



April Newsletter

A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear All,

I trust you all remain well and continue to cope successfully with these rather strange circumstances. It would be good if you, like me, are all raring to resume U3A activities.

Maybe it's the effect of Spring but I do think there is cause for optimism.

The vaccination programme seems to be going extremely well and to be very effective. Not only does it appear to have a high efficacy at preventing infection and reducing the severity of the illness if you still catch it, but there also seems to be some evidence that it has a significant effect in preventing transmission. Looking at the latest statistics, not only are deaths and new cases greatly reduced but the number of patients in hospital has been vastly reduced. So long as these figures are maintained, I think we may be able to accept it as another disease hazard and return to a more normal life.

Unfortunately, whilst it remains rampant elsewhere in the world, there remains the risk of a new outbreak being imported and possibly a mutation against which the vaccine is less effective. However, I have seen a report that a booster dose is already under development so we may need an annual vaccination as with flu.

It is therefore possible that we may be able to resume many of our U3A activities after June, perhaps with additional precautions. Walking, which of course comes under the outdoor regulations, is hoping to resume next month whilst other groups, which may require more close contact, may think it prudent to wait a little longer.

Whilst we are planning what we would like to do, what we are able to do depends on the regulations at the time and we may not know these very much in advance. I would therefore urge you to look at the website to check. We will try to keep this as up to date as possible.

Group members can always contact their group leader. Whilst the Committee are always pleased to be contacted by members, we do not always have the very latest information about any particular group.

As regards our monthly meeting, we hope to resume in June with our normal format of a talk. In July that will be supplemented with our AGM and in August by our annual cream tea. As I have mentioned, we may not be able to confirm details far in advance but we will do our best to give as much notice as we can. Speaking of our AGM, we would welcome some new Committee members if anyone is willing, particularly if you have some computer expertise. Please get in touch with me if you think you might be able to help (01530 272592 or chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk) - it is not too onerous, you would not be taking on a huge commitment. Do please consider helping your u3a - we really do need you: the Committee is quite informal and the members friendly.

When we were unable to hold our March meeting last year, it little occurred to me that our next would be over 15 months away. I do most sincerely hope that the next newsletter will be the last where I compose one of these letters and that, from June onwards, I will have the pleasure of being able to greet you personally. I very much look forward to it.

Best wishes until we can meet again.

Colin Ellis

FROM THE EDITOR

Monthly Meetings

We are hoping to be able to hold our first monthly meeting for over a year in June, subject to the Covid Roadmap running to time and the Congregational church being able to accommodate us. I will make sure everyone knows what is happening as soon as dates are confirmed.

Looking For Speakers

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

As the date for our first monthly meetings are 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 July or September. August will hopefully be our cream tea event.

We have someone who has kindly offered to give a talk at the June meeting, provided that it can go ahead as planned.

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. Slides however are not necessary. 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 hopefully have read in the email sent out last week, 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 we do ask that if you are actively taking part in any of the groups which have restarted, or are about to restart, like Walking or the groups meeting online, that you please renew before taking part.

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 members@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. Please be aware that this is a scam.

More than one member has unfortunately had their email address used in this way.

Another email tells you that your latest monthly payment for your 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 Welfare Officer, Estelle Sandles 01530 459858, 07919 986456 or email welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk.

Our Chairman, Colin Ellis 01530 272592

Colin Woodland 01530 413867

Ann Donegan 01283 760348

Tony Smith 01530 831822

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

COVID-19 SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Kevin and Christine Green tell me they have been volunteering at Measham Vaccination Centre and they have been asked to try to recruit more volunteers. They are looking for greeters, stewards and chaperones. If you would like to help out in Measham or elsewhere in NW Leics see this link which describes it all in greater detail:

<https://volunteer.valonline.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-support-volunteers>

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 FEW QUICK QUIZZES

(u3a national office seems to have stopped publishing quizzes so these are courtesy of Radio Times)

General Knowledge

1. In which part of your body would you find the cruciate ligament?
2. What is the name of the main antagonist in the Shakespear play Othello?
3. What element is denoted by the chemical symbol Sn in the periodic table?
4. What is the name of the 1976 film about the Watergate scandal, starring Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman?
5. How many of Henry VIII's wives were called Catherine?
6. What was the most popular girls name in the UK in 2019?
7. Which comedian was the second permanent host of Never Mind the Buzzcocks after Mark Lamarr?
8. Which popular video game franchise has released games with the subtitles World At War and Black Ops?
9. In what US State is the city Nashville?
10. Which rock band was founded by Trent Reznor in 1988?
11. What is the currency of Denmark?
12. Which Tennis Grand Slam is played on a clay surface?
13. In which European country would you find the Rijksmuseum?
14. How many films have Al Pacino and Robert De Niro appeared in together?
15. What was the old name for a Snickers bar before it changed in 1990?
16. Who was the head of state in Japan during the second world war?
17. What is the smallest planet in our solar system?
18. Who wrote the novels Gone Girl and Sharp Objects?
19. Which legendary surrealist artist is famous for painting melting clocks?
20. Which football club plays its home games at Loftus Road?

