



March Newsletter

A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear All,

Following on from my letter last month, we have discussed the situation at our Committee Meeting and taken soundings from Group Leaders. By and large, we are reasonably optimistic and I personally hope that we shall be able to restart our activities to the maximum extent permitted as soon as possible. On the present 'Roadmap', that suggests walking after 17th May and other activities after 21st June.

We will, of course, keep you as informed as we can but I know you will appreciate that we can only proceed as far as permitted by the relaxation in regulations..

That brings us on to the question of subscriptions. Sadly, I am all too well aware that you have had almost nothing in return for your subscriptions for the year from April, 2020. I feel very reluctant to ask for further contributions as I do not want to spark protests blocking the traffic in Ashby Market Street! However, we have had to consider our continuing outgoings and the need to finance future activities relative to our current balance.

You all know that we are required to make payments, based on our membership, to the national organisation both to cover their expenses and to pay for our magazines. Together, this amounts to about £1,100 due next month and, assuming the number of members remains constant, a similar amount in April 2022. The other large payment we make is in respect of the Congregational Church rent and speaker fees, which we would like to resume in June, if we can.

The Committee propose that we should leave the membership year as 1st April to 31st March annually but that, for this year only, we defer seeking renewals until July. You may recall that our last renewal process started prior to the first lockdown and many of you renewed at the full £16.50.

When it became clear that we would be severely curtailed in our activities, we reduced this to £8.00 for the 2020/1 year and offered either a refund or to carry forward any overpayment to 2021/2. No repayment was requested and very few of you actually indicated that you would wish to carry your subscription forward. The Committee have decided to set the amount of next year's membership at £8.50 (£5 for a second member at the same household). We feel it only proper to renew the offer, to those who have paid the full amount, that no further payment is required. Nevertheless, so that we can advise the national office of our membership numbers, all renewing members will have to complete a membership form, indicating whether they are accepting this offer and also ticking the data protection consent boxes.

However, gazing into the somewhat cloudy crystal ball, this could leave us with something of a cash flow problem at this time next year when we are required to make our payments to the national office.

Accordingly, if any of you who did pay in full last year, feel able to contribute the renewal fee this year, we would be immensely grateful.

We do not wish anyone to feel obliged to do so and would ask you to contribute only if you are completely comfortable with the proposal.

One other idea, which we will put forward for consideration at the AGM, is to ask for a payment to attend the Monthly Meeting. We envisage that this would be £1.00 per person and no additional contribution would then be requested for refreshments afterwards. This is similar to the way that History, Gardening and Science Groups operate when they use Packington Hall and the Evangelical church.

This would certainly assist our cash flow, especially if the number of members and those attending meetings did not quickly recover to the former levels. Should numbers recover rapidly, we could reconsider the charge or defer any future annual fee increase. We hope that the AGM will take place in July, so you have plenty of time to formulate your views on the idea.

I am pleased to think that we can look forward to our future with renewed optimism. The birds are singing, the flowers are blooming, the sun is shining (well, above the clouds, anyway) and I very much look forward to resuming our U3A activities. It will be an immense pleasure to be able to welcome as many of you as possible back in person. Roll on June!

In the meantime, I hope you all remain well and are coping with the final spell of these very strange times.

Best wishes,
Colin

FROM THE EDITOR

Possible Monthly Meetings On Zoom

In the last two newsletters I asked people to let me know if they were interested in attending talks on Zoom. Unfortunately only 6 people replied, so the committee decided it would not be cost effective to book a speaker, nor a good image for either our u3a or the speaker, if only a very small number of people were to attend.

The good news is that we should be able to hold our first real meeting in June, subject to the Roadmap running to time and the Congregational church being able to accommodate us.

Looking For Speakers

Has anyone got a talk that they are prepared to give to our members?

As the date for our first monthly meeting is dependant on the Roadmap dates staying as published, we are reluctant to book and pay for external speakers who we may have to cancel or postpone at short notice. Therefore we are asking if any of our members have any talks that they could give to the members on the last Tuesday of June, July or September. Talks don't need to be very long. If you have slides or computer graphics that go with them, then we can help to set them up. Any help would be very gratefully received.

