

Good morning all. Things have changed since last month, and some of the tentative steps to 'new normality' are back on hold. But we can still hope that, if enough people use their common sense, we may have something like Christmas. But, if we are feeling a bit sorry for ourselves, consider a GP in Manchester with 2 young children and another due in April, 9 times in isolation so far. Fortunately, so far, tests have been negative. Last time, she sent a desperate message on the family WhatsApp link: 'Send Mary Poppins, chocolates, or vaccine'. (Sadly, I could only respond to my granddaughter with chocolates).

Please respond to any of the comments by email directly to:

Valban17@gmail.com



A Holiday Remembered

When we were in Ramsgate on the U3A holiday last year several of us were very interested in filming that was being undertaken in and around an old motor yacht in the harbour called

'Sundowner'. The people filming wouldn't tell us what it was all about but last week I found out quite by accident. I was watching a recording of a programme called 'Combat Ships' which was on Smithsonian channel (Freeview HD channel 56 or Sky 171) on Friday evenings at 10.00pm. At Ramsgate they were filming a couple in 30s/40's clothes, at times the man with binoculars was looking through a porthole in the side of the boat. The boat and its owner had quite a history; apparently it was bought from the military in the 1930's and converted to a smart ocean going motor yacht which was then bought in 1929 by a man called Charles Lightoller. He had been an officer on the Titanic and was responsible for saving many women and children. He then served with distinction in the Royal Navy during World War I and was twice decorated for gallantry. In the late 1930s, not long before WW2 started he and his wife were asked by the Admiralty to undertake some reconnaissance along the German coast just pretending to be on holiday but actually collecting data – hence the binoculars in use behind the porthole! They also undertook water depth measurements using a plumb line and so they were able to get vital information about the coast which was very useful to the Allies in WW2. At Dunkirk Charles Lightoller, although by then long retired, took the Sundowner and became one of the 'little boats' and he rescued over 120 soldiers from the beach.

Contributed by June Irvine

We've been keeping in touch with our neighbours:

Harriot Browne, Chair, Burnham U3A writes. Some of our groups are keeping going with zoom, also committee meetings work that way

I keep the website up to date with anything I get told and have managed our Magazine for the benefit of our non-web members, even though a bit irregularly.

Instead of every 2 months, I have done summer & autumn, and am working on Winter. Again it depends on contributions, but they have been quite good. There won't be any more this year now.

We have agreed to drop last Spring's AGM all together, in the hope that 2021 is possible.

PS. If you would like to see our magazine, you can find it via a button on our website www.burnhamu3a.com

Mike Knight, Chair, Taunton U3A writes. What have we been doing since March? In fact, nothing much! Some of our smaller groups are continuing to meet in members' homes, for example, 'Reading for Pleasure' and 'Enquiring Minds'. Members on their own (MOTO) have been meeting and lunching still but only when there are six or less. We have been sending out newsletters to keep people informed of what's (not) happening and I've attached one for your information.

Our committee has been meeting monthly via Zoom and committee meetings are relatively well ordered. Next month (November) we are going to try our first Meet and Greet via Zoom and at the moment we have no idea how many members will want to log on to that. It will be a presentation by Jan Diamond on Michelangelo.

We are proposing to delay our AGM until January and that will also be held on Zoom unless restrictions are eased by then (unlikely). We have extended our membership year by 3 months so subscriptions for 2021/22 will not be required until April 2021 instead of January.

[Autumn 2020 Newsbrief - Final.pdf](#)
(92K)

PS I forgot to mention that we have also agreed to use Beacon for our membership details. At the moment I am acting as membership secretary as well as Chair as there's not much to do but in the longer term we will need a new memsec. Beacon seems to be pretty good and fairly easy to manage. Of course, there is still the problem of the members who are not on email. We have over a hundred of them and contacting them every time by post or phone is becoming not only a chore but also expensive! However contacting members by email through Beacon is marvellously easy and quick!



ODDS AND ENDS

We won't be meeting up on West Quay to see the **bore** as planned. Anyway, I'd forgotten the clock change and it wouldn't look particularly good in the dusk. Roll on next Spring.

I hear that the **Xmas lunch** (lunch group) 18th December has also been cancelled.

