



# Newsletter No: 4

## August 2020

### Northamptonshire Network of U3As

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As restrictions ease and six people can now socially distance in garden, groups are trying to be more inventive in how to include the whole group if they number more than six. One way two of Oundle's groups did this was to have six meetings in someone's garden and the others Skyping in with the laptop sitting pride of place at the top of the table. It was very successful and meant that those who didn't have the technology to Skype or Zoom, could once again take part in the group discussions face to face, with the others not being left out.

Our U3As continually seek guidance from and challenge those at National Office on what restrictions are in place and which have been relaxed and Oundle sought clarification for walking groups, as one of the Walking Group leaders had been on the Ramblers website and discovered that they allowed up to thirty members to walk together and be covered by insurance and thus the advice from National Office is as follows:

Up to 30 can now take part in a walk and are covered by U3A insurance, provided that the following points are followed.

That the Group Leader has:

1. Checked the local situation hasn't changed and you are still allowed to partake in organised activities for larger groups
2. Informed the committee of intentions and the planning and guidance that they have followed before resuming any activities
3. Informed participants or how they can take part and what they must bring. They must also do their own pre-attendance check which does not have to be shared but encourages everyone to consider their health situation and also whether they have any symptoms of covid-19 which would mean they should not take part.
4. Gathered the names and contact details for all participants and hold them for 21 days after the event in case this needs to be shared with Track and Trace teams

We've only heard from a few U3As this month and I think that now maybe the time to reduce the frequency of the Network Newsletter to once every two months. So unless anyone has any objections, the next Newsletter will be October.

The idea of doing a Network Newsletter was share ideas amongst us that some of us might not have thought of and see if they would work with others to keep as many groups as was feasible going and if it they could be adapted. It's not always possible, of course and I know there are groups that will have to wait until restrictions are lifted altogether.

And more importantly, try and make sure there are members who do not feel isolated and forgotten. The majority of us use email, texting and social media, but there are those whose only connection is the telephone.

**Gill Potts, Chairman of Oundle U3A writes:**

As we get back to some sort of normality and we receive new guidance from National Office, more of our Interest Groups are restarting, which is lovely. It is a sad reflection on our times that bureaucracy has to rear its ugly head, even within our U3A groups which now have to complete Covid-19 Risk Assessment forms in order to meet, but perhaps it is a small price to pay for being able to get together again.

I hope you will enjoy these lovely photos from our Flower Arranging Group, which featured in our August Newsletter. Although the Group cannot meet at present, they have set themselves new challenges each month, using flowers from their gardens and different items of homeware as containers, and then sharing their photos.



The Newsletter, which you can find on our website, also included an interesting article by Ann Cooper, one of the Art Appreciation Group Leaders, on four Northamptonshire Artists, one of whom, Constance Howard MBE, was Ann's aunt! If you have ever wondered who was responsible for the wonderful safety curtain at the Royal Theatre, Northampton, have a look in the Newsletter.

Our August competition was for photographs with the theme '*Spring and Summer in and around Oundle*'. Entries came flooding in and a professional photographer has now chosen his three favourite images, which we will hopefully publish in the September Newsletter.

Our August Committee meeting focused on two issues, the first being whether to sign up for Beacon 1. We are very grateful to members of Wellingborough, Higham Ferrers & Rushden, and Daventry U3As for allowing us to 'pick their brains' about this online system. As a result, we have decided to take the plunge!

The other issue revolved around the use of Zoom for Monthly meetings. We are still seeking further guidance on this, so if other U3As have any useful tips, we would love to hear from you – all good 'networking'!

## **Carol Lucas, Chairman of Towcester writes:**

Our committee is now holding regular meetings via Zoom We are planning a virtual AGM and looking ahead, as it seems unlikely we will be able to arrange large meetings for some time; we are also considering having larger meetings via Zoom.

The committee has been busy especially our Group Liaison supporting our groups who wish to resume face to face meetings outdoors with their Risk Assessments and personal Risk Assessments. Our ramblers have worked hard to comply with the Ramblers Association Risk Assessments as well as the U3A risk assessments and are now ready to ramble later in the month.

Many of our groups continue to meet virtually. We also have new “virtual” groups starting. At the present time members are sharing thoughts about a virtual craft group and our cookery group may go “virtual” sharing recipes and tips as it will be some time before they are able to cook together. We are continuing with our weekly photographic challenge on Facebook.

We continue to send out bulletins at least one a month to our members which are appreciated. We do get positive feedback.