Capital Cities

1. What is the capital of Bulgaria?
2. What is the capital of New Zealand?
3. Beirut is the capital of which country?
4. What is the capital of Canada?
5. Hanoi is the capital of which country?
6. What is the capital of Argentina?
7. The capital of Iceland is?
8. Slovakia's capital is?
9. What's the capital of Belgium?
10. What is the capital of Brazil?

James Bond

1. What does the acronym "SPECTRE" stand for?
2. How many actors have played M in the official James Bond film series?
3. Which year was Daniel Craig's first Bond film released?
4. Name Christopher Lee's villain character in The Man With The Golden Gun?
5. Which famous artist recorded the theme song for Goldeneye?

Answers on the last page

GROUP REPORTS

GROUPS ACTUALLY MEETING IN PERSON

Recorder Group

We had a very small group meeting on 20th, just 2 of us. Luckily, we have plenty of duet music, so were able to play for a couple of hours without running out of things to play. We had a good time, with no wind to blow the music off the stands.

We'd hoped to play this week, but the weather wasn't very good, so we stayed warm and dry in our own homes.

We're hoping for better weather, and the easing of regulations, so we can play again in May.

Walking

Walkers have been meeting informally in groups of up to 6, but from May 17th (hopefully), groups of more than 6 (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.

All three walking groups have at least one walk listed on the website now. Medium Walks are restarting in June but the Long and Short Walks are starting on May 18th and 21st respectively. Check the website for details.

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

GROUPS MEETING REMOTELY OR VIRTUALLY

Drawing and painting

Five members worked from home this month on the theme of April flowers. These were painted by Christine. All the other paintings are viewable on the Drawing and Painting Gallery page of our website.



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 Fri 21st May at 10am and will be hosted by Burton u3a. The speaker and topic have yet to be decided but will be posted on our website as soon as the details are known

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 12th April was by Tanya Dempster called "A life Scientific?"

Britain has a shortfall of engineers and Scientists; they are needed for a prosperous economy. Predictions show we will need more STEM people, (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) in future years so how can we prevent this deficit increasing?

Tanya's talk looked at the recent research on this issue, and that recent well trialled studies have shown how figures can be increased, and more girls encouraged to continue.

All children study sciences from the age of 5 to 16 and research shows that 70% enjoy the subject but that only 17% think of a science career being for them. Why this huge gap? The image of a scientist is a white man, with glasses, mad hair, in a lab coat, working by himself and probably blowing things up, rather than the wide and diverse range of activities. What child would aspire to be a Mad Scientist? And this image excludes girls and those from ethnic groups. So from an early age children need to be surrounded by images showing diverse people doing a wide range of scientific tasks in their careers, and solving many interesting issues from environmental, zoological, medical as well as technical. Books and posters are available for schools to use. They need to meet real scientists and many primary and secondary schools invite STEM Ambassadors in to work with children and tell them about their jobs and life so that they realise scientists are ordinary people doing a special job.

Peer pressure prevents many girls studying science A levels, especially physics, but they are just as able and needed if we are to close the gap in supply. A different approach is successful here, looking at the types of personalities needed, able to work in a team, good communicator, creative etc, and encouraging girls to aim high and not limit their options.

Science Capital is a new approach which has proved successful, parents, teachers, not just what you know about science, but attitudes by parents, science related toys, trips out, TV programs. The more science capital a young person has the more likely they are to opt for sciences. This animation explains it: <https://youtu.be/8y5vyjlxSBA>

So will this happen? It needs teachers to be trained, and schools able to afford material.

The talk was followed by a discussion amongst the group members about the points raised.

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

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.

This month we had a problem of someone's phone not talking to a Chromecast device on the TV. (This allows you to send the video or tv show that you are watching on the phone to play on the TV.) An old phone worked fine. It turned out that it needed the old "turn it off and on again" trick, but it had to be done in the right order and also needed the Wi-Fi router to be included in the process. This had the added benefit of getting a Wi-Fi printer working again too!

Family History

An excellent turnout of seven today.

Ana needed help in confirming a GRO reference from Ancestry which was a tad blurry. This was solved, so she has now gone on to order one Marriage and two Birth certificates.

John H needed to find out how to do a search by address on Find My Past. We solved it by checking with the FMP Forum Facebook page. Googling wasn't clear enough!

John D has finally solved the problem of the Mystery Diarist in a book about his great grandmother's Teacher Training College. A neat bit of forensic work by Chris and some footslogging through the censuses and BMD records was clinched by a Birth Certificate.

Shirley is now chasing down her grandfather's mother. So far she has not been able to find a marriage record. A joint attack brought up some solid information of John Salvin.

Carolyn is now trying to track her husband's grandparents' burial location. The cemetery sites have so far not yielded a location, but should be in the region of Linton, near Burton. This may need an approach to the Local Authority to see what their records hold.

Dora has been tracking her father's cousin who emigrated to NZ. She has now identified in FMP the ship she emigrated on: Ancestry had not got the record.

