



October Newsletter

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear All,

Once again, I hope that you have all remained well and as active as possible this past month.

It seems as though these letters have been my means of communication for ever, since our last monthly meeting in February. However, given the restraints, there has not been a great deal to report. Sadly, the numbers appear to be going in an undesirable direction at present, with an increasing number of areas under additional restrictions. I do not really anticipate any real improvement until the Spring but do hope that it will be possible to resume much of our normal programme next year.

Since our last newsletter, we have held a formal Annual General Meeting. As this had to be via Zoom, the numbers were severely restricted with only Committee Members present together with Jane Barnett and John Howlett to keep an eye on proceedings on behalf of the membership. I am very grateful to them for restraining us from running too far amok.

As the Minutes, Reports and Motions had all been circulated in advance and sufficient proxy and prior votes received, there was very little to do and the whole thing was over in about 6 minutes, which must be the shortest ever. I hope that we will be able to revert to normal next year. However I am grateful to those of you who did vote or appoint a proxy as this resulted in us having sufficient votes for a quorum and, hence, a valid meeting. This means that we are able to continue to run Ashby U3A, with the same Committee Members and Officers as last year. Although we are not able to achieve a great deal at present, we are at least in a position to proceed when circumstances permit.

Whilst on the subject of membership, we currently have 182 as against slightly over 300 last year. In current conditions, I regard that as an excellent position. A number will have joined prior to the scale of restrictions becoming apparent and I am grateful to you for your forbearance in these difficult times.

My thanks also to those who have either re-joined or, indeed, joined for the first time, despite these difficult times. A hearty welcome to you all and I hope to be able to say that in person at the earliest opportunity.

As always, we are always available for comments, chat or assistance, so do not hesitate to get in touch.

Until next time, I hope you all stay very well and enjoy life as much as circumstance will permit.

With best wishes,

Colin Ellis.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON OCTOBER 20TH

As you hopefully read in last month's newsletter, we were due to hold our Annual General Meeting this month on Oct 20th. Our Chairman has talked about it in his letter above, but here is the full report.

We managed to hold our AGM via the wonders of Zoom, the video conferencing software. It would have been illegal under current regulations to gather more than 6 people face to face and difficult to organise many more via video. Since it would have been unfair, and unconstitutional, to allow only a small portion of the membership to join in the AGM it was decided to give all paid up members a postal or email vote. Hopefully you all received ballot papers either by email or post.

The AGM itself was attended virtually by 9 committee members and two observers from the membership, namely Jane Barnett and John Howlett. John also audited the count of ballot papers.

We currently have 182 paid up members and 44 of you voted. Our constitution requires 15% of the membership to vote in the ballot for any decisions made to be valid. 44 votes was more than enough.

Colin Ellis, our chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed our observers. The Chairman's, Treasurer's and Group Co-ordinator's reports had been circulated to all with the ballot papers and so were not read out again.

And so to the voting for the 6 proposals: a number of members had given their proxy to the Chairman to vote as he saw right for our U3A and all the other votes were in favour of all the proposals.

As the Chairman voted for all the proposals too, the voting was unanimously in favour of adoption of last year's minutes and this year's accounts, for the approval of re-election of the committee and re-appointment of the auditor. The new subscription rates for this year were approved as was permission for the committee to set next year's subs nearer the time, when we see what activities are permitted by then.

There was no other business and so the meeting was closed. It lasted slightly longer than the Chairman remembered – it lasted 8 minutes!

U3A HAS A NEW LOGO

Some of you may have noticed that there is a new logo at the top of this newsletter. As part of an effort to rebrand itself and appeal to more members, U3A has adopted a new logo.



Last year u3a (note the lower case) dropped the "University of the Third Age" from its logo and is now distancing itself from the University tag as it was felt to be off-putting to potential members and we are now no longer described as being of a "Third Age".

u3a is now described as being for "people no longer in full-time work". And we can now "learn, laugh and live". Well, at least once we've got Covid-19 out of the way!

I suppose it is nice not to be known as being in our third age. We are only as old as we want to be!

However u3a is still aimed at older people – we are asked to be proud of that, not hide it and all those with the time to join in our activities will be welcome. So let us hope that we can restart those activities as soon as possible.

CAN WE RESTART SOME GROUPS?

As you will all be aware, much has changed in the last month regarding social contact with several areas near to us going into Tier 2 or even Tier 3.