## **GROUP NEWS**

**Striders** went for their third mini socially distanced walk last week, from Rothersthorpe, through Gayton and past Bugbrooke. The weather was perfect for walking, and they were glad to be back together as a group, albeit a small one!

They are walking each week in a group of six, rather than monthly in a larger group, and, so far, that’s working well!

**The Nordic Walking** group walked at Cosgrove. Two separate groups walked 15 minutes apart to ensure social distancing was maintained.



### **The Photography Group**

The photographic group ventured out once more all buzzing around Stoke Bruerne and demonstrating perfect social distancing.

It’s always interesting to hear what other U3As are doing so thanks to Stephne for keeping us all in touch.

**Julie Williams, Group Co-ordinator of Wellingborough U3A**...says they're Zooming along!

I never cease to be amazed by the commitment and ingenuity displayed by our wonderful Group Leaders! I recently sent a 'keeping in touch' email out to all our Group Leaders asking for an update on anything happening with their groups. I was not disappointed! Wellingborough Group Leaders have embraced the use of technology with a vengeance, with the use of email, Zoom and WhatsApp to keep in touch and run their groups. One Group Leader wrote:

*'I find the screen share facility on Zoom very useful to show material on video and PowerPoint. Written materials are shared via email. All members of these groups who were attending regularly before lockdown have made the transition to Zoom meetings. As this includes people in their 80s or with limited computer experience, I am delighted with their response.'*

Another Group Leader wrote: *'Our Singing Group is continuing its daily emailed song on YouTube which includes all the lyrics. We all try to sing it at approximately 2.00pm each day. It is proving to be extremely popular. Our Group Leader has polished up her DJ type introductions which I personally love immensely! Many group members send in their requests. This gives us a huge diversity of music.'*

Some groups, including Ukulele, Playing Board Games and Non-Fiction Book Group are now enjoying socially distanced meetings in gardens and groups have enjoyed meeting up together again. In the ukulele group which I lead, we have six people in my garden and some taking part via Zoom. The people on Zoom mute and play along at home which helps with the issue of time delay. It also means we can be joined by a former member of the group who now lives in Cornwall!



I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Group Leaders for their considerable efforts to keep in touch with their members and to restart their groups where possible. Despite these troubled times, U3A members in Wellingborough and District continue to 'Learn, Laugh and Live'!

## **Angela Mason, Chairman of Higham Ferrers and Rushden says:**

I am against highlighting what one group is doing against another. It only serves to either make you feel elated if you are the group doing loads or very depressed if you are clearly not doing as well as others.

So in the light of being as honest as possible I will tell you where we are at present. Today Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August I had a good day. Today I visited The Goods Sheds (Ex Railway Sheds) in Rushden at the invitation of their committee. Those who know our past dilemma regarding losing the monthly venue we held for over 10 years will recall us wanting to move to the sheds. It was however in a poor dilapidated state. The council had sold off its slate roof many years ago so the place leaked like a sieve. After receiving a new roof, floor, electrics and other refurbishment, the place is looking more like a new future home for us.

At present we use a church but as Covid is still around the church is not open and staff furloughed. So even if we wanted to return we cannot. The government won't allow it anyway.

The other good news is one of our groups has posted visits for next year to worthy places such as Highclere Castle. I posted the event and within 30 minutes we had 12 people sign up. Other trips are to follow.

We have managed to get Zoom speakers organised monthly fixed now till 2021.

There are the good bits.

I recently asked my group leaders what if anything they were doing. Some have managed to meet on Zoom others wanted to get going, but like me received a big no thank you from most members.

Covid is frightening, I understand that but it has put everyone in a state of fear they just can't get past. They write and tell me how they have escaped it this far and intend to remain shielding till it goes away.

And so having lost 10% of members we wait to see if this does go away and members return.

Last week I read theatres can reopen with very strict rules. I think of us as a theatre and so hoped to receive some news about groups like us.

One of my Group Leaders is now preparing to start a couple of her groups. This can only be done by booking a larger hall. She waits to see if members are prepared to pay for the hall. Another GL has had a resounding no from his members.

Another problem is our AGM. I don't have an issue holding it but holding it does mean I lose a number of committee members who would have to step down having served their required term. I intend to postpone the AGM till I can get the present members to take on these rolls. Postponing the AGM means present committee members still remain in post which some are happy to do. To date no one has come forward to take their place.

**From Wellingborough U3A Membership Secretary, Jayne Osborn:**

**Brain Teasers – Win a £10 note and a small gift!**



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

**Cat → CD      Pig → FP      Dog → JK      Fox → OP**

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?

