



Newsletter No: 5

October 2020

Northamptonshire Network of u3as

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Well, what happened to September you might ask. It was very wet and October seems to be continuing in the same vein.

I have an apology to make to Lynda Moran of Daventry u3a in that I only found her piece for the August newsletter in the virus checker McAfee anti-spam folder (along with a few other emails) when I expanded my Network email account to show all the folders and after sending the Newsletter out to all the u3as. With my new laptop, came McAfee and it had put its own anti-spam folder into the Network account. It turns out it is a tad exuberant in deciding which emails are possibly Spam. However, I have included her piece here as it is still relevant and have amended where necessary.

I have done a couple of the Zoom tutorials arranged by National Office and can highly recommend them. So armed with my new knowledge, my co-leader of our Quizzes 'n' Puzzles group, Jane Morris, and I decided that instead of setting questions, we would play a couple of games, one of which was Pictionary. It gives art a whole new meaning when you try and draw your subject on Zoom's whiteboard using a mouse!

I hope you enjoy our Newsletter, but please do send in more articles for our December one.

Stephne

Lynda Moran of Daventry u3a writes:

I know that a number of our interest groups are using Zoom, and it has been used for committee meetings. We have had offers from speakers to do talks for a bigger audience and our speaker seeker (Pam Tomalin) is keen to hear from others how the sessions have been managed and how successful they were.

One way we have found to keep members in touch has been to publish a weekly Members' Page on the website as a sub to the WELCOME page called "learn, laugh, live" It is full of all sorts of items sent in by our members. It is posted on a Monday morning and all members are sent a link by email. (We only have one member without an email address). This has been running now for 20 weeks and is proving increasingly popular. The Members' Page Crew (MPC) are the folks who produce the page from the articles, jokes, poems, puzzles, recipes etc sent in by members. We leave the current and previous week up at a time. Here is a link to the page if you would like to take a look: [Members' Page](#)

Alan Harris, Chairman of Northampton u3a writes:

We held a successful AGM through the kind offices of Zoom, a technology with which we are getting familiar. Google forms were used for the voting, with provision for those not on email to post their vote. After much cajoling we achieved a very good response well above the quorum required.

Although we are in the midst of difficult times, our Northampton u3a members are doing everything they can to keep afloat by meeting up in various ways.

Some of our groups are now meeting on a semi normal basis taking into account all the regulations because it has been easier for outdoor groups once The Rule of 6 was enforced, with the larger groups breaking into two or even three individual groups

At the beginning of lockdown we purchased a Zoom Package. Jane, one of our Committee Members, hosts the meeting for those Group Leaders who struggle with technology making it much easier. This means that a lot more Groups are using virtual technology as a form of meeting.

Many groups have been meeting in the park or gardens which obviously will have to stop as the weather deteriorates and this has led to more group leaders considering virtual meetings.

Whatsapp and emails have been working for other groups.

We are constantly striving to support and encourage as many groups as possible to function.

One of Northampton's members, Judy Sansom writes: What could be more relaxing than a meeting in Abington Park with a socially distanced coffee morning with friends? You'd think not a lot, wouldn't you! Well, I thought for a moment that I'd joined the New Experiences group when, with a loud crack and no warning, a large branch from the tree close to the one we were sitting under, crashed to the ground!



Photo by Ginny Jolliffe Coffee morning group.

Very quickly the park rangers were on the scene taping off the area and attacking the fallen bough with a chainsaw. We moved away to a safe distance, not under a tree and continued our nattering and pondering on a lucky escape. We plan to meet again but next time, as well as a chair, it might be wise to bring a hard hat too!

Gill Potts of Oundle & District u3a writes:

Many of our Interest Groups have moved indoors now that the weather is much cooler and of course they are restricted to a maximum of six - not easy to organise if your group is larger. I know that some larger Groups are coping by having some members meeting face-to-face while others join on Zoom, thus enabling everyone to take part. Our Walking Groups are certainly pleased to be in action again and to be exempt from the 'rule of six'. As I write, our Community Halls are again open for hire so we have liaised with them and prepared a generic Venue Risk Assessment for Group Leaders if they wish to hire a local venue.

Our independent judge thoroughly enjoyed looking at the entries for our Photography Competition '*Spring and Summer in and around Oundle*' and, as you can see, he chose three



lovely photos as his three favourites, which featured in our September Newsletter:

The first is *Family life goes on* by Geoff Harrop; The Second is *Emperor Dragonfly* by Richard Chandler; and the

third is *On the Boardwalk* by Jane Morris



Another very interesting article in the same Newsletter was from Anne Garraway, Group Leader of Intermediate Genealogy. They had commemorated VJ Day by each researching either a member of the military who served, or a civilian who was caught up, in the war in the Far East. It was a fascinating read.

