



November Newsletter

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear All,

As always, I hope you, your family and friends remain well and are coping well with enforced inactivity. I don't know about you, but when we had to cancel our March monthly meeting, I little imagined that there would not be another one this year. Nor did I think that, with very few exceptions, there would be no U3A activities for almost the whole year.

However, now there does seem to be encouraging news with the trial results of the first vaccines. Even if these are not as successful as hoped, the way has been shown and others will follow. Unfortunately, with the numbers requiring immunisation in this country alone, there is bound to be a time lag and I fear it will be well beyond the 12 month mark before we are able to really resume our normal activities.

In some ways, these current restrictions seem worse than the first period - at least then, the days were getting longer and we had that glorious Spring weather to lift our spirits. Currently, November just seems gloomy! I think that we should all try to be cheered and reassured by the medical news; it now seems highly likely that an end is in sight; albeit perhaps a little further than we would have hoped.

I have been fortunate, in that I have been able to continue with walks in the country, with construction of my model railway (which has certainly benefited from enforced inactivity elsewhere) and my photographs. It is to be hoped that you all have some great interest as they can be a great way of occupying any spare moment. Even the front lawn has got relaid. There's desperation for you!

The festive season and its approach will have to be rather different this year, with many traditional events not able to occur in their usual way. This is especially true in view of the level of restrictions currently imposed. Nevertheless, I am sure that we will all make the best of it. I certainly look forward very much to being able to welcome you back to our U3A activities as soon as we can next year.

I do hope that you all remain safe and are able to enjoy as much of this rather limited Festive Season as possible.

In the meantime, I would like, on behalf of your Committee and myself, to wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a vastly improved 2021.

Colin Ellis

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING ON DECEMBER 14TH

As you hopefully read in the Notice emailed out to you all, we are due to hold a virtual Special General Meeting (SGM) on December 14th to vote on a change to our Constitution. This would allow us, should compelling circumstances (such as this Covid pandemic) demand, to hold future AGMs other than by holding an open meeting at which members must physically attend and vote.

We obviously couldn't meet for this SGM either, so we sent out voting forms asking you to vote for the Constitutional change. We have had a good response so far but if you haven't voted yet, voting closes on December 12th. The Committee will meet via Zoom on the 14th to ratify the vote and, if the amendment is approved, to action the change.

FROM LOCKDOWN TO TIER 3

Well, we come out of Lockdown this week but we head straight into Tier 3. A bit like being released from prison only to be re-arrested as soon as we step out of the gate!

So still no meeting anybody outside of our family or support bubble, either indoors or in private gardens, but we can meet in groups of up to 6 in public open spaces. It is too early to say whether the Walking Group Leaders will want to organise walks for just 6 people, but it does mean that we can at least get out in informal groups under the Rule of 6. I hope you can all get out safely for some exercise, fresh air and maybe some company.

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 07919 986456 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.

ZOE COVID-19 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. There are 18 active cases in NW Leics at the moment.

NHS Covid-19 Test and Trace

If you have a smartphone, we would encourage you to download the NHS app. It tracks whether you have been in close proximity to someone who subsequently tests positive for Covid-19 and allows Track and Trace to contact you and ask you to isolate for a number of days. Remember this app only works if you carry your phone with you when you go out!

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Many of the local branches of different organisations in town lay poppy wreaths at the war memorial in Market Street as part of the annual Remembrance Day ceremony. The Committee decided that from this year we would also participate. However, as you probably know, due to Covid-19 the ceremony was cancelled. That didn't stop wreaths being laid, but it was done quietly and without all the usual ceremony.





ANOTHER SCAM

Another scam from people trying to take money from people in this difficult time.

People have been calling to say that you have been identified by Test & Trace as having come into contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19. To check whether you are infected they will send you a testing kit but there is a fee to pay for postage. Give them your debit card number over the phone and the kit will be sent to you!

This is a complete scam. Neither the NHS, nor anyone else legitimate, will ever ask for money, nor will they ask for your card details. Do not believe anything they might say to convince you otherwise. Just put the phone down.

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.