~~When the committee met via Zoom on Mon Sept 21st to discuss the "Rule of 6" we decided that it seemed pointless to restart groups only to have to close them down again after just 1 or 2 meetings, reasoning that restrictions were unlikely to be eased further and much more likely to be tightened, we decided unanimously, and reluctantly, that we would not restart any indoor groups at this time.~~

~~Although NW Leics has so far managed to remain in Tier 1, South Derbyshire is now going into Tier 2 as of this weekend as is Charnwood District of Leics. That means that Swadlincote, Smisby, Ticknall and Shepshed will be in Tier 2.~~

~~People living in or entering Tier 2 must not meet socially with friends and family indoors in any setting unless you live with them or have formed a support bubble with them. This includes private homes, and any other indoor venues such as pubs and restaurants.~~

~~**We also decided unanimously that walking should also be restricted to groups of 6.**~~

~~Walking group leaders can organise walks if they wish but they must be of 6 persons max, including the walk leader. Risk assessments, Track and Trace lists and compliance with Covid 19 rules still apply.~~

~~Elsewhere the Government have stated that splitting a large group into groups of 6 is not allowed as they have a "common purpose". This is apparently because groups of 6 who know other groups will likely interact with each other rather than stay in their own groups whether they are at tables indoors or when out walking and they come to stiles etc. However they have not stated how far apart two or more groups need to be in order for them not to have a "common purpose" or to be considered a separate group.~~

~~This confirms our decision to limit walking groups to 6 people.~~

~~**NOTE** if people decide to walk in groups not organised by U3A, that Rule of 6 and compliance with Covid 19 rules still apply.~~

STOP PRESS: NATIONAL LOCKDOWN FROM NOV 5th.

As you will all obviously know, we will enter a new national lockdown from Thursday for at least 4 weeks. As far as I can tell this means:

- . NO household mixing indoors or in private gardens unless in your support bubble.
- . All pubs and restaurants closed except for take-aways.
- . Outdoor recreation is encouraged but you can only meet one person outside your household in a public space. It is not clear if this has to be the same person every time, or whether it can be different people.

This of course means all walking in groups is now banned.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH AND BURNS SUPPER

More bad news. Unfortunately the committee have had to abandon plans for the Christmas lunch this year and also the Burns Supper in January as at present ~~only 6 persons~~ no-one can meet indoors. When restaurants and similar premises re-open we don't know how many people they will be able to take in one booking. If the situation should change for the better, we will look again at the viability of either event going ahead but it seems unlikely that we could organise anything in a short time.

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!

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.

Drawing and painting – Oct 21st

Six members worked from home this month on Halloween and autumn themes. All the paintings are viewable on the Drawing and Painting 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.

Luncheon Club

The Luncheon Club are having a break from virtual gatherings.

Music Appreciation – Oct 7th

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

Neil said:

“My choices this month have been brought about by one of my friends sending me a link to Jerry Lee Lewis singing "Boogie Woogie Country Girl". This is my 1st choice. This version demonstrates all ages dancing to the Boogie Woogie. Feel free to join in whilst listening!

This prompted me to Google "Boogie Woogie", which according to Wikipedia is a genre of blues that was developed by African-American communities in the 1870s and became popular in the 1920s. It was extended from piano to many other forms of music.

I think that "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company 3" is probably the most famous song to have come from this, and my 2nd choice is a version by the Puppini Sisters.

Another of my favourite songs, "Hold on Tight to Your Dreams" by ELO is heavily influenced by B-W, and so is my final choice.”

From Estelle:

“Here's my selection for this month:

'Handle With Care' by The Traveling Wilburys. The Wilburys line up here is Roy Orbison, George and Dhani Harrison, Bob Dylan, Tom Petty, Jeff Lynne and Jim Keltner.

Lady A with 'Need you Now'. Lady A are an American country music group formed in Nashville in 2006 as Lady Antebellum but have now dropped the Antebellum because of slavery-era connotations. Their line up is Hillary Scott, Charles Kelley, Dave Haywood. Hillary is the daughter of country music singer Linda Davis and Charles is brother of pop singer Josh Kelley.

Supertramp and 'Hide in Your Shell' from their 1974 album Crime of the Century album.

Happy listening!”

From Nev:

"I have a selection of music to offer this month.

My first choice is "Two Sleepy People" by Fats Waller. I have no particular reason for picking this one except that I like it! The music was written by Hoagy Carmichael with lyrics by Frank Loesser in 1938. On this recording Fats Waller demonstrates some amazing piano playing and his vocal is delivered with a degree of humour.

Now that Autumn has arrived (where did the summer go?) my second choice is "Autumn Leaves". It was written by Joseph Kosma, a Hungarian/French composer. The original lyrics were in French, written by Jacques Prevert. Later English lyrics were added by Johnny Mercer. The version I've chosen is by Eric Clapton recorded in 2010.

In the 1990s I worked with a man who had been at the Liverpool College of Art at the same time as John Lennon. He described Lennon as 'an aggressive, arrogant, big-headed and quite unpleasant person'. Had he lived John Lennon would have been 80 years of age this Friday, 9th October. Together with Paul McCartney he was the driving force behind the Beatles, responsible for the more 'rocky' and less melodious numbers from their repertoire. However, I've chosen a couple of tracks from his 1980 Double Fantasy album which I feel demonstrate a gentler side to his character. The first one is "Woman" and the other is "Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)"

From Mike:

"I thought I'd give you a couple of tunes by people famous in the 70s and 80s but seemingly forgotten now.