Contact Bill Wilson on speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk or phone 01530 413182

New Membership Forms

As you will have read above, we shall not be actively seeking membership renewals until July by which time we will hopefully know what program of events we shall be able to put on. However the new member and membership renewal forms are now on the website. The new forms allow you to complete them online without having to print them out and fill them in by hand, although that option is still possible.

If the forms are downloaded to Acrobat Reader they can be emailed direct to membership@ashbyu3a.co.uk after filling them in.

Ashby u3a Website

Things are starting to change, hopefully for the better, and groups are starting to plan for re-opening. Keep an eye on our website as I shall try to keep it up to date with new developments.

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.

Some New Scams

There appear to be some new scams doing the rounds, some of which are aimed at u3a members.

One is an email which appears to come from a local u3a member asking if you have a PayPal account and asking if you can make a purchase on their behalf. This is clearly a scam.

The scammers have obviously got one or more members email addresses from somewhere and are pretending to be them.

Another email tells you that your latest monthly payment for you Car Tax has failed due to insufficient funds on your debit card and that you will be fined £80 if you don't pay up. This is an attempt to get you card details. If you feel this may actually be true, then check your bank account first before making any payment to DVLA but do not use the data or links provided by the scammer.

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, 07919 986456 or email welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk.

Estelle can also offer support and welfare information. Any chats will of course be confidential.

Free Yoga Classes On Zoom

The Patients' Group (PPG) charity at Castle Medical Group has organised free Yoga Classes for it's patients. We would like as many people as possible to take advantage of this program for maintaining good health during the Covid-19 restrictions.

The sessions have been extended into April, on Fridays at 11am on Apr 9 and Apr 16

Each session is approx 45mins and is spent mostly sitting on a chair.

You can join the Zoom classes at the above dates and times at this address:

<https://universityofsussex.zoom.us/j/92519232577>

The meeting ID is: 925 1923 2577

For further information contact Bic Mistry on:

07813 689227 or 01530 414845 or bntmistry@ntlworld.com

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 4.5 million people are already signed up and contributing.

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.

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 Test 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!

A CRYPTIC QUIZ ON FLORA AND FAUNA

Quiz devised by Diana Downs and friends, Minehead & District u3a

These quizzes are intended for the enjoyment of u3a members only. Copyright is with the devisers.

A Trees

- 1 Add u to make liked a lot (6)
- 2 Sounds like an island (7)
- 3 Sometimes seen crying (7,6)
- 4 Sounds near the coast (5)
- 5 Partner of robust comedian? (6)
- 6 Keep your vest on 'til it blossoms (8)
- 7 Dull resident of the capital (6,5)
- 8 Its fruits are not very fast (10)
- 9 Aftermath of forest fire (3)
- 10 Makes a spirit? (7)

B Fish

- 1 Only one (4)
- 2 Schubert composition (5)
- 3 The lever is bent (5)
- 4 Ocean steed (3,5)
- 5 A follower with some paper (5)

6 This fish stank (5)

- 7 A piece could cover your modesty sir ! (3)
- 8 A red one might lead you astray (7)
- 9 An old weapon (4)
- 10 Excellent cut short (5)

C Flowers

- 1 Bovine accident ? (7)
- 2 To keep the animal warm (8)
- 3 A veg to eat with pudding ? (5,3)
- 4 A well ordered universe (6)
- 5 Groups of farm animals? (5)
- 6 Found on a tandem ? (5)
- 7 Evergreen German white wine (9)
- 8 Cartoon duck missing vertical axis zero upturned lid (8)
- 9 Not a water nymph (6)
- 10 Keeps moths at bay (8)

D Creepy Crawlies

- 1 Dairy spread way to travel (9)
- 2 Monarch of the glen and one of the fab four (4,6)
- 3 Has its own mobile home (5)
- 4 It can maliciously reproduce itself on your computer (4)
- 5 Fire breathing way to travel ? (9)
- 6 Feline short hesitation supportive column (11)
- 7 Peter Parker ? (6)
- 8 100 feet ? (9)
- 9 Mixed up dogs feet (4)
- 10 Typically British summer game (7)

