

May 2020

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Introduction from CEO Sam Mauger

Dear U3A member,

Welcome to our first through your door – bite sized National Newsletter.

We don't want you to miss out because you aren't signed up to the email national newsletter, so for the first time we are introducing a bite sized version of the newsletter for anyone not using email.

Many U3A members who receive the newsletter have contacted us to say if we produce a mini version they would be happy to print a copy and post it on for one or two members locally.

Your bite sized version has selected highlights and any important notices – so with or without email, you are included.

The National Newsletter is a way of connecting the movement, and even if you can't use some of the technology it mentions in the stories – we want you to feel part of the learning initiatives that are going on during this time. Please feel free to ring the national office if you have any questions – on 0208 466 6139

Very best wishes
Sam

Living History – Diary Project



Thank you so much to all of you who continue to contribute to the diary project. We are currently living through an unprecedented period due to the coronavirus and everyone's daily lives are affected. The situation is impacting on people in lots of different ways and you will all have your own experiences, thoughts and reflections on how it is affecting you, both on a practical and on a psychological level. We would really like to capture all of this as part of a UK wide **Diary Project** to:

156 Blackfriars Road, London SE9 8EN

If you have a query or concern please ring national office on 0208 644 6139. Many thanks for sharing your stories!

One member Sylvia, is writing her thoughts down in regular entries:

"As I sit here on March 20th 2020, I am thinking of this strange and unusual situation in which the whole world is involved. My Granddaughter in Canada is giving birth to her first child (my first Great Grandchild) as I write. What a world this new arrival is being born into but maybe it was always thus. I was born just three years before the second world war and they were also strange times. I was born in the Steel city of Sheffield that was bombed on a regular basis. So fear, little food and interrupted schooling were situations common to those times. To quote Charles Dickens, "It was the best of times it was the worst of times" although what will turn out to be the best, remains to be seen but having said that, I can already begin to feel optimistic that these coming days, weeks----years !! will make us begin to lose our complacency and as seniors, our probably comfortable lifestyles"

VE Day 75th Anniversary



Trust Membership Subscriptions

Many of you have been sharing your stories of how you marked Anniversary of VE Day this month in inventive ways whilst socially distancing.

Using music and art – members marked this significant day. Some U3A members connected with others through music. Shirley from Reigate & Redhill U3A said, 'We have hosted a zoom meeting for our handbell group which we've been doing at our usual meeting time. We are unable to play handbells together so we have shared our saved videos and some from Youtube, of handbell songs. For VE Day one of our group played some well-known wartime songs on the piano".

U3A member Helen opened the French doors and gave a short harpsichord recital for the neighbours.

Other members used art – Hazel from Norton Radstock U3A, painted a pastel of a poppy to put in her window in memory of her Father who served in the Far East for 4 years during WW2.

U3A Scrubs up to help Combat Covid



Following on from our news feature about Ilkley U3A members making scrubs for key workers, more U3A members from across the country have got in touch to tell us about how they are also involved with local efforts to make PPE for the NHS.

Members of **Flintshire U3A** are making scrub bags, which make it easier to transport and wash scrubs with minimum contamination. Several members of **Chepstow U3A's** Handicraft members have made scrubs, tie-back hats and scrub bags from donated old pillowcases and fabrics. Meanwhile, the Made it! Make it! Page is full of members showing the scrubs, face masks, hair support and other equipment they've made for key workers. All members are finding ways to contribute such as Sue from **Culm Valley U3A**, are fabric couriers, whilst others cut or dye the fabric. **Helensburgh & District U3A** Member Anne is helping by cutting out the fabric which is then transported to the sewers. Anne is a part of the local 'Sew Grateful' group on Rosneath Peninsula. She says, "I cut out the bags for the local group where I live. Today, I cut out nearly 70 bags from a sheet and two duvet covers, which are donated. I may be disabled and house-bound but I can contribute with help which is so satisfying".

Gardens

Enjoying what we can of Gardens, parks and other outside spaces have become an important part of our lives during this time and this month was National Garden Day, a day dedicated to celebrating the solace and joy of being in our gardens. Passion for Flowers – Julie Pigula Southport U3A is passionate about flower photography. She recently had an article published in the magazine for the charity: The Disabled Photography Society. Here are some of the photos she's taken:



News from the Board

Chair of the Board, Ian McCannah:

Chair, Ian McCannah, said, "After two years of consultation with members, the Trust announced the results of its medium term Development Plan last August. Implementation commenced in the autumn. To varying degrees, COVID-19 has obviously affected delivery since March of the Plan's four key proposals.

- Raising the Profile of U3A – work continues via virtual meetings, and its plans will be announced over the coming months.
- Developing the Movement proposals are evolving and should not be too delayed. Thanks to many very imaginative ideas from members
- Some Learning proposals have been launched earlier than planned due to COVID-19 others will be closer to the original timeline.
- Plans to upgrade the Trust's technology resources have been deferred a number of months until the Trust assesses the financial impact of the current crisis.

The U3A movement will not be immune to the impact of the current crisis. Therefore, the Trust is starting to think about its consequences and impact on our current operations and practices.

The crisis has brought with it both challenges and opportunities, particularly those relating to connecting members remotely.

As well as the lessons learnt by the Trust it is important, in order to reach the right conclusions, to receive the thoughts and experiences of members as well. Please contact National Office and let them know.

Learning News

Ten members of U3A have had their research paper on Dementia accepted for publication by– Dementia: the International Journal for Social Research and Practice

The paper is entitled – Carers Create: Carer perspectives of a creative programme for people with dementia and their carers on the relationship within the (carer and cared for) dyad. Co-contributor Rona Hodges Canterbury U3A said, "I contributed at the design stage, other members were trained and ran the focus groups, most of us were involved in the analysis, and one member – the main author – wrote the first draft and subsequent drafts after some comments. It was really a team effort and upskilled our members. This was totally a U3A production. The article will be available online in a week or so in the journal which is very exciting".

In Focus

Georgette Vale, Wymondham U3A

At the beginning of March, just before lockdown, our IT person said, 'perhaps we could host meetings by Zoom.' I said, 'what's Zoom?'

Then suddenly we were in this situation where I thought we should start doing this. It was the history group who first took it on board. To be honest, the first couple of meetings were how to get used to the technology and how to get onto it.

And then we had our usual meeting and, apart from the fact that we had to do our own tea and biscuits, it was virtually the same as if we were in each other's houses, or holding a meeting as usual.

We've had committee meetings by Zoom. But I've had all kinds of other meetings by Zoom now as well – family wise. I even caught up with some college friends. A lot of us had lost contact. We had been saying, 'oh we must meet up' but people are all over the country – one's in New Zealand. Now we're doing it every week! We could have for two years but we just never thought of it! We'll still do it once a month.

It's opened up the world.

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