

**Mid-Bucks (Aylesbury) U3A [www.u3a.co](http://www.u3a.co)  
Information Sheet for April 2020  
Editor: Dave Rogers Email [editor@u3a.co](mailto:editor@u3a.co)**

## **Notices**

### **U3A Holiday to Avon & Cardiff**

MOTTS let Julie down - the letter that they promised did not get sent out. U3A HOLIDAY final payment has been deferred to May 5<sup>th</sup> when MOTTS will review situation. It is unlikely that the holiday will go ahead in which case it will be postponed until 2021. Julie Leach Tel 01296 488282

### **Phonepals**

From Area Liaison – PHONEPALS is for anyone starting to feel fed up or lonely and would like to make some new friends with a phone chat about how you are spending your days, please give me a call on 01296612787 or email [blackbrook2018@gmail.com](mailto:blackbrook2018@gmail.com) and I will contact you, I should say that only phone numbers will be passed on after checking that everyone is a member of Mid-Bucks (Aylesbury) U3A. I hope that you are all keeping well and that it isn't too long before we are able to meet up again.

Val Blackburn Tel 01296612787

## **News & Views**

### **Dave Rogers - Editor**

First of all, you will see that our Newsletter appears in a different format to its predecessors. By discussion with Simon Reeks we decided that: The format / content will depend on what submissions are received. To help us all stay in contact, members should submit whatever they think would be suitable, even if the link to the U3A might be a bit tenuous. We will only be issuing by email which will cover c127 of our c160 members.

**On receiving various emails, it became clear that to do them full justice, they should be published as personal contributions so I will start with my contribution.**

I have been a diabetic for over twenty years. Thus, when the first announcement of the pandemic was announced, I immediately went into self-isolation. Currently, kind neighbours are shopping for me. In spite of self-isolation, on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March I developed a dry intermittent cough; on Tuesday it was joined by continuous sneezing; on Wednesday NHS 111 informed me that in all probability I had a mild form of coronavirus even though there was no temperature nor breathlessness – UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES was I to leave home. Today, I feel fully recovered from whatever it was – it could have simply been a heavy cold with an infrequent cough. I wish I could have a test to find out the truth as I'm still not allowed to leave home. My back garden has been thoroughly weeded and I am contemplating starting the mammoth task of regenerating my garden railway!

## Simon Reeks – Chairman

I hope that you and yours are as well as can be expected under the current circumstances. Whilst it is a shame that all our U3A activity has been put on hold for the moment, I am sure that we will emerge from the end of the lockdown like a phoenix from the ashes! The Third Age Trust is doing their best to keep the spirit of the U3A alive, visit [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) for lots of information and the opportunity to sign up for a regular email newsletter. Also, have a look at [www.wtu3a.org.uk/wp/wtu3a-home/](http://www.wtu3a.org.uk/wp/wtu3a-home/) from our friends at Weston Turville U3A – much information and entertainment. In the absence of the planned May AGM, your committee will remain in post until we are able to meet together again.

I am spending much of my time rebuilding computers just to see how capable they are. I'm sure that we're all finding ways of keeping ourselves occupied, both mentally and physically – **please share your experiences with our editor for future newsletters**. Many thanks to Dave Rogers for volunteering to continue editing and producing newsletters. Should you feel the need to have a chat, Val Blackburn's Phonepals (above) is an excellent idea or you can contact me by phone (01296 482735) or email [chairman@u3a.co](mailto:chairman@u3a.co) – I seem to have plenty of spare time at the moment! **Take care!**

## David Mummery – Secretary

**Geography Group** restarts in September. Meanwhile preparations are being made to ensure a varied and interesting programme will be in place. David ([djummery@hotmail.com](mailto:djummery@hotmail.com)) would be interested in hearing from anybody who has photographs of their travels within the UK or abroad and be prepared to share their memories with others. Those who have already contributed will be contacted in due course. Last season we learnt a lot about cruising on the Danube, travelling throughout Egypt, Sardinia and Australia. We also discovered that those who came were delighted with the tea/coffee and biscuits and meeting other people for a chat.

**Pétanque.** We are still hopeful that we can start in May depending on the state of the crisis. During the forthcoming season we hope to be able to challenge Weston Turville for a match.

**Art.** The National Gallery was due to give prominence to Artemisia Gentileschi. She was Europe's most celebrated female artist during her lifetime. Yet, like many artists of the period – Caravaggio included – she was forgotten.

The exhibition at the National Gallery, the first dedicated to the artist in the UK, endeavours to present Artemisia more fully 'in the round', focusing our attention on her artistic achievements. There has sometimes been a tendency to sensationalise Artemisia's life, with a focus on her personal story – her rape as a young woman by Agostino Tassi and the torture she endured during the ensuing trial to attain her assailant's conviction – distracting from due consideration of her development as an artist. It was in Florence that Artemisia found her artistic voice, painting some of her most iconic works, such as *Judith Beheading Holofernes*. No artist (male or female) had ever conveyed the brutality of Judith's act so vividly; arcs of blood spurt from Holofernes's severed neck and spatter Judith's arms and bodice. And her Judith is a far cry from the impassive heroines painted by contemporaries such as Cavalier d'Arpino or Caravaggio. Her painting focuses on the determination and sheer brute force required of a woman to overpower the Assyrian general Holofernes. Its violence is horrifying but we are also transfixed by its truthfulness. Despite her success, Artemisia did everything in her power to seek patronage elsewhere. In the late 1630s, after repeated delaying tactics, she answered the call of King Charles I to join her father in London. One of the projects Artemisia is frequently associated with is the elaborate ceiling decoration of the Queen's House at Greenwich, which was moved to Marlborough House in St James's in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. She remained in England for some time: several pictures by her are listed in the Royal Collection.

