

# KANUTA

The Newsletter of the Knutsford and District



May 2020



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## FROM THE CHAIR

In such a strange time as this it seems all we can do is make the most of the sunshine and keep in touch with our families and friends in any way we can. As we are all in a degree of lockdown for an unknown period it's hard for us as individuals to plan ahead. However, as a Committee we are doing what we can to keep our U3A on track so that we are in good shape to pick up where we left off. We have been meeting 'virtually', by email rounds and now partly by Zoom- all good learning! How many of us had even heard of Zoom a few weeks ago!

As we have completed another financial year the end of year accounts and Trustees report will be under way. Once they are completed and independently examined they will go on to the Charity Commission website so we will be fulfilling our legal obligations. As you know, in the last two years we have held our AGM in July. We don't think that's going to be practical this year so we anticipate holding it in the autumn, probably in November, which is still within the timescale allowed in our Constitution. We will let you know in due course.

You may remember that I have been Chair for almost 4 years and that the plan was for Mark Barley, our Vice Chair, to take over as Chair in July after the AGM. The Chair holds a lot of information and physical files which normally would be handed on to the next Chair, with time for discussions and explanations. This isn't going to be possible yet so in the circumstances the Committee have agreed that he and I should now be Joint Chairs which we feel will be good for our U3A and very good for me! I will be sharing as much as possible with Mark.

I hope you and your families and friends are well and that you can keep as many connections as possible with people and interests that are important to you. We are all missing our regular U3A activities though some Activity Groups are finding ways of keeping going in some form, which is brilliant.

### Christine Jones

Hi - I would like to introduce myself as the new Joint Chair of Knutsford U3A in these extraordinary times. My name is Mark Barley and I have been an active member of Knutsford U3A since 2013. I am a retired research scientist who has a firm belief in life long learning and originally joined the U3A to participate in the Geology activity group; at that time led by the very knowledgeable Fred Owen. I am now the group co-ordinator for Geology, but I am also active in two walking groups, the family history group and I recently joined one of the wine groups. I joined the committee in November 2018 and have been Vice Chair since the last AGM in July. Under the present circumstances isolation is a big issue for many members so you will find in this Kanuta some examples of using technology to enable virtual meetings and hence maintaining some of the U3A's activities.

### Mark Barley

### Joint Chairs

## Vacancy – Newsletter Editor

Hi, I'm Sue Allan, currently Newsletter Editor. I'll be taking on another role on the Committee later in the year and so will be relinquishing my role as Newsletter Editor and a replacement will therefore be needed. If you are familiar with 'Word' and emails it's not a particularly demanding role and can be quite interesting. I've enjoyed being able to keep up skills that I used to use while I was working. If you would like to know more about what is involved please give me a ring on 01565 632904 or 07773022373.

**Sue Allan**

### U3A National Newsletter.

Keeping in contact and activities for lockdown conditions are discussed in the U3A National Newsletter for April. You can sign up for future newsletters from the "Newsletter" tab on the National U3A website - [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) and find the April newsletter (and previous newsletters) from the Newsletter Archive link.

Here are some extracts from the April National Newsletter:

"We are really excited that television's fitness champion **Mr Motivator** will be providing us with a week's worth of exercises to do at home, so watch out for keep moving with Mr Motivator. **The classes will be exclusively for U3A members - online - and will be coming out in the next two weeks - we will keep you updated with more on this.**"

"We have also launched a programme of national learning initiatives to get people involved either individually or to participate in within their U3A groupings.

Currently this includes our **photography project, U3A Eye**, our **diary project** and our **birdwatch initiative** as well as regular mindfulness sessions and a weekly quiz.

Please keep checking [our website](#) for new content as we have got a whole raft of new initiatives which we will be launching over the next few weeks, including a national creative writing competition, and some more regular puzzles and challenges.

Please read more on Keeping in Touch and other stories at [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)"

The **U3A Eye** is a photography project which is encouraging people to submit photos of their surroundings. **BirdTrack** is a free online tool to record your own bird sightings and keep up to date with trends. It is provided by the British Trust for Ornithology. **Living History Diary Project**:- Record your thoughts and experiences during the 2020 Coronavirus epidemic for posterity.

There are also three new discussion forums where people can share ideas and support each other. Topics are:-

Learning; Our U3A Community and Beacon.

### Staying in Contact

The U3A has provided How to Guides for tools to help you stay in touch with family, friends and your U3A. They cover Facebook, WHYPAY, Zoom, WhatsApp, Gmail, Hotmail, Skype, Jitsi and Listening to Podcasts. Available at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/how-to-guidance> or link from Newsletter.

# THEATRE AND MUSIC TRIPS

2020 & beyond

## Rescheduled date for 'Les Miserables' at The Lowry, May 20<sup>th</sup> 2020.

I have now had confirmation from The Lowry that they have cancelled the performances of 'Les Miserables' next month.

