



Ashby U3A

July Newsletter



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear All,

I hope that you all remain well and able to cope with this enforced inactivity. I certainly miss my U3A activities, which provided stimulating outings and company, often several times a week. It would be good to think that you have all benefited from the easings which have been made and at least been able to see some friends or family.

Another month has gone past and, on the face of it, not a lot appears to have changed. However, the announcements which have been made suggest that more activities will be permitted soon. Unfortunately, these still are with the proviso of adequate distancing so it is difficult to think that they will assist resumption of our activities, many of which involve meetings at members' homes, car sharing or close proximity. A two metre separation in the Congregational Church would reduce our capacity to perhaps as few as 25 - 30 compared with our former larger gatherings of over 100. There was an item on the news regarding the possible re-opening of the London Palladium showing what the audience would look like - there appeared to be only a handful; the theatre largely empty. Of course, there may be some reluctance to participate; I have certainly noticed that town centres do not seem very busy and have spoken to people who feel reluctant to go to places which may be relatively crowded.

We will continue to keep matters under review. As soon as there are any proposals which would enable us to resume any of our activities, we will investigate to see how we can do so. Personally, I think that it will require an effective vaccine to allow the resumption of anything like our previous way of life and I fear that may still be some time off. Even if it can be manufactured quickly, the logistics of getting it to a large proportion of the population will take a while. However, I'm sure it will happen in the foreseeable future and very much look forward to being able to resume a full programme.

In the meantime, it is summer - despite the effect test match cricket appears to have had on the weather. Remember that hot, sunny April and May? It seems we might get a couple of warm days for the end of June, but then it will be back to the new normal. I hope you will be able to get out and also see others in the limited ways permitted. As we have previously said, we are certainly open for ideas and suggestions of how groups can get together and are willing to offer assistance if we can. Please do not hesitate to contact us; it would be good to hear from you.

I trust you will all remain well and look forward to meeting.

Colin Ellis

KEEPING IN TOUCH

The committee are doing our utmost to keep in contact with as many members we can during this time of enforced isolation. Can we ask everyone, but particularly Group Leaders, to keep in touch with their group's members to see how they are coping.

If any Group Leader wants phone numbers for their members, Membership Sec Iain at members@ashbyu3a.co.uk or Mike at webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk will be able to provide them.

HELP & WELFARE

If you know of any member who is unwell or shielding or has a family member who is unwell, please contact Estelle or any other committee member and we can see if there is anything we can do to help, whether it is collecting shopping or prescriptions, having a chat or just sending a card.

If at any time you would like or need someone to talk to, the following people are always ready to chat:

Our Chairman, Colin Ellis 01530 272592

Colin Woodland 01530 413867

Ann Donegan 01283 760348

Tony Smith 01530 831822

Our Welfare Officer, Estelle Sandles 01530 459858 or email welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk.

Estelle can also offer support and welfare information.

AgeUK - www.ageuk.org.uk has lots of information and advice on all matters regarding coronavirus including matters financial or health.

The U3A National Office has an email Newsletter which you can sign up for at <https://u3a.org.uk/email> It has the latest advice on the virus and also lots of information and advice on how to keep safe and occupied.

COVID Symptom Tracker

If you wish to help Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals to track the spread of Covid 19 across the country and find out what type of person is getting infected, you can sign up to the COVID 19 Symptom Tracker here at <https://covid/joinzoe.com> You need a smartphone to which an app is installed.

It asks you for some personal details of age, height, weight etc. and general health and medication. This can all be anonymous if you wish.

You can then report each day how you feel even if you are well, it takes seconds. You can see how Covid 19 is spreading or retreating and you will be helping research into how and why it spreads, and who is most vulnerable. Over 4 million people are already signed up and contributing.

INFORMATION FOR THE NEWSLETTERS

If you have anything that you would like to see in these newsletters, whether it is a report of something you or a Group have managed to organise despite all the difficulties or you have some information on safety, health, scams or anything similar please contact me, Mike Stow at webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk or 01530 469152.

On that subject, I would like to thank all those who have sent reports and information for the newsletters but especially the two Colins, Messrs Ellis and Woodland for their monthly contributions. This would be a very thin newsletter without them.

