

# COUNTESTHORPE U3A

## UPDATE AND CURFEW CHRONICLE No 4

Hello Everyone

Let's not dwell on the depressing situation we are currently experiencing when we can look back over the year since our last AGM, for there is much to remember and to celebrate.

As usual, the year since our last AGM has been a very full one for our U3A. The number of activity groups remain buoyant, with the relatively newer ones (such as Ukulele, Talking of Death, Pilates) currently establishing themselves very well. Video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Skype are now being utilised by a number of groups to ensure that members continue to enjoy themselves and to ensure their groups continue to function.

There have been many outings and holidays to enjoy, too. Speaking from first-hand experience I thoroughly enjoyed two great holidays to Bournemouth (October) and Weston-Super-Mare (March) which provided everyone with excellent food and accommodation and which included varied excursions to interesting places.

As someone who has always been interested in Egyptology, I must single out the day visit to the Tutankhamun exhibition at the Saatchi Museum. One could not fail to be overawed by the beauty and complexity of the craftsmanship produced some three thousand years ago. Furthermore, it was the impressive way that the museum displayed these artefacts in order to enhance each item's individual characteristics to its very best advantage; something that the Cairo Museum singularly failed to do.

We must also take time to reflect on the special nature of our U3A. I hope that many of you have experienced, as we have, many phone calls received from other members just to check that all is OK, or just for a simple chat. This connection is so important in these times of imposed isolation, particularly for those living on their own. It is a fact that women are much better than men at maintaining this type of social contact. I wonder to what extent men engage in this social activity because it is just as important for men's well-being; even if it is to share how one's shed is organised, or the discovery of new laser extractor tool for Torx fixings!

Once again, I must pay tribute to the committee of 2019/20. It has been my privilege to chair such a committed body of people, for every member has contributed so effectively for the good of our membership – which has continued to increase to well over 500 members last year. In these unprecedented times, which currently require more in the way of remote communications, we hope that this level of membership can still be maintained. Until these difficult times are over – as they surely will be, I wish everyone a safe passage through it all until such time we can get back together again to fully enjoy what our excellent U3A has to offer.

Peter Bradbury

**NB: A PRINTED VERSION IS SENT TO ALL THOSE WITHOUT EMAIL**

## KYNREN HOLIDAY

**This is now cancelled.** Full refunds are being processed. Jill hopes to re-book this for 2021, and those who booked for this year will have priority when booking opens next year! A date for your diaries!

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## 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. Thank you 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.

# THE COUNTSTHORPE U3A CURFEW CHRONICLE

## No 4

### May 2020

#### Wash Day Memories

During the lock-down I have been filling my time by writing down a few childhood memories and I wondered if anyone could relate to my memories of my account of “wash day” or are you all too young? I was born in March 1939 and soon after War was declared in September 1939 my Dad was working on the war effort in the shipyards in Newcastle upon Tyne. My Mum took on his “insurance round” in Humberstone, Leicester, and so I spent many happy hours in the care of my Grandmother. Gran (as she was always known) had two daughters still living at home and both worked full-time; one at Faire Brothers in Leicester and the other at the Lockheed munitions factory.

Household tasks were assigned to certain days and Monday was always “wash day”. The first task on Mondays was to light the fire under the copper (a brick-built structure in the corner of the kitchen). Then the water bucket had to be taken several times to the pump (which was situated between the five cottages it served) and pump water into the bucket – it took at least three buckets of water to fill the copper. Gran then shaved shards of green soap off a block into the water and lowered the clothes into the copper before replacing the wooden lid. She then spent time pumping and carrying more clean water to fill her “dolly” tub (a sort of metal barrel), ready for rinsing. When the water was hot the clothes were agitated using a wooden pole; the same wooden pole which was used for fishing the clothes out of the copper and into the “dolly” tub for rinsing. The clothes were then taken out of the “dolly” tub and placed in a stone trough, the water changed, the “tub” refilled, a blue bag added and the clothes rinsed for a second time.

At this point, any clothes requiring starching, were dealt with. The next task was to put the clothes through the two big rollers, known as wringers, of the mangle; this removed excess water and helped to straighten sheets before they were pegged out to dry on the line.

At the end of the day Gran used the bucket to drain the dirty water from the copper, reserving enough of it to empty onto the red quarry tiles ready for scrubbing. Ironing was Tuesday’s main task, and so on during the week.

I recall that Gran was a wonderful cook, could turn her hand to re-covering chairs or other upholstery, could be relied upon to have the correct remedies for all our ills and was always happy. In spare moments she would peg rag rugs or darn socks. I am sure she would have regarded herself as being very ‘ordinary’, but in my memory she will always remain the most resourceful and wonderful person I have ever known.

*Written by Jenny Mills*

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No pool, gym, or run in the park,  
So sort my clothes, just for a lark!  
Now, girls - do beware,  
They need light and air,  
It’s true that they shrink in the dark!

*Written by Tricia Brown*

## **21 Positives and counting . . . written on March 28<sup>th</sup> when lockdown seemed more of a novelty**

I can dance to Abba all day if I want to.

However untidy anywhere is no one will be coming to visit.

I can discover the pleasures of cleaning (should any exist).

I can watch bulbs come into flower.

I can gain more light from light bulbs when I have vacuumed the shade.

It doesn't matter how awful my ukulele practice sounds.

I can play CDs I own which I've forgotten about.