E Animals

- 1 Burning bright in the forest (5)
- 2 Astral lion quiet with headless difficult (7)
- 3 Sounds like a rough voice (5)
- 4 Precipitation starting a letter (8)

- 5 Muddled the Nepal (8)
- 6 A cry of distress ? (5)
- 7 Spanish man has means to unlock (6)
- 8 Meat not me wood (9)
- 9 Stripes across the road (5)
- 10 Not to be confused with somewhere to wash your hands (5)

F Vegetarian

- 1 I am put into a puzzle (5)
- 2 Tam o'Shanter, perhaps? (6,6)
- 3 Said to be enthusiastic finally oo-ah! (6)
- 4 Imperial cabbage (6,4)
- 5 Give this to Ava and she'll want all your money (4)
- 6 Is fox's tail made of this ? (5)
- 7 A new coin ? (4)
- 8 Healthy crustaceans eat one a day (9)
- 9 Round and round and endless pain (7)
- 10 Encourage sled dogs to make space (8)

Answers on the last page

GROUP REPORTS

A SEMBLANCE OF NORMALITY, ALMOST

Recorder Group

The Recorder Group had our first meeting of the year yesterday afternoon (30th), 5 of us in a garden in the warm sunshine. It was our first meeting since last October (29th). It's the first time for ages that we've ALL been able to meet.

We played mainly 3- and 4-part music: some traditional folk songs and spirituals, in interesting arrangements, some Handel and Purcell, and we finished with Nellie the Elephant.

A lovely afternoon.

We're hoping for more warm weather soon!

GROUPS MEETING REMOTELY OR VIRTUALLY

Literature Group

The group appear to be continuing with their WhatsApp group so that they can read at home and then discuss the books they are reading.

Science & Technology

Our next Zoom talk will be on Mon 12th April at 2pm. Tanya will discuss “Why are children not taking up science careers?”. Can we encourage grandchildren to take more interest in science?

If you would like to watch and listen-in contact Paul McKay on science@ashbyu3a.co.uk and he will add you to his list. Zoom invites will be sent out the week before with a reminder on the day.

Last month’s talk on 19th March was by Rosemary Marsden of Burton u3a Science Group on the subject of “Science – what’s in a word”

This month’s talk was given by Rosemary, who claims to be the least scientific member of the group.

Rosemary considered what is science, where did come from, who ‘invented’ it, how did it develop and even where is the word ‘Science’ derived from.

She gave the Science Council’s definition of Science as: “Science is the pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world following a systematic methodology based on evidence.”

So where did Science start – long before the West thought about it – how did the word scientist (and others we take for granted in the scientific community) come to be coined. Science began even before writing – seasons are part of science, religion and astronomy were part of science, science is not only diagrams and maths – but part of everyday life whether medicine, flora and fauna, cooking and chemical reactions – science is thinking, seeing, predicting, experimenting.

She concluded that almost everything is science since we, animals, plants, the planet and the whole universe are made from the same few elements and hence science seeks to understand everything about everything. **Science is a HUGE word.**

To contact the Group leaders, Tanya, Paul and Bill please email science@ashbyu3a.co.uk

Drawing and painting

It seems that seven members worked from home this month on the theme of birds. This Green-winged teal was painted by Megan. All the other paintings are viewable on the Drawing and Painting Gallery page of our website.



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.

It seems to have been all quiet on the computer-problems front this month.

Family History

Six members joined in remotely today, with one helper, and one detective on a parallel track. Excellent! Ana has been searching grave location websites so far without success. She has found yet another Ana on a cognate branch but is uncertain of the connection with her.

John H could not join in with us today but offered some helpful links to Irish records: He noted that www.irishgenealogy.ie is free whereas www.Rootsireland.ie is not. For Irish censuses he suggests using www.census.nationalarchives

John D has been searching FindMyPast for parish records of his most distant Irish ancestors on both his fathers and his mothers sides, but so far, no luck. He has also had no luck with Findagrave or other grave location sites for his great grandparents despite having already have seen the graves. No luck finding his grandparents grave(s) yet, either digitally or physically.

