how they have been missed !

As it stands, 17th May will be the first opportunity to hold any form of organised indoor sport activity. The road map guidelines also include indoor attractions and entertainment. It is unclear as to whether our other indoor U3A activities will be included under that umbrella. We await further guidance which will also advise as to whether social distancing and or the wearing of masks will impact on those activities and will keep you informed.

I realise I include this information each month but please help our scientists. 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 4.643 million subscribers. .They also provide some very interesting webinars that you can log into. Currently 38 million people nationally have been vaccinated, what a success story and it has been rolled out so efficiently.

Last month we posted a message from U3A National Office to members advising of a nationwide fraud scam attack on U3A's across the country. Please continue to be vigilant on our website and our Facebook page. Unless members book a TVN event, there cannot be any scenario where anyone purporting to be from U3A would seek money from our members.

**National U3a Newsletter.** Some of you may not receive the National U3 a newsletter which keeps us up to date with news and views from around the country. They would like to encourage as many U3A members as possible to receive it and let them know what they are doing locally so go to the [u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk) website and sign up.



**The Slow Ways Project** aims to create a network of safe, easy, and enjoyable walking routes that connect towns, cities, and villages across Great Britain once lockdown is lifted. u3a walking groups have responded positively to the project. Dan Raven-Ellison and Rob Bushby from Slow Ways have offered to host two webinars for u3a members, on **Tuesday 20 April and Monday 17 May**. Book a place. If you are a u3a Walking Group and want to register your interest in this initiative - go to [slowways.uk](http://slowways.uk) or contact Third Age Trust Chair, Ian McCannah.

**Thames Valley Network** continue to provide us with some interesting study sessions so don't miss out and their website is updated regularly [events\\_info@u3atvnetwork.org.uk](mailto:events_info@u3atvnetwork.org.uk). Please book electronically by clicking on the 'TICKETSOURCE' icon immediately below the event on [www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk](http://www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk). This is by far the best and easiest option. You will receive an acknowledgement immediately and the Zoom link a few days before the event.

There are also many online events on the u3a national website but you have to be quick off the mark as these events get booked up very quickly. Unfortunately, they don't put sold out until you try to register. They do however offer a waiting list so you can be informed if any places arise.

### **Existing groups**



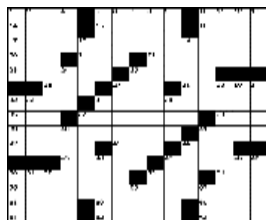
**Book Club 2** is back and happy to welcome new members. We are meeting on zoom on 22 April to choose our next book and to discuss all the wonderful and not so wonderful books we have read during the last year. Contact Chris White at [bookclub2@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:bookclub2@chalfontsu3a.org.uk)

### **Computing Group**

As part of the next computing group meeting we will be looking at Facebook security and privacy again. In 2019 509 million Facebook accounts were compromised, this data is now on the internet. You can check if you have been affected by putting your email address on the site below and it will show you if your data has been leaked . [havelbeenpwned.com](http://havelbeenpwned.com). If you would like more information email Gary Tomlin [computing@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:computing@chalfontsu3a.org.uk)



### **Cryptic Crosswords**



Have you ever wondered about the mysteries of Cryptic Crosswords? Did you do them "a bit" years ago? Do you wish to keep your brain active? Do you love the English language? Would you like to combine all of the above in a (guaranteed) fun environment? If your answers are "YES," then here is the good news; I'm hoping to start a new Beginners/Improvers group.

I started the first group 5 years ago and every session is "a laugh a minute." Of the 10 current members, 7 had hardly done these puzzles before. Now,

they can all do most, or all of the Daily Telegraph crossword on their own! They don't need me any more so I'm anybody's again!

Solve this to enquire: Sign up now? (5, 5) A P \_ \_ \_ Y Bob-never a cross word Leven!  
[crypticcrosswords@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:crypticcrosswords@chalfontsu3a.org.uk)

### **Singing for pleasure Update from Brenda O'Gorman.**



I feel it maybe some time before we can resume for obvious reasons. Ben Ewer, the pianist who accompanied the choir is possibly returning to Canada, so I need to look for a replacement and would appreciate it if anyone within the u3a knows of a suitable person who is able to play a musical instrument and would be willing to spare a couple of hours a week. We would be happy to cover expenses.  
[singing4Pleasure@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:singing4Pleasure@chalfontsu3a.org.uk)



## **Family History Group Update from Marguerite Fletcher.**

This month we enjoyed an inspirational talk from Gwyneth Wilkie of Chiltern U3A Family History group. Entitled 'Honing Your Detective Skills', frustrating 'brick walls' encountered by most genealogists. A great example of the co-operation and generosity of U3A members in ensuring that, with the help of Zoom, our lockdown meetings are still providing excellent and enjoyable content. [familyhistory@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:familyhistory@chalfontsu3a.org.uk)

## **Pilates**

April Morgan who moved out of the area last month was convenor for the Pilates group for the past four years and has been doing a brilliant job. She says she will continue to be the contact for this group and will keep members updated as to when classes will restart in line with current guidelines.



