

COUNTSTHORPE U3A

UPDATE AND CURFEW CHRONICLE No 2

Dear Member

We hope that this finds you well, and adapting to our new lifestyle! No doubt we all miss our usual social activities very much – including the U3A groups and general meeting. We will, though, appreciate them even more once they can be safely resumed.

Fortunately, we can still go out for a little exercise – either in our gardens or in the locality. The weather is improving, and this will help lighten our mood.

Just a few pieces of further information this month to preface our next “Curfew Chronicle” which follows on immediately.

GENERAL REMINDERS

- **ALL U3A outings, general meetings and group activities** are currently suspended until further notice.
- A decision on **the Kynren holiday** will be made in June and all those involved will be contacted separately by Jill Clayton
- **Full refunds** have been posted to anybody who had paid for a cancelled **History outing**

THEATRE GROUP:

- **Phantom of the Opera** - Curve Theatre has refunded the cost of tickets and money will therefore be refunded in full to all members who have paid.
- **Calamity Jane** - tickets for this had not been paid for at the time of the performance cancellation. Therefore money will be refunded in full to all members who have paid.
- **Dial M for Murder** tickets are non-refundable by Associated Theatre Group, and the performance is to be re-scheduled. If this date is unsuitable, we can request a credit note against future ATG shows. More details will follow. However, as only 7 people had actually paid for this show, I will be giving a full refund to them. Our credit note can then be used against any other future ATG show (normally at Milton Keynes).
- **Strictly Ballroom** - this is not until October and, as of this moment, is still going ahead; tickets were purchased at the end of February.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2020/21 fall due during our shut down period, but we urge you to renew anyway. The 2020/21 subscriptions are **£15** for full individual membership and **£8** for associate members. Thanks to those who have already renewed their subscriptions!

You may be tempted to delay renewing your membership as not a lot is happening for now. Therefore we should explain that our financial year is still 12 months long, regardless of any delay to the AGM. Whenever a subscription is renewed during any year, it is only valid until 31 March following, and so needs renewing from 1 April. Obviously, we will not have the expense of the Hall, nor printed "What's On" but we will still be mailing out to you and stamps, paper, envelopes, etc are not cheap! Also, we still have to pay capitation fees to the Third Age Trust on time, even though most U3A activities are currently suspended.

How to Renew Your Membership

Subscriptions for 2020/21 are £15 or £8 for associate membership (with proof of full membership of another U3A).

To RENEW your membership (due from 1 April 2020) please just send a cheque **PAYABLE TO "COUNTSTHORPE U3A"**, with a stamped addressed envelope to our Membership Secretary, Mr B Hillyard, 35 Station Rd, Countesthorpe, Leicester LE8 5TA. There is no need to complete a new membership application form. PLEASE RENEW BY **12 MAY** IF AT ALL POSSIBLE!

If you have changed your phone number, address or email, please advise Barry to enable us to update our records and keep in touch with you. This is especially important at this time!

If you enclose an SAE, your new membership and programme cards will be posted. If you do not enclose an SAE you will have to wait to collect them when our monthly meetings resume.

Please do not use the Parish Office/library posting box for now, as the library is currently closed and so your renewal will not reach us.

*(Please note that Barry Hillyard is the Membership Secretary - **NOT** David Wild)*

WEBSITE and also THOSE WITHOUT INTERNET ACCESS

- For those members with internet access, please visit our website for up-to-date information on eventual resumption of activities.
- Members should be assured that all general mailings of this nature will also be sent in hard copy to those who are not on email or who have not provided an email address.

THE COUNTSTHORPE U3A CURFEW CHRONICLE

No 2

April 2020

I'd like to thank all of you who so kindly got in touch, expressing appreciation for the previous Information Sheet and Issue 1 of the Curfew Chronicle. And more thanks to those who contributed items which make up this Issue 2. I hope you enjoy it and that it makes you feel that you're still in touch with our U3A.



(We so much enjoyed last time's Ballad of the Loo Roll! Here's another offering from the pen of Adrian Dobey. Enjoy this new offering!)

I'm cutting my portions in half and using my teabag twice,
Scraping the juice from my baked bean tin and stealing the cheese from the mice.

For years I've been trying to diet, but now the weight's falling away,
I wouldn't say this lining is silver but it's one bright spot in the day.

The Inns and the cafes are empty, except for a foolhardy few,
But if we all kept two Bojo's apart, by pub grub and ale I'm tempted, aren't you?

I'm coming over all Hannibal Lecter but if you're skinny, relax!
It's those greedy hoarders I'm after, but no, I think I'll just fast.

On reflection, the thought is repulsive, maybe I'll just fade away
Then "Chin up!" I say to the mirror (like Grommet),
"Cheer up, lad - things will get better one day".

