



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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# Newsletter

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**NESTON U3A****Autumn 2020**

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## Chairman's Musings



What a relief! Just yesterday Michael Grumett came to see me, concerned about the future of our U3A and we agreed that he would step in and take over the position of Chairman. The e-mail from Ann announcing the good news was sent out the same day! We now have three new volunteers for the committee and we will be able to keep it going for the coming year, though I should point out that the year will have only six to nine months, depending on exactly when the AGM is held in 2021, but it cannot be delayed beyond the end of June. The Charity Commission have relaxed their rules for this year, but charities are expected to have made proper arrangements for 2021. We are still in need of someone to take over as Treasurer in 2021.

I was dreading having to preside over the demise of Neston U3A, partly because it is my responsibility to ensure there is an adequate flow of new people coming onto the Executive Committee to ensure the smooth handover of duties, but also because I believe our organization has a very valuable role to play in the community. The enforced departure of about half the current committee members presented an unexpected development after a successful recruiting campaign last year. So, my grateful thanks to our three new volunteers. Please continue to support the activities of Neston U3A as you have done so splendidly throughout my tenure in office.

We still do not know when we will be allowed to resume normal activities; I cannot see that happening before we have a widely available vaccine and, in turn, I don't see that being before March or April at the earliest; but we soldier on. Some of our interest groups are holding online meetings or socially-distanced events; it would be good to see other groups doing something similar though I have to admit Barn Dancing and Table Tennis do have particular problems for which I cannot offer solutions.

I did say back in January that it marked the last opportunity I had to communicate with members via the newsletter – how wrong can one be? But this probably is my last contribution and I look back over the last 3½ eventful years with some mixed feelings. It started with the General Data Protection Regulations that required us to draw up a Data Protection Policy and a Privacy Policy; then the Charity Commission declared that the majority of U3As were functioning illegally by having a social account distinct from their business account, requiring us to amend our constitution and the U3A Trust having to form a trading arm; we changed our administration system to the U3A Beacon system; the U3A Trust resolved to initiate an annual U3A Day event, which actually did not happen because of Covid 19; the Deeside Network became much more formalized and we agreed to become affiliated to it; finally the most disruptive event of all was the arrival of the pandemic. So, it has been an interesting period, but it involved a lot of work by your committee and I would like to say how much I have appreciated their efforts; they have been willing and supportive throughout. At the same time, I am looking forward to being able to take a break – hence some mixed feelings, though I have said that I will be around and ready to assist if and when necessary.

My best wishes to you all, here's looking forward to seeing you again in the not-too-distant future. Keep well.

*Geoff Gibson*

## Farewell to a friend

It is with sadness that I am reporting the passing away of Eileen Lewis. Eileen served on the U3A committee for a number of years, latterly helping to 'Meet and Greet' where I was privileged to join her. She was also a founder member of the 'Singing for Fun' group.

Many of you will remember her beautiful garden when it was open via the National Garden Scheme.

Eileen's enthusiasm and knowledge of plants spurred many of us to help – almost a call to arms!

What fun we shared with her, propagating or dividing plants from our own gardens for sale on the plant stall in the garage and helping to prepare on the day. The garden would look magnificent all due to months of Eileen's hard work.

On the day she could be seen with old friends and new ones: laughing, smiling, sharing her wealth of knowledge.

Need I say more? Here's to you Eileen – thank you for the memories and the friendship.

*Eileen Basnett*



*Singing For Fun – Eileen Lewis (left) with Eileen Basnett*



## The Walking Group has ventured out again

The U3A medium walking group made a tentative, but successful, return at the beginning of September with a local walk along the Wirral way, up Cuckoo Lane and back along the Marsh. We had lovely weather and I think most people enjoyed it saying it was nice to do

something 'normal' for a change.

We are walking in 2 groups of 6 with the second group separate but keeping the first group in sight. We also follow all relevant Covid guidelines to the best of our ability.



If anyone else would like to join us, please contact myself or Hilary and we will give you details.

Rosemary Hollingsbee  
([rhollingsbee@gmail.com](mailto:rhollingsbee@gmail.com))

Hilary Eaude  
([hjeaude@gmail.com](mailto:hjeaude@gmail.com))

## NEW EVENTS FOR AUTUMN-WINTER 2020: SECOND TUESDAY TALKS

We are delighted to offer the opportunity to take part in a regular series of Zoom talks, starting at 10.30 am on the second Tuesday of each month. In particular you may wish to add the Winter Warmer on 8th December to your U3As own range of seasonal celebrations.

Please use the booking link on the NW Website Events page to register for each session:

[www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west/events](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west/events)

The full programme for the Fool's Gold 'Winter Warmer' can be downloaded from the website.