However, they have informed me that a future date for these performances is being rescheduled for **early 2021**. Exact dates will be confirmed as soon as possible. Their letter says "Existing tickets will be valid for rescheduled performances." As I have excellent centre circle seats I hope that means we can still have the same seats! So, for the moment, I will hold onto our tickets and contact ticket holders as soon as I have further information.

## Future Bookings

I have reserved seats for Matthew Bourne's 'Nutcracker' ballet, at The Lowry, on Thursday, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 7.30 pm. All being well, I will offer these for sale in August.

Margaret Hinde

## OUTINGS

It does seem very strange not to have some details of outings to put into Kanuta. Instead I need to confirm that some future outings that were booked have been either cancelled or rearranged.

**Coalbrookdale on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June** has been cancelled and will be re-arranged when the committee re-convenes.

**RHS Worsley Bridgewater Garden** cancelled our booking for September this year but it has now been re-arranged for **Monday afternoon on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021**.

One booking that may still happen is **Shibden Hall and Halifax on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August**. Shibden Hall is closed at the moment with no date for re-opening but, as bookings are hard to come by, it was thought better to hold on to what we have. Hopefully the situation will be better by August.

Three other outings are still in place:

**Roberts Bakery on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September and Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November**

**Chatsworth on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December** for Christmas decorations.

The Outings Committee hopes you are keeping safe and well. We hope to see you soon.

Lynda Harris  
Chair Outings Committee

## Surviving Lockdown

In partnership with Knutsford Town Council, BOXED Red Marketing, a marketing agency in Knutsford has created a virtual Knutsford High Street. It shows shops and business which are currently open for business, what they are currently selling or supplying, how they can be contacted and how their products and services can be accessed by the community (delivery or collection).

It can be found by clicking the link <https://knutsfordhighstreet.com/>

If getting to the shops or shopping online is not something you can do during the current crisis then help is available. Please visit <https://weareknutsford.org/> - a voluntary organisation set up in partnership with Knutsford Town Council to help those in need. This could be shopping, collecting prescriptions or just a friendly phone call. You can call 0800 1181692 or email [help@weareknutsford.org](mailto:help@weareknutsford.org) - please remember you are not alone and help is available.

The following is an item which has been passed on to us. It may be of interest to you but it is not backed by the U3A.

A new website called [Greysnet](http://www.greysnet.com) has just been launched with the support of the National Lottery Community Fund to help older people all over the country to stay connected and keep mind and body active during the current Coronavirus lockdown. It's called [Greysnet](http://www.greysnet.com) and you can find it at [www.greysnet.com](http://www.greysnet.com)

Greysnet is a dedicated online space where older people can chat with one-another through a public forum and find out about all sorts of events and activities they can get involved in while self-isolating.

### And now for a good news story from Lynda Harris!

A long time member of our U3A, April Canning, was very disappointed at not being able to celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on 6<sup>th</sup> April with family or friends so on the day itself she decided to go for one of her regular walks and share the occasion with the general public. Her account was such a 'good news story' that I persuaded her that it was well worth sharing it with you.



These are April's observations on the event:

With deserted pavement at beginning and an empty main road I nearly lost my nerve but not for long. I almost bumped into a couple at the first awkward corner, despite my wearing a bright red mac. We jumped apart, they roared with laughter and wished me a Happy Birthday.

- Three minutes into the entrance of park I had received 20 'Happy Birthdays' and after a further five minutes I had lost count at over 50.

- Families sang Happy Birthday, folk asked if they could take a photo but lost a bit of interest when they discovered I wasn't famous!
- Walked along the road chatting to folk in their gardens and, amazingly, nobody made me feel a fool and nobody scoffed. One elderly gent said he wished he'd thought of doing it!
- An elderly lady over the road shouted at me to wait, got to the lamppost to steady herself and sang the song to me on the deserted street.
- Another lady called out that it was her husband's birthday as well but their son immediately added, 'He's only 54'!
- Walking home a couple were coming out of their drive a bit away, with two tiny boy twins with hair like cherubs. I stepped into the empty road only to be told to wait. They whispered to the boys who immediately sang Happy Birthday to me very solemnly. They had learnt it at nurse school .... and I was fishing for a tissue.
- So many folk asked me about the war and how I was still fit. I said there was a fantastic spirit then, we all just got on with it. For the first time since the virus started, I had felt there was a little of the spirit of the war.

I am glad I did that walk. I now have some lovely memories to go with everything else relating to my birthday that I have at home.

Sequel

Now at least 7 walkers stop me for a wee chat because they can remember my name easily. I am desperately trying to remember theirs!