KNOCK, KNOCK, WHO'S THERE

I pass on a useful message from Leicestershire Police sent to me by Avril:

Sometimes people turn up unannounced with the intention of tricking their way into your home or overcharging you for a job. Always be cautious when someone you don't know calls at your door.

LOCK - Always keep your windows and doors locked, even when you are just popping out briefly.

STOP - Ensure the back door is locked before answering the front door so that nobody can access your house while you are distracted.

CHAIN - If you do decide to open the door, put the door bar or chain on first. Keep the chain on while you talk to the person on the doorstep. When the door is closed, remove the chain in case you need to get out quickly.

CHECK - No ID? No entry! If a stranger wants to come in and claims that they are from a utility company, local authority or any other organisation, always ask for their ID, even if you were expecting them - genuine callers will happily show you ID. Close the door and check the ID carefully. Call the head office if you are still unsure, but use the number from the telephone directory or a recent utility bill, not the one on their card.

Bogus callers may be smartly dressed and can be convincing.

If in doubt, say you want to check with a family member before committing to anything and shut the door. If they are genuine they will understand.

You can find more useful crime prevention at <https://www.leics.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/>

Regards

Matt Suffolk

Police Community Support Officer 6387

Bardon Hill Beat Team

Did you know you can report crime and incidents using our online portal. Please visit <https://www.leics.police.uk/> Click on REPORT.

In an emergency dial 999 but please do not report crime or Incidents via 'Neighbourhood Link' as the messages are not always monitored.

VIRTUAL GROUPS

Until the Government gives us the all-clear to leave our homes for social gatherings, some Groups are attempting to develop virtual groups which can operate remotely and allow us to at least keep in touch and maybe continue with whatever activities they were doing before albeit in a different manner.

Computer Group

The Computer Group is still able to help people with their computer, tablet or smartphone problems. Obviously we can't do repairs, but if you have software problems or other difficulties email help.computer@ashbyu3a.co.uk or phone John Howlett on 01530 461774 and someone will have a look at your problem and get back to you.

We've been answering queries from members about anti-virus software, Windows updates, online banking and choosing a new PC amongst others.

Just to remind you that although the very popular PC Clinic in the town closed down a few weeks ago the owner, Phil, is now offering a mobile service that can come to your house for service and repairs. Go to the PC Clinic website for details.

Drawing and painting

The Group didn't meet this month, virtually or otherwise, but hope to get together in one form or another on 19th August.

Literature Group

The group have formed a WhatsApp group so that they can carry on reading at home and then discuss the books they are reading.

Luncheon Club – 11th July

Ashby U3A Luncheon Club Report July 2020 (Star date 201007111400.9)

This month our “Luncheoneers” became “Luncheonauts” as we ventured on our virtual Journey to the International Space Station (ISS) for a spot of lunch without gravity. Here follows a log of the events:

Prelaunch message from the expedition Commander “Wobbly Legs” Woodland:

“I hope that your training has been going well. Just a few days now and we will be launching for lunch on the ISS.

By now you should be just about at the peak of your fitness for space travel. Mission control have informed me that final fittings for spacesuits went well and we are all fully kitted out.

The practice sessions in our spacesuits immersed in the training pool gave us a bit of an insight into weightlessness but the flights in the modified Boeing 707 gave us a taste of the real thing as the pilot flew the aircraft in an arcing dive to make us experience 0g for 60 seconds or so at a time. I found that by the third time my stomach had got used to the phenomenon and I stopped feeling so queasy. I think it was the centrifuge rides that I found the hardest. Initially I began to grey out at around 4.5G but, after employing the procedures the experienced astronauts showed me, I managed to withstand the full 5G they applied during training. Since only 3G will be experienced during the launch procedure we should be able to take that in our stride without any problems.

The 8 ½ minute launch sequence will be quite noisy as the rocket boosters take us from a standing start to 17,000 MPH and place us in orbit at about 250 miles above the earth. It can take 2 days to reach the ISS but Russian cosmonauts Pavel Vinogradov and Alexander Misurkin and NASA astronaut Chris Cassidy perfected a new procedure that will allow us to get there in 6 hours.

Mike Stow has donated Mars bars and Galaxy chocolate for our snack on the way there. I have thrown in some Milky Ways, a few packets of Star Bursts and some Flying Saucers (There’s a blast from the past). I’ve also managed to get hold of a couple of Demijohns of Moonshine to wash it all down.

