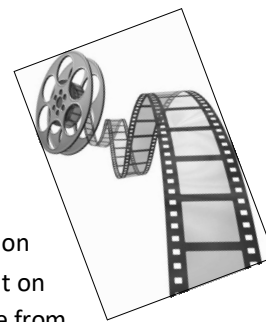


NEWS BITES! MAY. 2020

Sharing ideas across 34 U3As in Nottinghamshire



Lockdown Special

Thank you to everyone who has sent in an update on their U3A activities during this period. I cannot publish all the material you have sent to me but I will endeavour to give the Network a flavour of groups and events that are taking place.

There are extra pages added this month with further articles that you might find of interest. If you want to contact any of the contributors and cannot find their details on their own U3A website, please ask me to put you in touch. (Lynne)

Retford U3A have a Military History Group which has been running for just four years. We started with 15 members at our first meeting, and before the shutdown we were getting on average 50 members coming to our regular monthly meetings. Over the last year over 90 members have attended not just from the Retford Branch, but also from Gainsborough, Dukeries at Ollerton and Worksop U3A's.

As the group was fully active, it was decided that during lockdown we should put on a presentation every two weeks, rather than our normal monthly meeting. The logic being it would keep the interest in the group active. We have a number of very good presenters, and are able now to present a formal PDF Document on a subject on a Monday morning at 10.00hrs, and the following Monday, also at 10.00hrs carry out a Zoom video conference, hosted by the same presenter, to discuss the previous weeks topic. **Roy Evans of Retford**



Rainworth U3A singing group keeps smiling and keeps singing. Each member of the Rainworth U3A singing group has a folder of around 50 songs. The group's musical director, **Ian Hibbert**, has played the musical accompaniment into a digital sound recorder. This enables him to send out batches of mp3 sound files via email. However, not all group members have access to email, so they receive a CD compilation of the same mp3 files by post. Their proposed concert programme of VE Day songs, which was rehearsed prior to lockdown, was sent out in this way. Zoom and similar systems were avoided because they exclude non-technical members, which doesn't seem fair. Our Webmaster Gordon Brown has set up a WhatsApp group for members to keep in touch with one another. Also, we have a book and jigsaw exchange which continues, following social distancing.

Furlough Merlot

"Wine consumed in an attempt to relieve the frustration of not working. Also known as "bored-eaux"(courtesy of Maureen Wade of West Bridgford U3A)



In Carlton and Gedling, we have started an on line Film Study Group. There wasn't a convenient on line course that we could use, so I've started one from scratch using films available on the iPlayer and YouTube. Within a few days of advertising it, over twenty people had signed up, so there seems to be some potential for this sort of approach. If you'd like to chat about the hows, whys and whens of starting an online study group, please contact me: pkmartinez14@gmail.com.

Retford U3A Walking Groups We have 3 walking groups and after each walk a report is written, photos are collated and an email is sent out to members, up to 195 in the walking groups. Whilst the reports relate most of the details of the walk, there's often a comedic / humorous element in the emails too.

Obviously, since current restrictions were imposed there's no walks to write about, so I decided I would ask people if they would like a GAP (Giggles and Pics) email, filling the gap (!) between our last walks and our next walks. I didn't want to send anything unsolicited out, which is why it is basically a subscribed service as such. We have 30+ people who have said " yes" so far.

I encourage others to send in jokes etc, though we also include YouTube videos, mostly relating to walking, but possibly also about our local area including the Chesterfield Canal, which we've all walked along in different sections many times over. Some might also include video content relating to uplifting themes, including Captain Tom Moore and similar.



I started off intending to send one email out a week, but got on a roll so it's been 21 GAP emails this last 7 weeks, going out on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays ! **Tom Bell of Retford**

West Bridgford U3A are producing a weekly mailshot entitled Coronavirus Times where members made contributions – items about the U3A (e.g. groups that were continuing via SKYPE/ ZOOM etc) how members were coping with self isolation, entertaining items, informative items, recipes for a depleted larder etc etc. And items for inclusion have poured in; **Tony Beale**, the Membership secretary has no trouble producing an 8 page mailshot each week and which goes out to the membership every Tuesday. *"I know from the response that they are pleased to receive it and are keen to be involved. I edit the whole thing and then send it out as a PDF. Copies are also put on our website. I have just finished edition 8 which will go out on Tuesday. "*

Corona Virus

(sing to Sound of Silence)

Hello YouTube, how could we
Survive this virus is my plea
Without submitting to the button
To a world we had forgotten?
How to build a shed from nothing was
my search
With a perch
To watch the stars at midnight.
Now we can search for Heaven knows
Pilates, yoga, stretch with Joe,
Practice on a mat, get fitter
Squats, jumps, twists, stretches, or just
sit-there
Wondering just how much muscle we
have to tone
While stuck at home
During Corona Virus.
We miss the people we once saw
In streets, pubs, and the grocery store,
People filling up their trolleys
With loo rolls, meat. Beans and caulis,
To hoard away in cupboards so no
one shares
'Cos no one dares
Forget Corona Virus.
In March how could we all have
known
That we should stay at home alone?
When we were kissing, hugging,
daring
To drive round, spaces sharing?
But the signs went up, keep your
distance, wash your hands.
Use the phone, make video calls
Don't mess around with the Corona
Virus.