One girl had made a similar notice for her dad's 90th for him in his garden and I'm told that one lady wore her wedding veil on a local wooded walk for a 58<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

## News from the Groups

Some groups are managing to stay in touch during the lockdown by email and some are also experimenting, with some success, with video conferencing software such as Zoom and Jitsi. Limited activities are being undertaken remotely to keep these groups ticking over and those not currently using some form of technology are encouraged to consider using them, if applicable, particularly if the lockdown is in place for an extended period.

The **Poetry Reading Group** has formed a 'Keeping in Touch' group on email. We circulate any poems we have enjoyed recently and every couple of weeks I send out a Poetry Sheet with a short overview of a poet and a selection of poems. It works really well.

**Veronica Gordon**

## **Philosophy**

In view of the situation the Group are trying to put together an email system with the aim of sending our thoughts to Dave, our mentor. Should it work out he will then put together a Brief and distribute it accordingly

Fingers crossed that it will work out.

**Shirley Dignam**

## **Geology**

I know a number of activity groups have been using video conferencing software to keep their groups going. To encourage more groups to consider this alternative to the usual face-to-face meetings I summarise my own experience of hosting an activity meeting using Zoom.

On Monday 20th April I organised my first U3A Geology activity meeting using Zoom. I sent out the invitation earlier in the day with date and time of the meeting (8pm), a link which invitees could click on to enter the meeting along with a meeting ID and password (provides an alternative way of signing into the meeting). At 8pm I (as host) initiated the meeting and was soon joined by 5 other participants.

After suitable introductions (all participants had previously attended meetings at my house) I used the screen share facility on Zoom to show a Youtube clip of the 2018 eruption of Anak Krakatoa and explained something about the history of the volcano and why lightning is often seen in the dust column above volcanoes and the role of water and ice in promoting spectacular lightning in volcanic eruptions.

Mike then talked about the online course on geochemistry that he was following for free from Kyoto University. The English language course is an example of a MOOC (massive open on-line course) and you can view the videos online for free or sign up to the course, pay money, and get a more structured program including worksheets, problems, homework and probably some units towards a Geology degree(?).

I returned to the Screen share facility to show a Powerpoint presentation on the geology of part of the Northumberland coast. Last September I went on a 5 day commercial geology course organised by Geosupplies of Sheffield on the geology of Northumberland. On the second day we visited Bamburgh castle and the nearby Harkess rocks. The castle is built on an 80 metre thick outcrop of the Whin Sill, a 300-250 million year old igneous intrusion which underlies a large proportion of Northern England. The Powerpoint format allowed me to show photographs of the geological features I took on that day along with text and screenshots of interactive geological maps provided by the British geological Survey.

By this time we had spent 45 minutes in the Zoom meeting (the free meetings are time limited) so we agreed to meet again in the same way in two weeks time, said our goodbyes and closed the meeting.

Although video conferencing using Zoom or similar software lends itself to some group activities (such as geology) it is not suitable for all groups (though my son does claim to be doing karate by Zoom!?). It can potentially work well for any group that thrives on discussion: eg. Book clubs. Also the social aspect in reducing the sense of isolation shouldn't be underestimated in these difficult circumstances. For those of us interested in geology the aim is to keep things ticking over until we can get back to some sort of normality with face-to-face meeting and field trips to interesting locations.

For group co-ordinators interested in using video conferencing technology there is some information on the U3A website as described elsewhere in this newsletter or you can contact me.

**Mark Barley** (Joint Chair).  
mhbarley@waitrose.com

### **Family & Social History**

Several of the members of this group are using their lockdown time to pursue their family history research and I am encouraging them to pass onto me any problems they may be encountering so that I can circulate the queries to the rest of the group to see if they can help. This will give members a wider range of websites to use rather than just the ones they subscribe to as individuals and will hopefully help the group to tick over until we can get up and running again.

**Allan Jones**

### **Table Tennis**

The Co-ordinator, Gerard McCreesh, would like all members of this group to please send him their email addresses so that he can communicate future developments to them.

gerard.mccreesh@hotmail.com

### **Research into the spread of Covid-19**

Some of you may be interested in taking part in this research project which aims to better understand the virus in those who are more vulnerable. From pre-existing health conditions, to age and pregnancy – this project is enabling research that helps us beat COVID-19 for all. If you click on the link below it will give you more details.

[UK's leading charities and all of the Royal Medical Colleges](#)

You are asked to download a phone app which is a symptom tracker. It then asks you to create an account and takes you through easy stages. The researchers are wanting more people in older age groups to report how they feel each day and whether they have got any symptoms, this only takes moments. If you do register you will then be asked two questions:

Have you had a virus test?

Do you feel normal?

The main purpose of the research is to gain understanding of the virus and, in particular, to map the ages and geographical spread of the virus.

Although we do not normally publicise this type of project we felt that the data collected could be very valuable to the study and prevention of Covid-19.