Anatoly Ivanishin, Ivan Vagner, Chris Cassidy, Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley are eagerly awaiting our visit. Mind you it will be a little crowded once we are docked and squeezed through the air lock to join them!



See you on the L(a)unch Pad!

Colin W

Ashby U3A

Luncheon Coordinator

Ashby U3A’s own Lieutenant Nyota Uhura, Margaret Berry replied:

“I’ve tried to be good since entertaining Elvis last month, going on a strict diet and fitness programme.

My new space suite is quite cosy and now like peas in a pod we squeeze into the shuttle lead by Captain Colin.

He attempts to calm our nerves by plying us with his moonshine and playing ‘Holst’s The Planet’s. Then hands around the chocolate bars kindly donated by some of our fellow travellers. With our stomachs

now like jelly and the space suits bursting at the seams, we blast off on our space adventure and arrive somewhat stirred and a little shaken.

I tried to keep my picnic food menu down to earth, but I'm afraid it's a bit farfetched and up in the air.

Starter - Sun dried Tomatoes and Rocket salad.

Followed by – Star Anise sprinkled over the Rainbow Trout with Globe Artichokes.

Finished off with - Heavenly Layered Pudding topped with Sonic Blast Ice Cream.

I've chosen Rocket Fuel energy drink, a soft drink from Argentina, as no alcohol is allowed the space station. Though I bet the Russian contingent have an odd bottle of Vodka hidden away.

Up, up and away!"

Margaret Berry

The Expedition Engineer Bill and Expedition Safety Officer Ann Devitt said:

How to eat on the International Space Station.

Unfortunately, the ISS has no gravity. So things that are unrestrained tend to float away. The solution might be to provide a table covered with sheet steel, to act as a magnet.

CUTLERY: The cutlery would stick down to the table till needed, as would the bone china, if a metal insert was provided.

FOOD: However, when you consider the food to provide, things get complicated.

The first course could be soup, provided in tubes, and squeezed as you go. It's called a Brothel.

For mains, things get difficult, a stew and dumplings, for example, won't come out of a tube, even if you got the dumplings in there initially. I think that it is called a 'stewadle'. So we might have to make do with cold sardines in a tin. Leonardo would be used to them, even if not in his normal container. Vegetables would be problematic, though I suppose lettuce or cabbage could be nailed down, as could carrots, but this does seem somewhat limiting.

Pudding might be tiramisu again in a tube, and I am sure the ISS designers could provide an on-demand custard dispenser for our Captain, for direct ingestion via a flexible tube, with gravy option.

DRINK: The custard dispenser could also be equipped to provide wine or beer via tubes, but gassy products like champagne might result in some sort of indigestion or gastric re-flux. However, the latter might be channelled for use in the thrusters of the returning space craft back to earth.

WINES (or in Lisa's case WHINES): Blue Moon cocktail (Bailey's; Amaretto; Blue Curacao (with Stella Artois for the main course).

SERVICE AT TABLE: Such occasions as ours really do require the services of a butler, to "Waite-on" the assembled group.

As there is no gravitational force to keep the items on the table, and the guests and staff in place, it seems that magnetism might be again employed, by providing the staff with magnetic boots, providing that the space ship's inner skin is also attractive to magnetism. Guests will have to be strapped in, with seat belts.

The concept of "up" or "down" might be lost in a space craft, so it will not matter if the butler serves at the table from above, sticking to the ceiling by his boots. The orientation of his serving tray would be a challenge, perhaps he could have things stuck to both sides, to provide economy of movement.

GUESTS: Leonardo da Vinci, and girlfriend.

Apart from Leonardo, we thought of inviting Icarus, but he is off somewhere chasing the sun again. So, we have extended the invitation to Lisa, Leonardo's girlfriend, although we don't really like her.

She just sits there in a cloak, with that sly grin on her face, and moans all the time. I think that is why they call her Moaner Lisa. She's no oil painting, either. I don't think she will make a name for herself, cheap and nasty, though she does not say much. Hope she won't spoil the event, maybe she will just get plastered.

THE GUEST'S QUESTIONS: Italian or French might be the language necessary to communicate effectively with L de V, but some of the engineering terms might be difficult, so we have kept the questions simple:

"Were you/ are you and Lisa an item?

Was it her anatomy that attracted you?

Will the relationship balloon and take off?