Sent in by Adrian Dobey



There was an old lady of Glen Parva,
Who sat thinking of the 'hereafter'
Her memory returned, a bottle she yearned
What day did the Corona man call?

Sent in by Elaine Jackson



DID YOU KNOW . . . COUNTSTHORPE POST OFFICE

has changed ownership. Also, they are now offering a free local delivery service for such daily essentials as bread, milk, cheese, eggs, etc. Call them on 277 2137 for more details or to place an order. This could be very useful for those self-isolating, or unable to get out to the shops



Tricia Brown has sent this amusing report about the recent U3A holiday to Weston-Super-Mare, which fortunately was just squeezed in before the “shutdown”!

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WESTON SUPER MARE HOLIDAY REPORT

Day 1

Our break began with a fine, dry but blustery day as we set off for refreshments and a quick nose around Dyrham Park en route to Weston. The rain held off, BUT, I swear the winds were gale force as the majority of us, encouraged by the description from our “meet and greet” NT guide, “walked” (struggled the “ten minutes” (more like twenty down the “gentle slope” (vertical cliff) from the car park to the 17th century house. The interior of the house is undergoing massive restoration. My first thought was “It will be nice when it’s finished!” But, it did give us a fascinating glimpse of the conservation work, (like the before and after comparison of two chairs), the skill, the research and attention to detail that is involved. I’m sure the profits from the coffee and the honey cake (C17th recipe) with which we gladly celebrated Florence’s 92nd birthday, will go some way towards the £10 million cost of the work. We like to do our bit. Unsurprisingly, there was a long queue, despite waiting in a hailstorm, for the little mini bus back up to the coach to proceed to Weston.

Day 2

Mainly dry for our visit to Wells. Marvellous cathedral, with its famous “scissor arches” (apparently that’s why the tower is still standing, but I didn’t linger beneath them!), the Bishop’s Palace and picturesque village. Free time to stay there or to return and explore Weston.

Day 3

Most of us went to Bristol, with a walk across the suspension bridge in light rain to the very interesting visitor centre before our coach took us into the city, and incessant torrential rain. Retail therapy, museums and churches, including the New Room – the oldest Methodist building in the world and its museum about the Wesleys, were all experienced according to our preferences. Some of us ventured on a water taxi to the SS Great Britain and its adjoining Brunel Museum. Well worth the £18! Many cafes took more than one hit. Towards the end of our day we saw a few of our group in one coffee shop before our short cathedral visit and they were still there when we came back. Naturally, it stopped raining once we were back on the coach. Others of our party had explored Weston and took the opportunity to visit the cinema – “Emma” was mentioned and recommended.

Day 4

A showery day and many of us visited Tyntesfield, William Gibbs’ grand country house, with its own exquisite chapel. William made his considerable fortune importing guano from Peru. Where there’s muck, etc . . . ! This High Victorian Gothic style house is stuffed with 60,000 possessions of all three generations of the same mega-wealthy family. You didn’t know what to look at first. Everything was of the latest and best of its time and so richly ornate and detailed; even the billiard table legs! Nowadays, dusting must be a nightmare but the Gibbs had 20+ indoor servants alone! I’ve only got one, if I ask him nicely! The gardens and grounds

likewise were as impressive, including terraces, rare trees, stables, an aviary and a large kitchen garden and orangery. The Home Farm (now the shop and café) was massive. Unfortunately, the conservatory attached to the house was demolished in 1916 after a storm, so we were too late to see it. It was a 50 x 80 feet domed Gothic structure, probably the sort you've got at home, but a tad bigger, so easy to imagine anyway. Meanwhile, for those remaining in Weston, the new pier was visited, also the museum and a visit to see "1917" at the cinema. Unfortunately, the helicopter museum was shut. An attempt was made to visit the scooter museum, allegedly open, but the owner must have been having problems as he never returned as he had promised from taking his car to the garage. He could still be there for all we know!

Day 5

Typical! A fine sunny day and we're travelling home! But this enabled time for a lovely stroll around Stow-on-the-Wold and even to sit outside and eat sandwiches (or chips!), before possibly more retail therapy or a visit to the medieval church.

Day 6

We missed the full English, the buffet, our rooms being cleaned and tidied, a superbly organised and interesting day, followed by a well-cooked dinner and "happy hour" drinks (or should that say "hours") with good company in the hotel bar and lounge. The family-owned and run hotel was rated two stars, but we all agreed that it deserved far more. We were well looked after. Finally many, many thanks to Jill and Anne. To say you did very well is an understatement, and to do so for £194 each – amazing! We'll come again!



WHY WORRY?