GROUPS MEETING REMOTELY OR VIRTUALLY

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. Subject to the social distancing regulations in force at the time, we may even be able to do house calls.

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

In one case, a PC's keyboard had stopped working because of corrupted software, making it impossible to log in and hence fix it. We found that there is an on-screen keyboard, mainly for touch screen devices, but that didn't work either, so the answer proved to be to use the original Win 7 DVD to do a "Windows Repair". It installs a clean copy of Windows without deleting any personal files. Even that wasn't straight forward and needed several reboots before it replaced the keyboard software with a functioning version. A couple of days work to sort it all out!

Drawing and painting

Seven members worked from home this month on the theme of Remembrance. Some very nice paintings were done. Here is a sample, with my apologies to the other artists for only having space for one here. All the paintings are viewable on the Drawing and Painting Gallery page of our website.



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.

Music Appreciation – Oct 7th

4 members provided their choice of music and very good it was too.

From Estelle

1. The Alan Parsons Symphonic Project with the Medellin Philharmonic Orchestra & "Eye In The Sky"

I'm a massive fan of Alan Parsons, either in the studio with session musicians or on the big stage with orchestras, this album and all his others are great for laying on the floor with a cushion and ear buds!

2. Didgeridoo Meets Orchestra 2013

Talented and beautiful William Barton's Earth Cry using a Crooked Stixz and a Bruce Rogers Digeridoo accompanied by the Australian Youth Orchestra at Sydney Opera House. Very mind blowing.

3. Kodo: "Legacy"

Kodo is a pro taiko drumming troupe based in Sado island, Japan.

From Nev:

Like my first October choice my first choice for November is for another pianist. Jerry Lee Lewis was born in 1935. He was also known by his nickname, The Killer, and has been described as "rock and roll's first great wild man and one of the most influential pianists of the 20th century". His rock and roll career faltered when he married his 13 year old cousin in 1958. The track I've chosen is a Hank Williams song "You Win Again". Williams recorded it in July 1952, one day after his divorce from his wife, Audrey, became final. Lewis's recording was released in 1958.

My second choice is by a man who is not only a pianist but an actor and comedian. He is, of course, Hugh Laurie. I have chosen his version of "St James Infirmary", an American blues song of uncertain origin made famous by Louis Armstrong in 1928.

My third choice is an instrumental by Joe Brown. It's played on a mandolin and called "Souvenir d'Alvito". I have been unable to find details of the composer(s) but it is referred to as a Joe Brown song (?) on the internet although he is not listed as the composer. I suspect it is his version of a traditional tune (Italian?).

Finally I have chosen "Delilah", a song made famous by Tom Jones. The version I've chosen is by the Sensational Alex Harvey Band which reached no7 in the UK charts in 1975. This recording is from the Old Grey Whistle Test and is delivered with a degree of humour!

From Mike:

I was looking for a good video of individual tracks from the Buena Vista Social Club album and couldn't find any but then I came across Playing For Change. I'd not heard of them before but it seems to be an organisation created to "inspire and connect the world through music". They record musicians around the world and combine them into a single performance. You'd think they were all in the studio together rather than 1000s of miles apart.

Here are two tracks I found. The first is "Chan Chan" written by Company Secundo from the original Cuban Buena Vista Social Club here played by various musicians.

The second is the "The weight", originally by The Band. This performance is by Robbie Robertson late of The Band and Ringo Starr amongst many others.

I make no apologies for giving you more Bonnie Raitt – this time "Angel from Montgomery". I think she has a wonderful voice. And she's a mean guitar player.

And finally Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris and Linda Ronstadt on the Late Show singing Neil Young's "After the Gold Rush" from their Trio II album.

From Neil:

Spencer Davis passed away recently, and when anyone from the 60s dies you get to thinking of their contribution to that magical era. Besides The Spencer Davis Group's most memorable hits, I remembered buying one of theirs that is not so well known, "Time Seller", so decided to dig it out for the first time for over 50 years.