Chris D joined in on a specific hunt for a contemporary of John D's great grandmother in her teacher training college. This lady wrote a diary of her two years in college, which was included in a book on the college. She isn't named but must be one of the girls named on the class photo. Chris is using a forensic/detective approach, building on internal evidence from the diary, and the Census and BMD records to create a spreadsheet in order to eliminate and triangulate potential targets. We have applied for the birth certificates of a couple to see if they match.

Shirley has encountered the old problem of sons named after fathers. Now she is tracking her father and grandfathers death records to pinpoint which William she has located.

Carolyn is still working on her filing and paperwork. She has taken a preliminary look at Roots Ireland records, so far without success. One question she needs answering is when did McBrides go to Ireland? She has dipped into a Rootstech Conference in USA, which seems very good, with follow up YouTube sessions. She wants to know if Family Search is good. The answer is that the records have to be used with care because they are often added by private individuals without peer review.

Dora has been tracking her fathers cousin who emigrated to NZ. So far she has found a marriage record there, which bodes well. Eileen has been building up her husbands side using Ancestry hints, with care.

Meeting up again: Some of the Group have offered opinions on how and when we might meet up as the restrictions are progressively relaxed. These have been forwarded to the Committee.

We next meet on Wednesday, April 14th 2021

Walking

Now that we are in Phase 1b of the Lockdown Roadmap, groups of 6 individuals can meet outside for any reason. Walking would be a good reason! Walk Leaders will possibly be trying to gather groups of 6 for a walk, but if you don't get asked, you can always form your own groups of up to 6!

From May 17th (hopefully), groups of up to 30 should be able to meet outside. Pubs and cafés will open indoors too, so refreshments can be taken on-route or after.

Walk Leaders should study the revised Ashby u3a Guidelines for Walking Groups. See our Website under the Information tab.

Music Appreciation

We only had 3 contributors this month but with the usual variety that can be expected from us, mostly pop, rock, jazz and blues but also some Welsh and Irish songs, comedy and a classic film theme tune.

The playlist option on YouTube seems to have worked last month, so if anyone wants to listen to our music choices, feel free to click below for the whole list to play straight through. It can of course still be paused at any time and you should get a track listing down the right hand side so that you can go back to a previous track or, God forbid, skip a track!:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRHuemeqEW8&list=PLdjMqEt4gpep6dUNx8b-AxlzkQ1fJdGdT>

Nev and I (Mike) both went with a Saints Day theme this month. Me with St David, Nev included St Patrick too. Both St Days were of course this month.

The BBC had a St David's Day music themed night, strangely 3 days early, but did include a documentary on Tom Jones, a concert with Katherine Jenkins and concerts by Shirley Bassey and Stereophonics. So I thought I'd start with some rousing Welsh tunes by Ms Jenkins from "Kathfest" 2007 including an unexpected finale of Delilah. Makes you proud to be Welsh, even if you aren't.

My second choice was not a Welsh song but the lady definitely is Welsh, Dame Shirley. This was the end of a 75 min Electric Prom from 2009 where she had belted out all her famous hits and could still manage to sing Goldfinger to finish.

Thirdly we met on Budget Day, so I thought I'd include a reminder of when the top rate of income tax was 19/- in the pound, or 95p/£ in new money. This is George Harrison and Eric Clapton's live version of the Beatles "Taxman". Unusually, it was written by George and John.

Nev's choices were:

We celebrated two patron saint's days in March. St David's Day is on March 1st and St Patrick's Day is on March 17th. I have therefore selected songs by Welsh and Irish artists.

Badfinger were a rock band formed in Swansea and were active from the 1960s to 1980s. The track I've chosen is "Without You" written by band members Pete Ham and Tom Evans. This song was a big hit for Harry Nilsson in 1971.

Catania are another Welsh rock band formed in 1992 by Cerys Matthews and Mark Roberts. "Road Rage" was written by Mark Roberts and recorded in 1998.