There are only two things to worry about – either you are well or you are sick

If you are well, then there is nothing to worry about

But if you are sick, there are two things to worry about

Either you will get well or you will die

If you get well there is nothing to worry about

If you die there are only two things to worry about

Either you will go to Heaven or to Hell

If you go to Heaven there is nothing to worry about

But if you go to Hell, you'll be so damn busy shaking hands with friends that you won't have time to worry!

Sent in by Teresa Morgan

Patsy Paterson reminds us of Rose Millington's poem. We might reflect on these wise words and find all kinds of things to do in our new "U3A-less" lives! I'm not so sure about swimming in the river or climbing the mountain any more, but the rest sounds okay, and a good excuse to procrastinate a little longer before doing the housework or ironing!

DUST IF YOU MUST

Dust if you must
But wouldn't it be better
To paint a picture, write a letter
Bake a cake or plant a seed-
Ponder the difference between 'want' and 'need'.

Dust if you must
But there's not much time,
With rivers to swim and mountains to climb,
Music to hear and books to read.
Friends to cherish - a life to lead.

Dust if you must,
But the world's out there,
The sun in your eyes, the wind in your hair,
A flurry of snow, a shower of rain.
This day will not come round again.

Dust if you must,
But bear in mind
Old age will come, and it's not kind.
And when you go, as go you must
You yourself will make more dust.



TEMPERATURE *(very topical!)*

The vet likes Polly, and our Polly likes the vet
He says that she's the fittest dog that he has ever met.
She's loved every check-up
From when she was a pup.
Even for injections, she gently gives her paw
But pick up a thermometer – her bottom hits the floor!

Tricia Brown

Several of you have written in with things that have made you happy – the little, simple things that we often take for granted:-

- ❖ I've spoken to G... today and she seemed to be very isolated at first but after a few minutes' chat she perked up, and when we said goodbye she said that I'd made her feel a lot better which was nice - I felt I'd done my good deed for the day!
- ❖ Went for a walk up Bambury Lane, and 30 yards along the field edge (at the last bend in the lane) I found that the violets were out in force by the pond. Lovely!
- ❖ Have just made my first silly mistake - looked at the calendar to see what I am doing today! I have a long list of jobs - all at my place.
- ❖ I received a lovely, hand-written letter today from somebody I know only slightly. How wonderful is that?
- ❖ Sharing some sights and sounds from my solitary walks:
 - seeing the perfect reflections of trees and bridges on the calm surface of the canal now that I am able to walk the towpaths again as the mud is drying up;
 - hearing a skylark as it soars into the clear blue sky above Barley Lane;
 - seeing a male pheasant in all his glorious plumage – it doesn't seem to match his raucous call, though;
 - watching a swan on the canal, preening its already perfectly white and orderly feathers;
 - listening to a woodpecker drilling manically in Bouskell Park
- ❖ Today's happy news – the rhubarb is tall enough for a little light pulling, and my camellia is about to burst into bloom
- ❖ Cheery daffodils and a robin building a nest next to my back door. Must check my rhubarb!
- ❖ I watched a squirrel in the trees. He disappeared into a hole in a tree trunk, then poked his little head out and watched me intently.
- ❖ I'm lucky enough to have a garden, which is my solace and salvation
- ❖ Just listened to the birds singing early in the morning, then on Radio 4's "Tweet of the Day" I enjoyed the lovely bubbling sound of the curlew. I once saw one in the field at the back of my house.



*How wonderful that we all are so enjoying the sights and sounds of nature. Let's hope that it is not too long before we can get out and about a little more. In the meantime, let's enjoy our own gardens, local walks (and thus, other people's gardens) or even find some great nature programmes to enjoy on television. But **remember to keep in touch**, whether by letter, phone, email, WhatsApp, Facebook or whatever your chosen method! It helps so much.*

A FEW MOMENTS OF CLARITY

After the game, the King and the Pawn go into the same box - *Italian proverb*

The only reason they say 'Women and children first' is to test the strength of the lifeboats - *Jean Kerr*

I've been married to a communist and a fascist, and neither would take out the garbage - *Zsa Zsa Gabor*

When a man opens a car door for his wife, it's either a new car or a new wife - *Prince Philip*

A computer once beat me at chess, but it was no match for me at kickboxing - *Emo Philips*

The best cure for sea sickness, is to sit under a tree - *Spike Milligan*

Wood burns faster when you have to cut and chop it yourself - *Harrison Ford*



FINALLY - A SIGN OF THE TIMES?



Well, that's all for now. If you have any funnies, useful tips, anecdotes or ideas for preventing the time hanging too heavily, please send them in so that we can all share them.

THANKS IN
ANTICIPATION OF
YOUR
CONTRIBUTIONS!

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