## **Walking Weekend October 2022**



Some great news! Grace Hunter has come forward offering to put on her walking boots and lead the walking weekend at St Ives! I don't think we will be seeing snow and mountains but I did like the image! She has been in touch with members to ascertain interest. More news to follow.

## **Now over to Members Musings**



### **After G.C. by Chris Williams**

Whan that Aprille with his shoures soot  
The droght of March hath perced to the rote  
And sonnes ray through the window enters  
Than throngen folk to garden centres  
And ther they swarm like colonie of ants  
And buyen everything but plants.

**Alan Noble** saw this on a tv programme, unfortunately only this tail end, and couldn't give any information on this young super nurse. Nice to see a young nurse heroine. She always says to her seriously ill covid patients on their own 'You're not alone I am with you'. Simple words from such a young person, nice to see kind young ones

## **DUCHESS FOR A DAY by Denise Beddows**

Back in the 1980s, the Paralympics did not attract either the interest or the funding which, I am delighted to say, it enjoys these days. Nevertheless, disabled athletes travelled here from all over the world to attend the games which, in those days, were held in the grounds at Stoke Mandeville hospital in Buckinghamshire. Usually, the arrival of groups of overseas Paralympians was known in advance, so an Immigration Officer, often it was me, and a Customs officer would be despatched down to the arriving aircraft to conduct a 'tarmac clearance'. This meant the disabled folks did not have to traverse the many miles of piers and walkways to get to the immigration controls or to try and manhandle their baggage from the Customs hall to the meeting point. Instead, they and their baggage could be cleared at the foot of the aircraft steps and collected from there by Stoke Mandeville's minibuses.

As a 'thank you' for this regular tarmac clearance service, it was usual for the Assistant Directors of both HM Immigration and HM Customs to be sent an invitation to the final day of the games. One of them would be granted the honour of presenting the medals to the winning athletes and all would be invited to a slap-up lunch with other dignitaries afterwards. One year, I think it was 1988, my AD was unable to go, so he had passed his invitation down to the Inspectors, none of whom could attend, unfortunately. The invitation had next come down to the Chief Immigration Officers, none of whom were able or wanted to go either, so my Chief offered it to me. Thus, I found myself being collected with a coach load of other Heathrow people and taken to Stoke Mandeville for the day.

I thought I ought not to let the side down by appearing looking anything less than elegant, so I wore my best outfit, a cream silk skirt and black linen jacket with a cream and black straw hat which had seen an outing to Ascot racecourse earlier that summer for my first and only attendance at Lady's Day.

The experience was quite an eye-opener for me. I had no idea what hardships and sacrifices some of the disabled athletes had to endure just to compete. As we guests stood out in a windy field watching the wheelchair archers sitting in the open, awaiting their turn to compete in various heats, our host explained to us that, in sitting out of doors for so long, these competitors were prone to catching severe chills and kidney infections and so several of them would end up in the hospital ward later. I was also quite alarmed at the speed and viciousness of the tackles I saw during the wheelchair basketball events.

Later that morning, however, I was more than a little embarrassed to be singled out for the honour of presenting the medals to the winning athletes. I felt they ought to have had someone far worthier than a mere Immigration Officer presenting their awards, but I tried to do so with grace and gratitude for their incredible efforts.

As I stood, beaming, and trying to look important at the medals table, whilst the long line of winners came past one by one to have his or her medal pinned on, I overheard one of the Irish basketball players ask his team member 'who's that giving out the gongs?' His chum said 'dunno, probably some Duchess or other.' This only served to increase my embarrassment.

After lunch, I was taking a little stroll around the grounds when I came to the beer tent. Inside, I saw the Irish basketball team in their wheelchairs gathered around a large table on which there were lined up numerous pints of Guinness.

'Hey Duchess!' one of them called across to me, 'Will ye come and join us for a drink? Sure, we're all legless in here!'

His fellow team members guffawed at his tasteless joke. Well, how could I refuse? I did join them, and a great deal of Guinness and a great bit of craic was had by all. All too soon, it was time for me to head back to the coach, my own Irish eyes smiling and my straw hat slightly askew. It is a matter of particular joy to me that, nowadays, the Paralympics event enjoys as high a profile as the main Olympics. These days, the medals are more likely to be presented by a real duchess than an assumed one. Those Paralympians damn well deserve it.