A good number of our Members 'attended' the 'Driving safely after Lockdown' online presentation by IAM. It proved a very valuable refresher since few of us had ventured far in our cars over the past few months, and I understand that several people have since booked a practical session with an IAM instructor in their own car. Thank you to those responsible for the organisation of this very useful event.

Our Committee continue to meet monthly for a one-hour meeting, which has proved to be a most efficient way of operating (that is not to say that we don't talk with each other in between meetings – most days there are things to deal with, so phone calls and emails are frequent!). At our last meeting, we finalised the details for payment of Subs in January, formally agreed our Online Banking Protocol, assessed our progress with Beacon and set a budget for our Annual Competition. Each member of the Committee had sent a report round prior to the meeting, highlighting their work since the previous meeting.

Three of us from the Committee signed up for the u3a National 'High Street Project'. We enjoyed doing our initial survey and we have sent our data to form part of this huge initiative.

Finally, we took the plunge and booked an online talk to replace our usual monthly meeting talk for October. Graham Harrison gave us a very entertaining talk on '*Poisons for Medicine*'.

Carol Lucas, Chairman of Towcester u3a writes:

Here, re-starting many of our activities is proving to be a challenge. Recent fluctuations in the pandemic situation are making things doubly difficult. Hopefully as you read through the report you will see the positivity which is being maintained and the efforts being made by our Group Leaders. Kate Bartlett (our Group Liaison) has been working hard with Group Leaders to re-start groups where possible. Some groups that meet outdoors such as Ramblers and Nordic Walkers are now functioning albeit in a re-structured format. Many groups continue to meet via Zoom. Other groups are meeting outdoors in smaller numbers, we have felting on patios and ukuleles in gardens and others working with Kate are exploring the possibility of moving indoors into COVID secure venues.

The **Science for All** group held their October meeting via Zoom on October 1st. The subject for discussion was "Modern Farming". Suggested topics for discussion were methods for producing food that could replace the traditional farm, such as indoors horticulture, factory farmed animals, milk replacements, and meat replacements etc. Other topics suggested were the application of technology to traditional farms, such as the use of robots, autonomous vehicles and other technology.

Our **Food and Wine** Group leader said: Clearly with COVID restrictions we have been unable to meet as usual. Recently I have rebooted the group along a format that in turn each weekend a member will select a wine which they will drink at home and then circulate us all with an email as to what they chose, where they got it from, any background information and what they thought of it, as well as what they chose to eat with it and how well the combination worked. For various reasons some of our members have not been able to contribute, but I'm keeping them on the circulation list as it is important, especially for those that are being very careful about self-isolation, not to feel they are forgotten and missing out.

One other loss due to COVID is that we were all looking forward as a group to visiting Carcassonne and its vineyards this week but unfortunately that has all had to be postponed/cancelled until at least next September. C'est tragique.

The **Music for Pleasure** group meets virtually. They listen to suggested music then meet to discuss them. The group had listened to Mozart's Flute and Harp Concerto, a popular orchestral work. Less familiar were these lovely Japanese melodies for flute and harp.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6ZRWljgGol>

Our **Felting Group** once again took advantage of the late summer good weather and met up at the home of the Interest Group Leader Amanda Campbell



The **Alternative Poetry Group** has continued all through the coronavirus, sending poems and exchanging comments and celebrated their first year in July. September's theme was Home and we had a lovely selection.

One poem was written by Sir John Betjeman CBE who was Poet Laureate from 1972 until his death in 1984,

This raised a conversation between members; What does a Poet Laureate receive in remuneration? The Poet Laureate traditionally receives an honorarium from HM The Queen. Carol Ann Duffy donated her annual honorarium to The Poetry Society to found a new award, *The Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry*, which was presented annually throughout her term as Laureate from 2009-2019.

The Poet Laureate's current annual honorarium is circa £6,000.

Historically, the Poet Laureate received a gift of wine from the monarch. In 1790 Henry Pye asked if he could be paid a salary and the 'butt of canary wine' was discontinued until the 20th century.

Boys Toys restart. Since the nasty virus arrived in the UK and after the main initial lockdown six to eight of us have been meeting fortnightly, unofficially but fully compliant with distancing rules, in the meadow next to the car park in Northampton Road. As we all sat on our chairs with our flasks in the round with seats 2m apart, one wittier member referred to us as the 'coven' and the label stuck.