GOING HOME: The guests will have to prepare for the return trip to earth, we need to ensure that our guests remember to "go before they go" (as you might put it!). (Actually I think that for the journey up and back, everyone is "plumbed in" as it were. *Ed*)

MUSIC FOR THE TRIPS.

FROM EARTH "Take me to the stars"

RETURN TO EARTH "The Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines"

We hope that it will be an eventful evening, for all concerned.

Bill and Ann Devitt

Captain's Log from the U3A's answer to both Captains James T Kirk and Jean-Luc Picard, our very own Captain Colin Isambard Ellis:

I regret that Thursday was far from satisfactory. I blame myself. After all, there is nobody else to blame. I should have known better. It was a brilliant concept - I thought I would be awarded a Nobel prize for Science or, possibly, Engineering or even both. It should have been a triumph. Take the world's greatest engineer to the Space Station for lunch. I might even find out the reason for the extra quarter inch on the gauge of the Great Western Railway. Instead, the word disaster, preceded by the word unmitigated springs to mind. How could this come to pass? In a word - well, three words - Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

I should have realised that things were not going to go well as we boarded our rocket. The low entrance brushed Mr. Brunel's top hat onto the floor. Having complained at the miserly nature of the conveyance, his mood was not improved on discovering that the capsule was not equipped with hat cords. Apparently all GWR 1st class carriages were so fitted, after all, no gentleman would consider himself properly dressed in public without a top hat. Glare in my direction - I'm not sure whether the implication was that I was not a gentleman or improperly dressed - probably both. There followed a lengthy diatribe of how all these difficulties would have been avoided if only they had adopted his broad-gauge rockets, which would have been three times as big and twice as fast. He neglected to mention five times as expensive but then Isambard never did concern himself with money!

Following take off, Isambard proceeded to light one of his large, habitual cigars. Consternation! However, as smoking was not initially permitted on Great Western trains, he accepted this prohibition with reasonably good grace. Having discovered that some of our fellow crew members were Russian, Mr. Brunel then regaled them at length with the details of his steam driven, semi-submersible gun for attacking Russian forts in the Crimea. Not a great advance in international relations. Nor did things improve on getting to the Space Station.

On arrival, we were naturally offered something to drink. Alas! Not only was Mr Brunel's favourite Burgundy not available but he was horrified to hear that there was no alcohol at all - not even Champagne (except in the Russian quarter!). He was eventually mollified with a coffee - until he received it. He spat it out, proclaiming that it was even worse than that served in the Swindon refreshment rooms. ("I was unaware that you had such a thing as coffee in the place"). The final straw was when he discovered that lunch was to be eaten from some plastic packets.

With an outburst that owed a great deal to the Isle of Dogs (where the Great Eastern steamship was built) and which cannot be repeated amongst gentle company, he demanded an immediate return to Earth. On being advised that no special rocket could be provided, a further glare in my direction was accompanied by the fact that, at principal stations on the Great Western Railway, engines and carriages were always kept in readiness so that a gentleman could obtain a special at a moment's notice.

Whilst he was making this pronouncement, somehow Mr. Brunel's travelling carriage (known as the Flying Hearse) had arrived outside and I found myself bundled into it for the return journey. Of course, there was no prohibition of cigars, the carriage being fitted with a case to hold fifty! The atmosphere soon resembled that of the Metropolitan Railway underground during the steam worked era. In no time at all, we arrived outside the Athenaeum, into which Mr. Brunel went to eat without even a word to me. Why were the Victorians able to achieve things in about a third of the time it takes today? On enquiring of the coachman about the possibility of being taken to St. Pancras station, he responded with the statement that he had no instructions about that and drove off leaving me on the pavement. Of course, lunch is quite beyond the ability of the modern railway, so I was somewhat tired and hungry on reaching home. Not having anticipated lunching there, I found my choice was whether to have sardines or beans with my toast!

As you will appreciate, I very much look forward to the resumption of our normal lunches.

Yours, in sorrow,
Colin Ellis

Report from our out of this world Mike (Spock) Stow:

After initially thinking we would be too queasy to eat on the ISS I, like Captain W, have found that the training has improved my stomach's responses so I'm now able to contemplate a proper picnic. I propose to bring:



Crostini with SUN-dried tomatoes



Followed by Stargazy pie (that will test a queasy stomach!)