First off is Joe Jackson with "Stepping Out". I saw this very recently being used in a Jet petrol station advert, but Joe is not singing it.

Secondly, Joan Armatrading – "Love and Affection". A great song and a great singer.

Then 2 different pieces. Cal Calloway – "Jumping Jive" this is from the film "Stormy Weather" and this video clip is notable for the Nicholas Brothers dancing. Fred Astaire said it was the greatest piece of dance ever committed to film. Who am I to argue.

The last piece is an orchestral flashmob in the street of Sabadell in Spain. This is it's an unannounced performance where the players walk into the square one at a time and just start playing until the whole orchestra and choir are there. You'll recognise the music straight away (Beethoven's Ninth - Ode to Joy) but for some reason I find it very moving."

If any of you reading this want to listen to or watch any of these pieces you'll find them quite easily on YouTube or Spotify.

Recorder Group – September

The recorder group have been meeting in the garden of one of the group members through most of the summer, but now the weather has changed this is proving increasingly difficult and so proceedings may be postponed now until spring or any easing of social distancing indoors.

Family History - 14th October

Five Find Outers joined in again, all working hard at knotty problems.

John H is working on his aunt's marriage. No progress reported, but we have high hopes.

John D is researching a mysterious character going by the name of Smith (!) who appears from time to time in his great grandfather's school logs. He is referred to as an ex (and sometimes as the first) Pupil Teacher of the school James takes over in 1864, but John can find no trace of him in the censuses, nor the records of the most likely teacher training college.

Dora has expended her Ancestry account to Worldwide to investigate the Dutch origins of her mother. This is proving very fruitful, with several good leads.

Sylvia is working sideways on her cousin's parents, but seems to have struck a brick wall. An alternative line tracing her maternal grandmother via the records of her great aunt seemed to be bearing fruit until she ran into the problem of the name Murphy in the Irish records.

Carolyn is following her great grandfather's movements across the world. It seems from a newspaper cutting that he went to Turkey as a mill manager for two years then on to India where he lived for a time near Gandhi's home village. But she is having difficulty tracing him via the shipping lines as they seem to concentrate on immigration and emigration, rather than plain passenger traffic. The search continues, as there are many sources to search through.

We meet again on Wednesday 11th of November, Virtually as before for the 8th time.

Science & Technology – Oct 12th

For the S&T group's third Zoom talk, Colin Woodland, Squadron Leader RAF (Retd) gave us a very interesting talk about "Breathing at high altitude". This was based on his experiences starting as a Technician in the RAF at the Institute of Aviation Medicine in Farnborough.

He first explained the problems at altitude, namely the lack of oxygen to breathe! At the top of Everest, i.e. approx 30,000 ft, the air pressure, and hence amount of oxygen, is only 30% of that at ground level. It is also very cold. Air temperature drops 2°C for every 1000 ft you go up. So at the top of Everest it is around -40degC without any wind chill. Flying above that height, conditions are even more extreme so pilots need assistance to survive at those altitudes. At 63,000 ft the air pressure is so low that blood in the body begins to boil!

Colin then went on to describe the various methods, which became increasingly sophisticated, to enable pilots and later passengers to breathe comfortably at higher and higher altitudes. He also kept us amused by relating some of the many experiences he had as an experimenter and guinea pig. Most of the stories were of funny incidents but his last told of how after going through several decompressions trials in one day, he suddenly felt a sharp pain between his shoulder blades and he collapsed with a heart attack caused by nitrogen bubbles in his spine (the bends). Fortunately, his boss, who was a cardiologist, recognised the signs, laid him out and thumped him in the chest and restarted his heart!

He spent several days in hospital on his back, recovering. The perils of high altitude can be found in the lab too. Fortunately Colin recovered well enough to tell us the story. And a fascinating one it was too.

Walking

~~All the walking Groups were hoping to be active by September but, as you may have read above, the committee decided that the Rule of 6 does apply to us and so walking groups would be restricted to just 6 people at a time. There are many other restrictions including record keeping of names and contact details for Track & Trace, social distancing, sanitising and limits on coffee stops etc. Walk leaders will brief participants before walking.~~

SEE STOP PRESS ABOVE: ALL WALKING IN GROUPS NOW BANNED BY GOVERNMENT REGULATION

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 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 Howlett is now organising some short walks again. See the website for details or phone him on 01530 461774 if you wish to come along.~~

This month five of us started from the Moira furnace car park by the children's play area. Despite some early drizzle we set off across the playing field, through some woods and into Park Road. Another trail took us back to the lime kilns before setting off along the canalside towards Donisthorpe. Back up the old railway track brought us to the other end of Park Road and the wooded path out to the canal again. This time we turned left along to the Moira Furnace café. Despite the drizzle starting again, most were able to sit outside for a coffee under what little shelter there is.

~~Although we are now limited to just 6 people because of current restrictions, in future if more than six people are interested in walking on any one day, we will try to arrange two separate walks.~~

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