Most U3As seem to be producing an "alternative" Newsletter monthly with articles, jokes, photos etc. sent in by members. There are many Corona Virus poems around—I particularly like this one from Eastwood and District May Newsletter



Apologies from the editor

I cannot publish all the newsletters and newsletter articles that have been sent to me. However, I would encourage everyone to look at each other's websites and view some of the fantastic material that is being produced. You can find links to all the website addresses on the

[Notts Network website](#)

Edwalton Gamston & District U3A Multidisciplinary Group

It started because the Painting Group, which is ongoing during the lockdown and which has a monthly topic, decided to extend the project to the whole branch while the restrictions to meetings are in place.

April's topic, Trees, seemed an ideal starting point and it was offered to all members of the branch, who were asked to contribute whatever they liked to the idea. It could involve the writing group, with stories or poems, the photography group, the gardening group, the science group, the history group and even the Shakespeare reading group as well as all the other groups that make up our branch. It was difficult to think though quite how the wine tasting group could join in, and certainly none of the members came up with suggestions.

After a fairly slow start submissions came pouring in, paintings not only from the painting group, wonderful photographs, poems and a romantic story based on one of the paintings, there were also quotations from various sources but sadly no history, science or horticulture.

The unresolved question now, is how to put them all together, the computer skills of the leader of the Painting group are not up to the task but she is thinking of producing a physical portfolio rather than a virtual one, which will be a permanent reminder of the creativity of the many people in the branch who joined in. The Multidisciplinary group will continue for as long as it needs to, until all our different groups can meet again. **Josephine Cutts of Edwalton U3A**

Note from Arnold U3A

Given the difficult circumstances we are faced with, Arnold U3A, like many others, has had to be innovative in the way it goes about its business. "Virtual meetings" are carrying on as best they can with the use of the internet, be that through Zoom, Skype or simply sending emails, but I thought it be worth sharing the fact that some of our Group Leaders are going the extra mile to keep members involved. We have one Group Leader sending out quizzes and cartoons on a weekly basis – one with cartoons and crossword clues on a daily basis, - and another who posts a "Smile for the Day" – every day –on the Arnold U3A website. As I write this I have just watched – and laughed - at No.56 ! Sometimes it's just what she has seen in the garden, sometimes it's cartoons, sometimes it's a funny video clip – and boy do we need them to cheer us up. Keep smiling ! **Neil Hunt of Arnold U3A**

Ann McGillivray, of Eastwood and District U3A with apologies to Simon and Garfunkel

Learning during the lockdown—Paul Martinez, Support Office, Notts Network

Many of your members will have had the experience of following a course on line. I've done about 10 **FutureLearn** courses (<https://www.futurelearn.com/>), and I have just discovered two further potential sources of on line courses. The **Open University** offers a very wide range of courses across different subjects. I presume they are reusing and reformatting materials they had generated for their world renowned higher education courses. The link is: <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue>

Another source of courses is **Coursera** developed by a consortium of Universities across the world. Their free short course offer seems to be a loss leader for their paid for courses. They are also more oriented towards people who want to develop their careers, but for that reason, they offer a different sort of course and range of subjects. They also seem pretty slick – perhaps because they want to attract a professional learner. The link is: <https://www.coursera.org/courses?query=free>

New Opportunities

Personally, I much prefer to learn with a group of people, exchanging ideas and experiences as we learn together. Some of the courses particularly **FutureLearn** invite participants to share comments with all the other participants. I don't find that all that satisfying, however, because the contact is all via text and there's no real community of learners – you're scattered all over the world.

We could, however turn the present lockdown into an opportunity. It would be easy for a group of your U3A members to sign up for the same course and then form our own study group to exchange ideas and discuss via email, WhatsApp or Zoom. The course developed by somebody else could in effect form the basis for a whole new study group which would be able to meet in the flesh when the lockdown has eased or ended.

This approach could achieve four things at the same time. It:

- widens the scope and range of interest groups and enrich your interest group offer
- gets over the problem of lacking sufficient expertise to start a group
- takes the burden or preparation off a group convenor or leader
- potentially attracts to the newly and recently retired.

To expand on the last point: the U3A nationally recently commissioned a survey of 500 over 55 year olds, only a handful of whom were U3A members. The good news is that around half of the respondents said they were interested in learning new subjects and skills when they retired and had more time. The bad news is that most of them said they would be looking for opportunities on line – where U3As have not historically had a strong presence. The worse news is that hardly anyone had heard of U3A!



Message from Sam Mauger, CEO of Third Age Trust

Trust U3A

We've launched Trust U3A, a way to join our amazing U3A community online whilst face-to-face contact is limited.

There has been a great response so far and we already have eight learning groups up and running with more on the way. Trust U3A is open to U3A members to join too.

Find out more about Trust U3A by going to the Third Age Trust website or email secretary@trustu3a.online

Membership with Trust U3A runs from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 and costs just £7.50.

If you would like to receive Sam's regular Newsletter with all the latest news, events, and updates from TAT, you can sign up very easily [Here](#)

Notts Network meeting 29 July 2020 at 10.00

Network Officers met virtually on 6 May using Zoom.

Sadly, we have realised that we will not be able to hold the Network meeting at St Peter's in July.

However, we have decided to hold the meeting using Zoom instead. You will all receive your sign in details nearer the time.

Ian McCannah, National U3A Chairman, will address the meeting and afterwards there will be an opportunity for U3As to share their activities during lockdown and perhaps ask for helpful advice.

A decision has also been made to suspend the Network subscription due in October as we are not meeting. We will review our finances when we resume face to face