And a Starfruit quencher to finish off

Oh and as the first stage of the rocket drops away 2 ½ mins after launch we could tuck into a Boost chocolate bar!

Alcohol is not allowed on most of the ISS, but is allowed in the Russian section (surprise!) so I suggest that we take Colin's Moonshine in there to make our own version of Tequila Sunrise (or even Moonrise) each of which we will see approximately every 90 mins.

Cheers

Mike

Expedition Commanders Final Report:

Dear Luncheoners,

What an adventure that was! Sorry about the little scare when we discovered the damaged heat shield caused by the little bump we had as Mike (Spock) Stow undocked us forgetting he wasn't in his BMW. Thanks for cheering me on as I did my first space walk and managed to replace the damaged tiles. Those British Rail Sandwiches were an excellent substitute for the missing heat shield tiles (Thank you to Colin Ellis for providing them).



Me in my moment of glory

Re-entry was certainly exciting. The plasma glow was something to behold. However, it jerked me back to reality as I recalled the dreadful day that my dear friend, Rick Husband, Commander of the ill fated Columbia Shuttle Mission, died on re-entry because several heat shield tiles had been dislodged and Mission Control tragically considered the damage insignificant. How wrong can you be!



The Crew of Columbia. Rick is front row left

We don't get adventures like this every day. Well done, crew, the mission was successful and great fun.

God bless,

Colin Woodland

Ashby U3A

Luncheon Club Coordinator

Music Appreciation – July 1st

We were in quite a contemplative mood this month with several slow songs but there were some in there to cheer us up! All the music was available on YouTube so we were able to watch as well as listen in most cases.

First off Estelle gave us **Jackie Brenston**. He was an American R and B singer and saxophonist. Played and recorded with Ike Turners band but his own group the Kings of Rhythm ran from '55 to '62. This song **Rocket 88**, is considered by many to be the first true Rock n Roll record

Her second choice was **Elvis Presley** singing **Blue Moon**. Recorded in 1954 and released in 1956. It's a lament of course. It's how a lot of us may feel now. Written by Rodgers and Hart.

Dorothy chose **Phil Collins - Another day in paradise** I've always liked Phil Collins' songs but the words of this made me wonder whether some of the BLM movement is because people feel to some extent like the woman depicted in the song...?

That was followed by the very different **David Oistrakh and Yehudi Menuhin playing Bach's Concerto for 2 violins in D minor**. An excellent rendering of the piece by two maestros of the violin.

Neil said "Last month I tried to brighten up your lives with some comedy songs. I hope it did the trick.

This month though, my first choice is likely to have the opposite effect, I'm afraid. It was prompted by the Black Lives Matter campaign.

I was reminded of the **Billie Holiday's version of "Strange Fruit"**, a powerful and haunting song, which when released by her in 1939 became the stand out version, and has been ever since."

His second choice was a version of one of Billie's songs, "**God Bless the Child**", by **Blood, Sweat & Tears**, who were basically Jazz musicians who had got together to make jazzed up versions of well known songs, with particular emphasis on the Brass Section.

Nev was the third person to be thinking of BLM this month:

"Although there is much publicity recently for Black Lives Matter I like to think that ALL Lives Matter whatever their colour, nevertheless, I have chosen **Sinead O'Connor singing Gershwin's "My Man's Gone Now"** from "Porgy and Bess" as featured on Larry Adler's Gershwin album. The song is sung by Bess in the show and Sinead had a great problem with the tune which is very difficult to sing. It is worth watching the George Martin documentary about the making of the album, although it does have quite a bit of hum on it."

"My second choice is "**That Old Feeling**" in the hope things will soon return to how they were (I'm forever the optimist)! The version I've chosen is by the **Man Overboard Quintet**."

"My third choice is "**Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea**" because I feel that's where we are with Covid 19. This version is by **George Harrison**. The line up of the band is like a who's who of popular musicians. George Harrison, Jools Holland, Mark Flanagan, Joe Brown, Herbie Flowers & Ray Cooper."

Mike's choices were topical, if only in title. Remembering the crowds on Bournemouth beach last month, he thought of **Chris Rea's "On the beach"**. This though is socially distanced. In fact he seems to be thinking of being alone with a certain someone, quite unlike Bournemouth!