### The National U3A High Street project

The U3A research team have requested U3As to organise a national research project, to which the Covid19 pandemic has given a sudden urgency.

This summer it has become very clear that lockdown will lead to profound changes in shopping habits. As a consequence every shopping area seems certain to look very different very soon, which will fundamentally affect local communities in ways which nobody can yet anticipate.

The board of directors aim to produce, by December 2020, a report that describes a pre-pandemic state of Britain's shopping locations. In early 2022 they will then be able to construct a final report that looks in-depth at the impact of the pandemic, as part of the wider research.

Our chairman asked me to lead our group. I was enthusiastically joined by Elizabeth Pettigrew, Ann Roochove, Geoff Gibson, Robin Hughes, and Simon Davies who VOLUNTEERED their help.

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation for all their contribution to this project.

At our initial meeting it was decided to include Parkgate, Little Neston, West Vale together with Neston high street.

Each member of our group were tasked with undertaking a survey of approx 30 shops

A detailed information sheet of what information was required to be obtained and noted was produced to include each shop's name, address and post code; what they are trading as; the locality type; the size and shape of the premises; who it caters for; if it provides

food – to eat in or take out; their present situation – are they currently trading/derelict/vacant; availability of public transport. A photograph of each shop was also requested.

We were also required to establish how the shop traded previously.

All in all I am sure you will agree a very comprehensive list of information.

Once we had gathered our info an individual report was produced for each shop by the surveyor which included the photo.

These photos were all taken and downloaded on to the forms by Simon, for which I am extremely grateful. We anticipate that we should be able to submit our findings in early October.

I understand that to date 560 U3As have undertaken to contribute to this project

Working on this project, got me thinking! I would be interested in what you see Neston looking like in 2022. Will we have:

10 ladies' hairdressers?

How many coffee or charity shops?

Will we have any buses?

A Library?

A Post Office?

10 vacant properties.

2 A T Ms?

A Civic Hall /Town hall

A Royal British Legion club



*Michael Maden*

## Poetry News

What has Poetry Group 3 been doing since March? Well, nothing at first as we, along with the rest of the world, came to terms with the new way of living. However, by the middle of April we had rallied and embraced 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology by holding weekly Zoom meetings which we all found very welcome. Not all of us wanted to Zoom, but there are 5 regulars and 6 of us in a WhatsApp group where we chat and swap news and jokes on a daily basis. We call ourselves “Poetry Pals” – a good bit of alliteration there for poetry enthusiasts!

Full marks have to be awarded to Marion as she faced the challenge of installing Zoom onto her Kindle and getting it to work. Each week she would be there, ready with her poems, and her Kindle balanced on cushions on the coffee table. Marion also entertained us with her own poems that she was inspired to write during lockdown. You can read her poem about lockdown below.

None of the rest of us were quite so moved as to write our own, but we covered a variety of topics from Solitude, The Tide, Cake, Gifts, and the Four Elements of Earth, Fire, Air and Water tackled over 4 weeks. A real treat came in July when we met in Marion’s garden for poems about Hope, washed down with Prosecco and fortified with Val’s amazing Poppy Seed Cake which was absolutely delicious. In fact, Val’s cakes became quite a topic on their own, as each week at the end of our meetings she would tell us what the cake of the day was, to have with her afternoon tea.

As the winter approaches and there seems to be no end in sight for a return to normality, I know I shall appreciate my friends in Poetry Group 3 more than ever. I feel they have kept me going through what has been a lonely time for many of us – and I think I have just found a good idea for our next topic: Friendship!

*Lesley Sutherland*

“I am a member of Poetry and Prose 3. Early on in lockdown we formed a Poetry Pals WhatsApp Group but really missed the poetry aspect. We were persuaded by one of our members to try ‘Zooming’. Needless to say, some found it easier to Zoom than others!

My little verse came as a result of those efforts:

### **Zooming**

Lesley, Liz, Jill, Val and me  
Zoom together each Tuesday at three.  
First we catch up on Covid and Trump  
On cooking and gardening – you’ll agree quite a jump.  
What we miss most in this time of trouble  
We agree, it’s family, but we’ll soon join a bubble!

The topics we cover range far and wide:  
The seasons; love; animals; nature and tide.  
We’ve all made our choices and take it in turns,  
To read from John Clare, Robert Browning and Burns.  
We read our poems and talk about each:  
Why we love them and what they can teach.

Oh no! It can’t be, it’s now nearly four.  
Time for L, L, G, V and me to log off once more.

We’ll Zoom again!!”  
*Marian Holland*

### **Books**

Please contact myself (07799640 208) or Simon (07960170007) if you would like us to provide you with books. Let us know what you would like and we will try our best to find books to suit you. No charge and no return date! We are happy to deliver to your door.

*Julie Davies (Editor)*