It was the first record they released after Steve Winwood left the group to form Traffic, who were one of the first Psychedelic groups. I hope you enjoy it. It features a cello, and is thought to have

prompted the Beatles to include a similar cello arrangement in "I am the Walrus" which was released a few months later.

This, set me to thinking of other Psychedelic/Hippy songs. Although I liked the experimental aspect, there weren't many that I liked enough to buy.

One that I did was "Itchycoo Park" by the Small Faces. They were from East London, where I lived, and supposedly Itchycoo Park was Steve Marriot's nickname for Little Ilford Park, which I had been to many times.

Finally, some of you may well remember me playing "Alice's Restaurant" by Arlo Guthrie at our Christmas get together a few years ago, and seem to remember it going down well. To some this is the ultimate Hippy anthem, and was considered to be an anti war protest song. Arlo later said that he wrote us as an anti stupidity "song", although there is not much singing. It is mainly a Talking Blues with delivered with humour.

Family History - 11th November

For a variety of reasons we only had three contributions today. But we all remembered our Fallen in our several ways.

John H is investigating the messaging system in Ancestry to see if there is any mileage in linking up with people on other trees. Others have had some success here, so he is hopeful. John D Is still trying to trace his mother's second husband's line, despite determined efforts by Ancestry to offer totally unrelated links.

Sylvia has several threads going. She, too, is exploring Ancestry links for her mother's family which is giving her problems. She is still trying to find a birth record for her maternal grandmother. Unfortunately, her great grandparents were called Murphy and resided in Ireland, so records are hard to come by.

Science & Technology – Oct 12th

The S&T group only met once before the first lockdown prevented any further gatherings and so we haven't built up a great many followers. It was decided therefore that we would share our Zoom meetings with the Burton u3a science group. Ashby and Burton already have a reciprocal arrangement so that we can attend the each others actual meetings, (that is all groups not just S&T) so this was easy to arrange.

The first shared meeting was a presentation by Bill Devitt entitled "Tilting trains – why and how?"

The illustrated talk started with an explanation of the reasons why modern tilting trains are an economic proposition, permitting faster trains on existing tracks, which in turn leads to the ability to provide a more frequent service. This in turn allows economies in the number of tilting trains on any particular service, whilst providing an improved (shorter) rail journey times.

The talk then progressed onto describing the differing methods of making railway trains tilt, using hydraulic or electrical methods, or just using the low centre of gravity to cause trains to take curves faster by unpowered means.

Finally the talk focused upon the UK Class 390 "Pendolino" trains, built for Virgin Trains, where the speaker was Project Manager for all of the Virgin West Coast line activities and rolling stock. He described how these tilting trains receive information from track-mounted transponders en route in order to compute where and by how much tilt is needed for each curve.

For electrically powered trains, it is also necessary to arrange a method of counter-tilting the electrical input pantograph, so that the supply of electricity to the train is not interrupted by losing contact with the overhead supply wire.

All of the methods described above had to be accompanied by extensive safety measures, so as to be able to expect any unexpected events!

A second meeting a few days later was given by Burton's Chris Hesketh entitled "Dealing with what goes down the drain"

This was a very interesting talk about sewage farms, how they work and how they separate out all the various things, organic and inorganic, that get into the sewage system. How they treat matter so that it is safe to put it back into the environment.

The next talk will be on Friday 18th Dec 10am to noon. John Hoddy of Burton will give a talk (title TBC) followed by Paul McKay talking about "The mystery of the star of Bethlehem"

Walking

ALL CHANGE YET AGAIN. DESPITE MOVING INTO TIER 3, AS FROM DEC 3rd WE CAN RESUME WALKING IN GROUPS OF UP TO SIX PERSONS

All the walking Groups were hoping to be active before lockdown came along and thwarted them but now they can restart but restricted to just 6 people at a time. Whether walk leaders will want to organise walks for such small numbers is another matter.

There are many other restrictions including record keeping of names and contact details for Test & Trace, social distancing, sanitising and limits on coffee stops etc. If walks do go ahead, walk leaders will brief participants before walking.

Longer Walks

For the time being Kevin is not organising any more formal walks but small groups (6 or less) are meeting informally, but not currently under the auspices of U3A.