I was looking for something about Independence Day, only 3 days away, but they were all sad or dreary, even Bruce Springsteen, so I've settled for the John & Vangelis' "**State of Independence**" but sung by **Donna Summer**. (something we are all hoping for, summer and independence!). Like The George Harrison tune this has a stellar but uncredited backing choir, namely Michael Jackson, Dionne Warwick, Lionel Richie and Stevie Wonder amongst others.

Yet again I think we had a great selection of music.

Mike

Recorder Group – June 25th

With a good weather forecast for today, we decided to hold a meeting this pm, just before one member goes on holiday. It was perfect! Warm in the shade, and no wind to blow the music off the stands.

There were 4 of us, and we played music for descants (one or two), treble and tenor:

The Earle of Salisbury (Byrd)

All in a Garden Green from "The English Dancing Master"

4 Pieces by Henry Purcell

"Off to the Fair" (arr. Alyson Lewin)

RazzJazz for 3 by Marg Hall (only a brief look, as it's hard, and it was warm)

Easy Recorder Ensembles Set 7

"Try a Trio!" from The Clark Collection

4 Minuets by Handel

and from "Easy Celtic Arrangements":

Down by the Sally Gardens

Bunclody

Dawning of the day.

I'd forgotten to take my copy of our new book of quartets, so we didn't play that. We're on the lookout for another warm dry day in a couple of weeks, so we can meet again.

Joan.

Supper Club – June 25th

As you will have read above, the Luncheon Club headed by Colin & Sharon have been outdoing us with their exotic choice of venues so I thought I would try to get back to reality and ask the supper Club members if they had eaten out yet or had takeaways, and if so what they thought of the food and the overall experience. However it seems that not many of us have ventured out for a meal yet and those that reported had gone for a takeaway of fish and chips!

Michael & Catherine take the prize as the first people to eat a real meal at the Virtual Supper Club as they had been for fish and chips at Nick's Fish Bar last month which they recommended.

Joyce and Sam recommended The Cross Keys at Newbold also for fish & chips.

Caryl & Colin say that they haven't ventured out yet but are due to eat out at a restaurant very soon. Hopefully we'll soon have news of what it was like.

Estelle hasn't ventured out yet but sent this:

FISH AND CHIPS MY STOMACH CRIED!
Crunchy batter and loads of chips
Me, on the sofa, licking my lips
I don't do take-aways, I don't
Sunday roast in a box, I won't
Fish and chips is what I crave for
But laced with Covid the taste would be poor,
So safety is my by-word, shame
But to me safety is the fishy game!

P.S. I understand Nicks in Ashby and the one in Thringstone opposite the Co-op are both superb...can't wait....but hold the mushy peas please!

If anyone else has been out to a restaurant or pub to eat, perhaps they could let me know what the experience was like so I can let others know. I'm sure everyone is itching to eat out but maybe rather nervous of sitting close to strangers.

Family History – July 8th

We had an excellent session today for our fourth Virtual Meeting, with seven attending. We interacted very satisfactorily using WhatsApp and email.

Dora reported on her work on the Parish record for her father's line, although she has not been able to get much further into the 17th century. She is now working on her maternal grandmother.

Shirley is trying to find out what her father worked as in the immediate post WWI period. I suggested she start with the 1939 Register, which will help pinpoint the family's location, but it may take a study of Directories such as Kelly's to get further. We were able to clarify the reason why she and her elder brother are currently redacted on the Register: she is still alive!

John Howlett has unearthed a report on his father's time in the Mediterranean when he was captured by the Germans, but presumed dead for some time.

Sylvia is waiting for copies of street directories for London in 1912 and 1935, and is trying to trace a cousin who was there at the time. She is also close to making contact with another cousin, having identified him, but with no response so far: so frustrating when this happens!

Carolyn needs to get a copy of a birth certificate: she should get the PDF version from the GRO. Any other way would be too expensive. Working on her 2nd and 3rd grandfathers, but as they all have the same first name is making heavy weather. We all know that one! She is also trying to access the National Archives for information on a grandfather's war record, and Medals record. The Medal Card should be available via Ancestry, but the free trial currently available from Kew is worth going for. Eileen chipped in with some helpful advice about creating an account.