Nev's first Irish selection featured Van Morrison and Lonnie Donegan. Van Morrison was born in Belfast in 1945. Lonnie Donegan was born in Glasgow in 1931 to an Irish mother and Scottish father. His father was a professional violinist who had played with the Scottish National Orchestra. In 1933 the family moved to East Ham in London. The track he chose was from "The Skiffle Album" recorded in Belfast in 1998 and released in 2000. The track also features British jazz trombonist Chris Barber playing bass. Secondly, early in his career Donegan played banjo in Barber's jazz band. Chris Barber was very keen to popularise American Blues Music and allowed Lonnie Donegan to play Skiffle sessions during his jazz concerts. The track I've chosen is "Sloop John B (I Want To Go Home)" a Bahamian folk song from Nassau which was made popular by the Beach Boys in 1966.

His second Irish choice was the traditional Irish folk song "The Irish Rover" played by the Dubliners and the Pogues on the Gay Byrne Show As someone commented on YouTube, the combined blood alcohol content on that stage must have been absolutely staggering!

Nev concluded his selection with a nonsense song featuring both the Welsh and the Irish. The song is "The Ying Tong Song" featuring Harry Secombe and Spike Milligan ably assisted by Peter Sellers otherwise known as the Goons. The song was written by Milligan in 1956.

Neil's selection was as follows.

Several years ago I was asked to compile a list of my Top 20 all time favourite records for a musical weekend at a friend's house.

I don't know if any of you have tried this, but as you can imagine it is a very difficult task. Anyway, I finally whittled it down to 21, and I recently found a copy of my choices. If I did the same again now, much as I liked them, several of those I picked would not be included. At the time I tended to choose an artist, and then pick one of their lesser known songs. Here are a selection:

Ray Charles – That Lucky Old Sun

There are several reasons why I like and admire Ray Charles, but his distinctive voice has to be the main one. The hit version of this song featured his Orchestra & Chorus, which really uplifts the song. Unfortunately I could not find a video including them, which is a shame, so there is just a still photo.

Joan Armatrading – The Weakness in Me.

One of many of Joan's songs that I like, but I have chosen it because it is seldom played on the radio. There was an excellent documentary about Joan - "Me, Myself I" - on BBC 4 a few months ago. If you get a chance, I would recommend watching it.

Bruce Springsteen - I'm on Fire

Choosing a favourite Bruce Springsteen track was particularly difficult for me. I chose "Human Touch" originally, but like "I'm on Fire" just as much, and include it here because it has a video that I like too.

OTHER THINGS TO DO IF YOU ARE STILL STUCK INSIDE

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.

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	01530 459858
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

A Trees

- 1 Poplar
- 2 Cypress
- 3 Weeping willow
- 4 Beech
- 5 Laurel
- 6 Hawthorn
- 7 London Plane
- 8 Blackthorn (Sloe)
- 9 Ash
- 10 Juniper

B Fish

- 1 Sole
- 2 Trout
- 3 Elver
- 4 Sea horse
- 5 Bream
- 6 Smelt
- 7 Cod
- 8 Herring
- 9 Pike
- 10 Brill

C Flowers

- 1 Cowslip
- 2 Foxglove
- 3 Sweet pea
- 4 Cosmos
- 5 Phlox
- 6 Daisy
- 7 Hollyhock
- 8 Daffodil
- 9 Daphne
- 10 Lavender

D Creepy Crawlies

- 1 Butterfly
- 2 Stag beetle
- 3 Snail
- 4 Worm
- 5 Dragonfly
- 6 Caterpillar
- 7 Spider
- 8 Centipede
- 9 Wasp
- 10 Cricket

E Animals

- 1 Tiger
- 2 Leopard
- 3 Horse
- 4 Reindeer
- 5 Elephant
- 6 Whale
- 7 Donkey
- 8 Porcupine
- 9 Zebra
- 10 Bison

F Vegetarian

- 1 Maize
- 2 Scotch Bonnet
- 3 Quinoa
- 4 Cavolo Nero
- 5 Rice
- 6 Basil
- 7 Mint
- 8 Crabapple
- 9 Spinach
- 10 Mushroom