Medium Walks

Without a leader, the group is struggling to organise future walks. If anyone or maybe two or three people wish to help organise this group it would be very useful.

Short Walks – Oct 16th

John says he won't be organising any short walks before Christmas as the cafés will be shut and that is one of the reasons most members join the short walks. Hopefully things will be better in the New Year.

A QUIZ FOR CHRISTMAS

A couple of people asked if I could include a quiz. I'm not a quiz setter but I did find these questions on the u3a trust website which although not exactly Christmassy may keep you occupied for a while:

Can you work out these places in the UK?

1. Spaniel's muzzle (9)
2. 'e goes on a water closet (4)
3. Sounds like the pains are to be interred (9)
4. Move around the long fish (8)
5. Does a good life actress live here? (6)
6. A game between two local rivals (5)
7. A place for sofas? (12)
8. Owl type fixes paper (11)
9. Modern sea terminal (6)
10. and put a water plant on it (8)
11. Men's outfitter meets tree (9)

12. Cyril the footballer joins on the end of Newcastle, Staffs (4,5)
13. Joy, Babs & Teddie are sibling singers (8)
14. Elizabeth to be set on fire (7)
15. A big one happened in 1066, 1805, 1940 and lots of other times (6)
16. Fawlty meets Professor (8)
17. Crane in front of a short valley (10)
18. Secure firmly with a fastener (6)
19. Ancient pig (6)
20. No pains in question 3 (4)
21. Exercise with maize (6)
22. In a hurry to get to the fell. (8)
23. Did a revolting Tyler cross the river here? (7)
24. Heart missing a car manufacturer (8)
25. Headgear for a meadow (8)
26. Sounds like a herd of cattle reside here (5)
27. Travel by bus, nearly (4)
28. Spring festival at the horse residence (10)
29. Forbid question 20 (7)
30. Give their players their cards (|4)
31. A pebble for the female servant (9)
32.and for a lot of other people on 'E' (10)
33. Crossing over to Adam's garden (10)
34. Wide steps (11)
35. Modern retail (9)
36. Iron nearly a hundred (6)
37. Did he have an address at Gettysburg? (7)
38. Talking pig (7)
39. Lewis the runner surrounded by water (8)
40. Big organ on a puddle (8)
41. Dog's best friend on the lea (9)
42. Recent dockside sounds like a recent lock opener (7)
43. Wednesday's child is nearly full of this and mates a royal male (6)
44. 90 or 100 degrees, ey? (8)

Answers down below. Copyright Stella Burton and Madeley & District U3A.

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!

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.

THE COMMITTEE

If you want to get in touch, our current committee are:

Colin Ellis	Chairman	chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 272592
Anne Donegan	Business Secretary	secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01283 760348
Val Reed	Treasurer	treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 564279
Iain Banns	Membership Secretary	members@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 416697
Colin Woodland	Groups Co-ordinator	interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 413867
Peter Clement	Minutes Secretary	minutes@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 560894
Estelle Sandles	Welfare	welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk	07919 986456
Bill Wilson	Speaker seeker	speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 413182
Mike Stow	Communications	webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 469152
Avril Wilson	Social Secretary	socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 413182
Tony Smith	Member	tony@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 831822

Quiz answers:

1 Cockermonth	23 Watford
2 Looe	24 Hertford
3 Aylesbury	25 Hatfield
4 Stirling	26 Coves
5 Kendal	27 Ryde
6 Derby	28 Whitstable
7 Chesterfield	29 Banbury
8 Barnstaple	30 Deal
9 Newport	31 Maidstone
10 Portrush	32 Folkestone
11 Ashburton	33 Edenbridge
12 Lyme Regis	34 Broadstairs
13 Beverley	35 Newmarket
14 Lisburn	36 Preston
15 Battle	37 Lincoln
16 Basildon	38 Chatham
17 Winchcombe	39 Carlisle
18 Bolton	40 Liverpool
19 Oldham	41 Mansfield
20 Bury	42 Newport
21 Runcorn	43 Woking
22 Rushmoor	44 Anglesey