Finally, Carolyn had a question to ask about safe storage of physical documents. This is a big question, but hinges on the fire rating of home safes: bluntly put, unless they have a Class O rating (and therefore very expensive) they are little better than money safes: that is, they keep your stuff from being stolen. As fire safes they act as incinerators in a bad fire. Sadly, very few of us have this level of protection to make sure our precious originals are fire protected. The best way is to store them away from the house. That also applies to our digital backups.

Eileen has found the will of her ancestors from 1840 which is very exciting, with names of beneficiaries etc, but proving difficult to read, and the service record of another, so she has lots to do, but is currently distracted by the builders!

John D has come across a neat trick to scan those old negatives that you can't identify, without using an expensive scanner. It requires a tablet with a white page showing and the contrast turned up to the highest setting placed over the negatives when using a standard document scanner. The next trick is to reverse the image and separate the different frames with software (John H recommends GIMP) and then they can be assessed for disposal or further development.

We meet again on Wednesday 12th August, hopefully here, but that all depends on lockdown progress.

Quiz

I should perhaps have been in touch with you all before now, but somehow the months have flown by (for me, anyway). In the lockdown I did all the same things but in a different order each day! Anything for variation.....and the garden needed a lot of attention. I am pleased to say that I have remained healthy; in fact was randomly selected to do a coronavirus test and was deemed free from any infection, which was welcome. I do hope you have continued with good health.

I can't imagine when the quiz afternoon will start again – I somehow fancy that we shall be very hesitant about being 4 round a small table. It is awful to think what long-lasting effect this shutdown will have had on us all, making us suspicious and careful. I shall look forward to seeing you all again, whenever that is.

Pat

Science & Technology- March 9th

Tanya and Paul have been sending out science based quizzes every week or so to Group members. They have certainly kept us on our toes or awoken some little grey cells to try to remember things from school, uni or work! This last time I was at least able to answer all the questions, but unfortunately not all correctly!

On Aug 3rd, i.e. this Monday, at 2pm Paul is hosting the Group's 2nd meeting but the first time online. He is giving a zoom presentation of a talk on Submarines, a mixture of the science, technology and his work experiences. We shall hopefully have a full report of the talk and how the Zoom conference worked next month.

Walking

There have been no virtual walks this month but some members are starting to venture out singly, in pairs or small groups to get their exercise and to meet up socially whilst trying to keep 2m apart. If you wish to arrange your own walking group, remember that you are limited to no more than 6 people at present and you should keep 2m apart. Most people have found that face coverings are not very practical when walking so 2m distance is important.

Short Walks

John Howlett is organising short walks again, although they are limited to just 6 people because of current virus restrictions. Walk dates are posted on the website, but if you wish to take part please contact John to book a place. Don't just turn up as you may be turned away.

The first walk was:

Friday 17th July. Around Ashby, starting at the Hood Park Gates

This was a similar walk to the last non-covid one only that was 5 months ago. We walked through Hood Park and took the footpath out to Smisby Road just beyond the biscuit factory estate. We crossed Smisby Road and walked up Rotherwood Drive into the Bovis estate where we turned left along Sherbourne Drive into Canterbury Drive and then Rouen Way. Part-way up the hill we took the path which goes down past the old flour mill except we turned right and followed the track out onto Burton Road opposite Hill Street. We turned right and followed the road till we reached Churchill Close and turned left. At the end of the cul-de-sac we took the path out to the playing field and turned left into Highfields Close. From there we crossed the Moira road and took the footpath to the allotments. Here we stopped for a chat with Estelle who was working on her plot before going to Joan's garden for morning coffee/tea. The weather held up well.

OTHER THINGS TO DO

Visit the **U3A National website** at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

There is information about COVID-19, but also lots of more interesting stuff such as what other U3As are doing around the country, bird migration tracking for the British Trust of Ornithology, photography challenges, ideas to keep learning and there are quizzes and maths puzzles to occupy a few minutes or hours! See above.

The National Theatre is screening plays on YouTube every Thursday night at 7pm. Search for "National Theatre at home" for details

Royal Opera House are on www.youtube.com/royaloperahouse with a number of operas and ballets available to watch at any time. Currently the Sleeping Beauty is showing amongst others.

Google Arts & Culture – <https://artsandculture.google.com> has high resolution photos of many of the world's great paintings and other artworks from 2000 museums round the world, plus you can explore the most famous places in the world such as Eiffel Tower, Angkor Wat, Sydney Opera House plus loads more. Somewhere to get lost for a few hours.