I have been given a number of really nice **craft books**, cross-stitch and glass painting. Anyone interested let me know and I can arrange 'contactless' viewing.

We need a **volunteer to house some U3A equipment**, video camera etc. Do let me know and I'll put you in touch with the current minder.

Zoom, more and more of us are discovering that it IS easy, and amazingly useful for any number of people to chat, and see, one another. I was terrified of it a couple of months ago, now wouldn't be without it. Most of you use laptops and they have the necessary mike and camera inbuilt; if - like me - you use a desktop, easy plug in Webcams cost less than £20.

Thank you, those who said they enjoyed the **Carnival story**. And to answer some of you, yes, I wrote it a few years ago - one of a set on Somerset History. *(IF YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THIS IT WILL BE ON OUR WEBSITE ALONG WITH A LINK TO THIS NEWSLETTER. Ed.)*

One day we will all get together, at a super coffee morning, and renew our **memberships** (along with all our other activities). But until that happy day, if for any reason you are not intending to renew - moving, maybe - could you let Christine Bale know please. 01278-451804.

As you will remember, we have **waived membership fees** for the whole year. But there are still costs. With over 50 members not on email, we started setting up a volunteer delivery system of a printed newsletter. But the latest safeguarding means they will have to be posted. **Anyone feeling generous** could send a few 2nd class stamps (unused!) to help with this. (To Val Bannister, 3 Homecastle House,

Chandos St, TA6 3DL). Thank you, in advance, for your supportive generosity.

"Oh yes they will!" "Oh no they won't!" "Maybe" Our new and local theatre, McMillan, plans to run live **Panto this Xmas**. And lots of other live events now, well socially distanced in the theatre or available to watch at home. Just check it all out - key in McMillan Theatre What's On. Obviously, we have to be aware of the level of risk, but for home watching, no problems.



AND OUR MEMBERS WRITE:

Shirley Payton: As a group (Creative Writing, 1) we have continued writing on an agreed subject each month. Sometimes a poem or a story, we then mail them to each other. Over the year some of us have also met up for coffee and a chat. First at The Purplespoon, more recently at the White Feather. We realise now that it will not be possible to meet up for at least a month but certainly intend to stay in touch and continue writing. We are determined not to be beaten by Covid!!

Sue Fox Thank you for your updates- good on you. As I've now moved out of your area [to Wellington] - I won't be joining you in the future. Good luck to each and every one of you - and stay safe and well.

Rachel Dysart Thank you for rounding up all this info and news and passing it on. I was interested in the Scrabble group news. I suspect the players welcome the chat as much as the play. I play Scrabble online on Facebook. Their version is called Lexulous and is free. You can play with friends or random players. You can even chat by typing a message in the chat box. Some players are deadly serious and you learn new words that are in the scrabble dictionary but seldom heard in your daily life. It is rare that I would play a game in one go from start to finish. I generally play once a day. You can play with people all over the world. I am happy to help anyone start a game.

There is a world out there:

Marion Churchill writes: I went to Chew Valley lake yesterday to look at the waterfowl; mainly Canada geese, swans & I did see a pair of great crested grebes diving. Driving further east is Manor Farm cafe & farm shop (& loo stop).

And a nice story from **Dave Porteus**. A plane with 5 passengers on board, Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, the Pope, Nicola Sturgeon and a ten-year-old school boy. It is about to crash and there are only 4 parachutes. Sturgeon says "I need one. I have to sort out Scotland". Takes one and jumps. The pope says "I need one to sort out the Catholic Church", and jumps. Trump says "I'm the smartest person in America, I need one" and jumps. Boris Johnson said to the boy, "You can have the last 'chute, I've lived my life, yours is just starting". "No problem," says the lad, "there are 2 left. The 'smartest person' took my school bag".



THANK YOU AND

Please reply individually to this newsletter, your news and views are important, rather than using 'reply' as it will get too cluttered and I may miss one of you. Also, if you don't get an individual reply, please don't be offended - any ideas from you will be shared with the steering group, but you will, I'm sure, understand it's a mammoth task. Thanks.valban17@gmail.com

Keep well, safe, active and happy - Val B (Bridgwater U3A Sec).