Of special mention should be her *Self Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria* and her *Allegory of Painting*. See them at the National Gallery. It was originally planned to end on 26 July, but may be extended due to the closure of galleries due to the virus.

## David Wilson – Treasurer

It is with great sadness that I have to mention the loss of a few local businesses as a result of COVID-19. A local bra manufacturer has gone bust, a submarine company has gone under, a manufacturer of food blenders has gone into liquidation, a dog kennel has had to call in the retrievers and a company supplying paper for origami enthusiasts has folded. Interflora is pruning its business and Dynorod has gone down the drain. The saddest one though is the ice cream van man found dead covered in nuts and raspberry sauce. He couldn't take it anymore and topped himself.

## Jane Elliston – Committee Member

**The Photography group** are keeping in touch via all users' emails. Jane sets a weekly challenge that can be done in home and garden. If you want to join us please contact Jane on 07788494380. Jane is also posting a photo on the **Mid-Bucks (Aylesbury) Facebook group** and asks for your thoughts. This is open to anyone and everyone is invited to post up a picture for comment.

## Jasmine Reeks – Membership Secretary



**Membership Secretary** - Hat number one – the red, I think!

Splendid timing! All renewal letters went out except about 6 and those I was hoping to hand out at the March Meeting. If you would like a renewal form, I can email you one or for anyone you know who hasn't an email account, I could post. Thank you for those of you who have renewed. I will hold on to the cheques until it is safe to go to a bank. (Simon and I spent days trying to pay in one personal cheque via our mobile phone. ARRRGGHH! There was no joy there.) Neither David Wilson nor I should risk that task, currently. The cash renewals I am also holding securely. Obviously, I shall not be chasing anyone until we are in the clear, so panic not. Just keep

hold of your renewal form so we do not have to print them out again. Good news is that we had one new member join for the coming year. Welcome Dorothy

**Local History** – Hat number 2 – the warm, cosy one as some days are still chilly!

Well, we obviously haven't been visiting anywhere except virtually. We are watching programmes, which we have previously recorded. An American Aristocrat's Guide to Great Estates. Julie (as she likes to be called) visited eight estates, of which three we have previously visited. Sudeley Castle was a U3A trip in 2019 or was it 2018? We are also working our way through V&A – Secrets of the Museum. I am not sure if these are on catch up but you can tell we stack up series on our box!

I have transcribed a diary/letter, which my father kept on his journey home from Italy on the troop convoy in 1944. He wrote it for his girlfriend, who became his wife (my mother) in 1947. It was so interesting but raised many questions to which we will never have the answers. On the BBC news site there was a short film showing MI6 in WWII – Bletchley Park and its associated sites. It was handed over anonymously to Bletchley Park Trust as it should never have been filmed and cameras were banned. Look on the [bletchleypark.org.uk](http://bletchleypark.org.uk) website for that 11-minute film and much more. The incredibly rare 11-minute silent film, believed to be a compilation of footage recorded between 1939 – 1945, shows members of MI6 Section VIII at Whaddon Hall, Buckinghamshire. It is also on You Tube.

**Yarn Crafters** – Hat number 3 – the sun hat for those days when yes it does beat down!

I am sure you are using your crafting skills to pass the time. I was sent a copy for booties and mittens for prem babies. If anyone would like a copy, please email me on [membership@u3a.co](mailto:membership@u3a.co) and I will send it on. It is great as you can finish one between cups of tea, which is so satisfying. It is in 4 ply but I am going to try double knitting on larger needles and knit the smallest size.

**U3A Coffee Mornings** – Hat number 4 – the black cloche, with the art deco broach!

Well, we only accomplished one but “after” this situation, I am sure we will have another chance. As a group, we can chat for England!

For those of you puzzled by the hats, you had to be at the last U3A monthly meeting. I may reprise my act, or then again ??????

## April Smart – Webmaster

I'm keeping well and kept busy looking after Molly's litter of 8 puppies who are nearly ready to go to their new homes, if I can find a vet willing to give them their first inoculations and chip them. **The Facebook Group** is gradually growing and has 20 members now. I'm encouraging members to contribute jokes and comments. Jane Elliston is posting pictures to make us think and would welcome contributions from other members of her **Photography Group**. However, **Family History** is currently suspended, but we are keeping in touch and continuing with our research individually.

## Ceinwyne Jones – Group Leader

We enjoyed our last meeting - lunch at Hartwell house – just! The surroundings; the atmosphere; the service plus the meal were excellent! It's been back to delving into the freezer for long forgotten items. It does make life more interesting – better than trying to cope with online shopping!

**Next Contribution Date 12<sup>th</sup> May**  
**ALL WELCOME**