This month we ventured back to our usual haunt at the White Horse pub in Silverstone, where we have been so well looked after, albeit in the garden under their enormous canopy. During our usual chat we decided the virus had restricted us enough and as venues were opening we would plan our first trip out. The British Motor Museum was chosen as it is nice and spacious, had reopened Friday to Mondays and was fully COVID compliant.

A group risk assessment was filled in, personal assessments read and checked.

Tickets had to be pre-booked as numbers allowed in are limited. We were ready to go.

Everyone travelled in their own cars and on arrival we were briefed on the Museum's COVID procedures.

Although we had all been to the museum before there is always something new to see so it was not only a pleasant opportunity to get back to normality but also proved to be an interesting day. Masks had to be worn all the time in the museum except when eating lunch in the cafe.

The virus numbers maybe rising but by visiting venues like the British Motor Museum days out can be organised in a very safe way even if it means not sharing cars or travelling on coaches just yet.

Our **Photography Group** were out and about photographing Stony Stratford and each other! A wonderful selection of their photographs can be seen on our Facebook page.



As you may re-call we have a new group **The Virtual Craft Group**. Each month they have a category to inspire their crafting. For September the theme was *Stars*. In October the theme will be *Autumn*.



More examples of their efforts can be seen on our Facebook page



Finally

We continue to be very grateful to our members who have a very positive “can do” attitude. We are always interested to read about the activities of other u3as and thank you all for your contributions and of course thanks to Stephne who continues to keep us all in touch.

An Afternoon with Gervase Phinn

Once again we have had to postpone this year’s Network event and have rebooked it for Thursday 22nd April 2021, same time and same place, with the hope that we will be able to enjoy Gervase’s talk then. Tickets that have already been issued will still be valid.

Answers to Wellingborough’s Brain Teasers:

1. Which word is the odd one out, and why?

Cat → CD Pig → FP Dog → JK Fox → OP

Pig: It’s the only word that does not point to two consecutive letters of the alphabet.

2. I had to meet an Australian, an American and a Canadian at the airport. One of them was called Hank, and as I approached I identified him immediately, despite never having met any of them before. How?

The other two were both women!!

3. Palindromes are words which read the same backwards as forwards. Can you find palindromic answers to the following:

- a) Ship’s stern **Poop** b) Navigational aid **Radar** c) Musical note **Minim** d) Midday **Noon**
e) Wildebeest waste **Gnu dung** f) First man’s first words **Madam I’m Adam** g) Even **Level**

The winners were: Molly Scarborough and Bernie Shaw, of Wellingborough U3A.

This month's quiz and it's general knowledge:

1. In what part of the body would you find the fibula?
2. Hamilton has become one of the biggest musical theatre shows of all time since it debuted in 2015, but what is the name of the acclaimed star who wrote it?
3. If you have cryophobia, what are you afraid of?
4. Who won the Best Actress Award at the most recent Oscars?
5. How many of Henry VIII's wives were called Catherine?
6. According to ONS, what was the most popular boy's name in the UK in 2018?
7. Ray Davies was the frontman on which iconic '60s band?
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's the chemical symbol for silver?
12. With what sport would you associate Sachin Tendulkar?
13. What is the capital city of Switzerland?
14. Which legendary actor played Jimmy Hoffa in Martin Scorsese's 2019 film *The Irishman*?
15. Ataulfo, Alphonso and Keitt are varieties of what fruit?
16. In what modern day country was Nikola Tesla born?
17. What is the smallest planet in our solar system?
18. Who wrote the novels *Gone Girl* and *Sharp Objects*?
19. What is seven cubed?
20. Who is the current manager of Manchester United?

Answers to August's quiz.

First – collectives of animals:

1: A **congregation** of alligators; 2: A **sloth** or **sleuth** of bears; 3: A **gang** or **obstinacy** of buffalo;
4: A **bask** of crocodiles; 5: A **business** of ferrets; 6: A **tower** of giraffe; 7: A **bloat** of hippopotami;
8: A **cackle** of hyenas; 9: A **shadow** of jaguars; 10: A **conspiracy** of lemurs;

Second – collectives of birds:

11: A charm of **goldfinches**; 12: A stand of **flamingos**; 13: A pandemonium of **parrots**;
14: A convocation **eagles**; 15: A cast of **falcons**; 16: A bevy or game of **swans** (if in flight, a wedge);
17: A murmuration of **starlings**; 18: A parliament of **owls**; 19: An ostentation of **peacocks**;
20: An unkindness of **ravens**