Sylvia (by email) is trying to flesh out her maternal grandmother's life. I circulated her email information to see if any of the group can help. It is a complex story that needs some clever heads on it!

A very good session: thank you all! We next meet on Wednesday, May 12th

Music Appreciation

We had 3 contributors this month and the main themes seemed to be April and the Beatles.

Nev went with the April theme, and Neil and I both independently chose the Beatles.

The complete playlist is here so if anyone else wants to listen/watch them on their tablet or computer, feel free to do so: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdjMqEt4gpepYIfvOa7o186B3d5kvo7nF>

Nev said:

My choices this month relate to the time of year.

As we are now into April I was reminded of one of my mum's favourite singers who had a big hit in 1957 with a song called "April Love". It was written by Sammy Fain and Paul Francis Webster and was the theme song from a 1957 film of the same name. The singer, Pat Boone, was born in Jacksonville, Florida in 1934. Because of his Christian beliefs he declined certain songs and film roles that he felt might compromise those beliefs. Although not a typical 'rock 'n' roller' he had several hits in the late 1950s, had his own tv show which ran from 1957 to 1960 and had a successful film career in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The clip I have chosen is from the film 'April Love' and also features the leading lady, the lovely Shirley Jones.

My second choice is "April in Paris" performed by Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong. The song was composed by Vernon Duke with lyrics by Yip Harburg for the 1932 Broadway Musical 'Walk a Little Faster'. This version was recorded in 1956 and accompaniment is by Oscar Peterson (piano), Buddy Rich (drums), Herb Ellis (guitar) and Ray Brown (bass). (*Mike: Not a bad backing band. They might do well one day!*)

My third choice is a song I came across on YouTube whilst searching for songs with 'April' in their title/lyrics. It is "In April" by Johnny Flynn. The song was written by Jenny Lewis and Jonathan Rice for the film "Song One" which was released in 2014. Johnny Flynn is musician, singer, songwriter and actor. He is the lead singer of the band 'Johnny Flynn & The Sussex Wit'.

Finally I have chosen a song made famous by ELO. Although it's not about April I was prompted to choose it by the beautiful blue skies we experienced last week. It is, of course, "Mr Blue Sky" written by Jeff Lynn in 1977. The version I have chosen is by Joe Brown from his 'Ukulele Album' released in 2011.

Mike said:

I was prompted by what Neil said last month about compiling a top 20 list of favourite tunes and realised after I'd got to about 18 tracks that I didn't have a Beatles song amongst them. As someone who has all their published music I thought that strange. I came to the conclusion that much of their early stuff was basic pop/rock n roll and not always written by them and the later stuff was more concept album, and single tracks didn't always stand out. How much of their music do you hear on the radio now? Anyway I decided that two of my favourite tracks were Eleanor Rigby and She's Leaving Home. Both quite sad songs. I've chosen "She's Leaving Home" today as I think it is brilliantly written by a 25yo Paul.

One song that is on my top 20 list (this week!) is the BBC version of Lou Reed's "Perfect Day". See if you can remember all the artists.

My other two tracks are more up-beat and fun but both have an unusual rhythm. Firstly Dave Brubeck's "Unsquare dance" which is in 5/4 time.

The other is Elbow with "One day like this" which sounds like it is in 7/8 time but which I believe is actually in 8/8 with 7 notes and a pause, but it is a track I've always liked and Guy Garvey is such an unlikely rock star. The live version from Hyde Park 2017 is particularly good in my opinion.

Neil said:

I'm a bit busy at the moment and haven't found time to put together a usual play list, but am lucky that one of my friends sent me a link to a concert, so it will be my contributions for this month. It's an LA concert of Paul and Ringo and a host of guest artists singing the Beatles songs. What a night ! Would loved to have been there. As Tina Turner says, simply the best.

(Unfortunately the concert was taken down from YouTube before everyone could watch it. Presumably there was a copyright infringement. Shame, as it was a very good concert. Mike)

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

General Knowledge

1. Knee
2. Iago
3. Tin
4. All the President's Men
5. 3
6. Olivia
7. Simon Amstell
8. Call of Duty
9. Tennessee
10. Nine Inch Nails
11. Krone
12. The French Open (Roland Garros)
13. Netherlands
14. Four (The Godfather Part 2, Heat, Righteous Kill, The Irishman)
15. Marathon
16. Emperor Hirohito
17. Mercury (Pluto has been relegated to a dwarf planet)
18. Gillian Flynn
19. Salvador Dali
20. Queen's Park Rangers

Capital cities

1. Sofia
2. Wellington
3. Lebanon
4. Ottawa
5. Vietnam
6. Buenos Aires
7. Reykjavik
8. Bratislava
9. Brussels
10. Brasilia

James Bond

1. Special Executive for Counter-intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge, Extortion.
2. Four (Bernard Lee, Robert Brown, Judi Dench and Ralph Fiennes)
3. 2006 (Casino Royale)
4. Francisco Scaramanga
5. Tina Turner