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

- a) Ship's stern; b) Navigational aid; c) Musical note; d) Midday;
- e) Wildebeest waste; f) First man's first words; g) Even

Well, well, well, after having Brain Teasers in our short, monthly newsletters since lockdown, I think I must have made them too difficult this time – I haven't received any entries yet, even from the regulars!! I usually get lots and choose three correct entries out of them all at random, then deliver the prizes to the winners. Answers appear in the following month's newsletter.

So **£30 is up for grabs** as I'm now opening it up to the county's U3As. Who's going to nab the prizes and get lots of kudos?? Come on, everyone, get that old grey matter working and see if you can crack the teasers!

Email me with your entries on [membership@wellingboroughu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@wellingboroughu3a.org.uk) or call me on 01933 677442 or 07886 847368.

**Membership news...**

I've been more or less redundant as Membership Secretary for the last six months, but to my delight I've signed up three new members in the last two weeks. Is this a sign that people are feeling a bit more confident about the future? Oh, I do hope so!

Even with most of our activities either curtailed or severely restricted, it *is* still possible to make new friends, acquire new skills, and have some fun as a U3A member, with a whole lot more to look forward to, eventually, of course!

**Other news...**

I was also delighted to be one of the judges in the National U3A Creative Writing Competition, for a short story on the theme of "Time". I judged the entries from two regions other than our own, and my favourite of them all is high up in the final shortlist to be judged by another panel. The announcement of the regional winners, plus readings of their stories, is taking place next month at an online awards ceremony. Exciting stuff – and I can't wait to see who the overall winner will be!

Keep safe, keep well, and keep cheerful ☺ All the best,

## Post Lockdown Driving

Jean Hogg our Regional Trustee has sent out information on a Post Lockdown Driving webinar, which you may be interested in. It is an online tutorial being offered by the Institute of Advanced Motorists, aimed at getting us back on the roads safely.

It will be at **10.00am on Wednesday 26th August**. The session will last for 40 minutes, with questions.

The session is in 3 parts:

1. Are you ready to get back on the road? Many people will only have taken short trips on local roads or may not have driven at all. It's estimated that half a million people have taken their cars off the road during lockdown (SORN).
2. Is your car ready for the road? How to carry out a Health check for your car.
3. Are other people ready for the road? Observation skills will be very important: cycle lanes will have appeared; there'll be more pedestrians and people jogging; people stepping off the kerb to observe social distancing; more people speeding. How to **Observe Anticipate Plan**.

If you are interested, please let your Chairman know so that he/she can send you the link at the appropriate time.

If you want to take part and your U3A is "resting", please let me know at [u3anothantsnetwork@hotmail.com](mailto:u3anothantsnetwork@hotmail.com) and I will send you the webinar link.

So far members from at least six U3As in our Network are taking part – it would be nice to hear from someone who has done so and what their verdict is.

## Advance Notice of the AGM of the Third Age Trust

This year you will have the opportunity to 'virtually' attend the AGM of the Third Age Trust (essentially the National organisation for U3A). Any member of a local U3A is eligible to attend and this would normally mean you travelling to a Conference Centre somewhere like Nottingham. This year arrangements are being made to hold the AGM online on 29<sup>th</sup> September but at present the time is to be determined. Nominated committee members will be able to vote, but otherwise you would be an observer and it would be an opportunity to see the National Chairperson and other Officers and staff and to hear about current issues and the "direction of travel". Further details and instructions about how to register to participate will be circulated in due course, so if you are interested keep an eye out or go onto the National Website in a few weeks' time to book your place.

## QUIZ FOR AUGUST – Collective names for Animals or Birds

- 1 A .....of alligators
- 2 A .....or ..... of bears
- 3 A .....or ..... of buffalo
- 4 A ..... of crocadiles
- 5 A ..... of ferrets
- 6 A ..... of giraffe
- 7 A ..... of hippopotami
- 8 A ..... of hyenas
- 9 A ..... of jaguars
- 10A ..... of lemurs
- 11A charm of .....
- 12A stand of .....
- 13A pandemonium of .....
- 14A convocation .....
- 15A cast of .....
- 16A bevy or game of .....
- 17A murmuration of .....
- 18 A parliament of .....
- 19An ostentation of .....
- 20 An unkindess of .....

### ANSWERS TO JULY'S QUIZ All things Z

- 1 Zabaglione; 2. Zanzibar; 3. Ziggurat; 4. Zagreb; 5. Zambia; 6. Zola; 7. Zurich; 8. Zealots; 9. Zetland; 10. Zen