I needn't wash for days if I don't want to.

I can try new recipes as long as I've got the food. Or enough food.

I can walk up and down in house/garden to notch up 10,000 steps a day. Or more.

I can read, sleep and eat as I choose.

I can learn lots of new things.

I can self-improve.

I don't have to stand in supermarket queues.

I can clear out all unnecessary paperwork (as long as I'm motivated).

I can take one day at a time to cope.

I can chuckle at emails sent to amuse.

I can stay in touch with friends.

I can appreciate what I have got rather than want what I haven't.

I can go for a walk at 6.30 am or 10.30 pm and not see a soul.

My garden will look tidier . . . eventually

### **Additional thoughts on April 28<sup>th</sup> would be: (There could be more!)**

I am lucky to have a secure home.

I am lucky to have remained healthy.

I am fortunate to have dedicated NHS staff should I need them.

I am lucky to have supportive neighbours and friends.

**We know you are looking forward to getting out and about - BUT . . . where might you go? Try this!**

## Making plans for the weekend?

Use this simple calculation to help you work out the ideal place or activity for you!



Choose a number between 1 and 9

Multiply it by 3

Add 3

Multiply by 3 again

Add the two digit number you get together

**The number you get is where you will be going!**

1. Pub	7. Out for dinner	13. Football in the park
2. Cinema	8. Meet up with friends	14. The Zoo
3. BBQ in the park	9. Stay at home	15. Shopping spree
4. Birthday party	10. Round of golf	16. Swimming
5. Day at the beach	11. Gym	17. Road trip to Ireland
6. Playground	12. Long weekend away	18. Theatre

*Sent in by Ruth Westley*

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## **A FEW 'ONE-LINERS' TO MAKE YOU SMILE**

*Sent in by David Hebblewhite*

The Grim Reaper came for me last night, and I beat him off with a vacuum cleaner. Talk about Dyson with death.

A mate of mine recently admitted to being addicted to brake fluid. When I quizzed him on it he reckoned he could stop any time . . .

I went to the cemetery yesterday to lay some flowers on a grave. As I was standing there I noticed 4 grave diggers walking about with a coffin; 3 hours later and they're still walking about with it. I thought to myself, they've lost the plot!!

My daughter asked me for a pet spider for her birthday, so I went to our local pet shop and they were £70! Blow this, I thought, I can get one cheaper off the web.

I was at an ATM yesterday when a little old lady asked if I could check her balance, so I pushed her over.

I start a new job in Seoul next week. I thought it was a good Korea move.

I was driving this morning when I saw an RAC van parked up. The driver was sobbing uncontrollably and looked very miserable. I thought to myself that guy's heading for a breakdown.

My neighbour knocked on my door at 2:30 am this morning; can you believe that, 2:30 am?! Luckily for him I was still up playing my bagpipes.

I saw a poor old lady fall over today on the ice!! At least I presume she was poor - she only had £1.20 in her purse.

A wife says to her husband you're always pushing me around and talking behind my back. He says, "What do you expect? You're in a wheelchair."

I was explaining to my wife last night that when you die you get reincarnated but must come back as a different creature. She said she would like to come back as a cow. I said you're obviously not listening.

The wife has been missing a week now. Police said to prepare for the worst. So I have been to the charity shop to get all her clothes back.

A teddy bear is working on a building site. He goes for a tea break and when he returns he notices his pick has been stolen. The bear is angry and reports the theft to the foreman. The foreman grins at the bear and says, "Oh, I forgot to tell you, today's the day the teddy bears have their pick nicked."

Just got back from my mate's funeral. He died after being hit on the head with a tennis ball. It was a lovely service.

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## A CONFUSING CONVERSATION

*(This is a piece written by Jackie Barker, for our Creative Writing Group session, where we write something to a new theme – a word or phrase - each month)*

What's this month's topic then?

*Weren't you listening? It's 'confusion'.*

That's a strange thing to want to write about.

*Why's that?*

Well, confusion. It's what pathologists say when there are dark marks on a corpse.

*No, no, you're getting muddled. That's a 'contusion'.*

Oh yes. Silly me. Of course, it's what you write when you've weighed up all the pros and cons and have your answer.

*No, it isn't, silly. That's a 'conclusion', a 'summary'.*

Well, I thought that was how you described a lovely warm day. You know, when the weather's sort of balmy.

*Well, you're driving me barmy.*

Sorry, I only want to know what to write about.

*It's confusion. CON FU SION - you silly old bat.*

Right. I've got it. I've to write about that Chinese philosopher who says many profound things that nobody understands. Should be interesting.

*No, no, no! That's Confucious and I don't think he ever had anything to say about confused old biddies.*

*And now, in sharp contrast, another piece inspired by the same theme from another member of the Creative Writing Group, Shirley Wilding.*

### **CONFUSION (or Coronavirus 2020)**

There's so much confusion, sickness and gloom  
But the flowers weren't told that they shouldn't bloom

There is loneliness, worry, unhappiness, grief  
But the trees and the bushes still burst into leaf

Funereal bells may toll in the rafter,  
But there's music to hear in children's laughter

There's a chill in my heart, like cold winds that blow  
But love, like the sun, has a comforting glow.

Who can foresee what the future will bring  
But the birds in their wisdom continue to sing

When this grim situation eventually ends  
I know I'll have learnt the true value of friends.

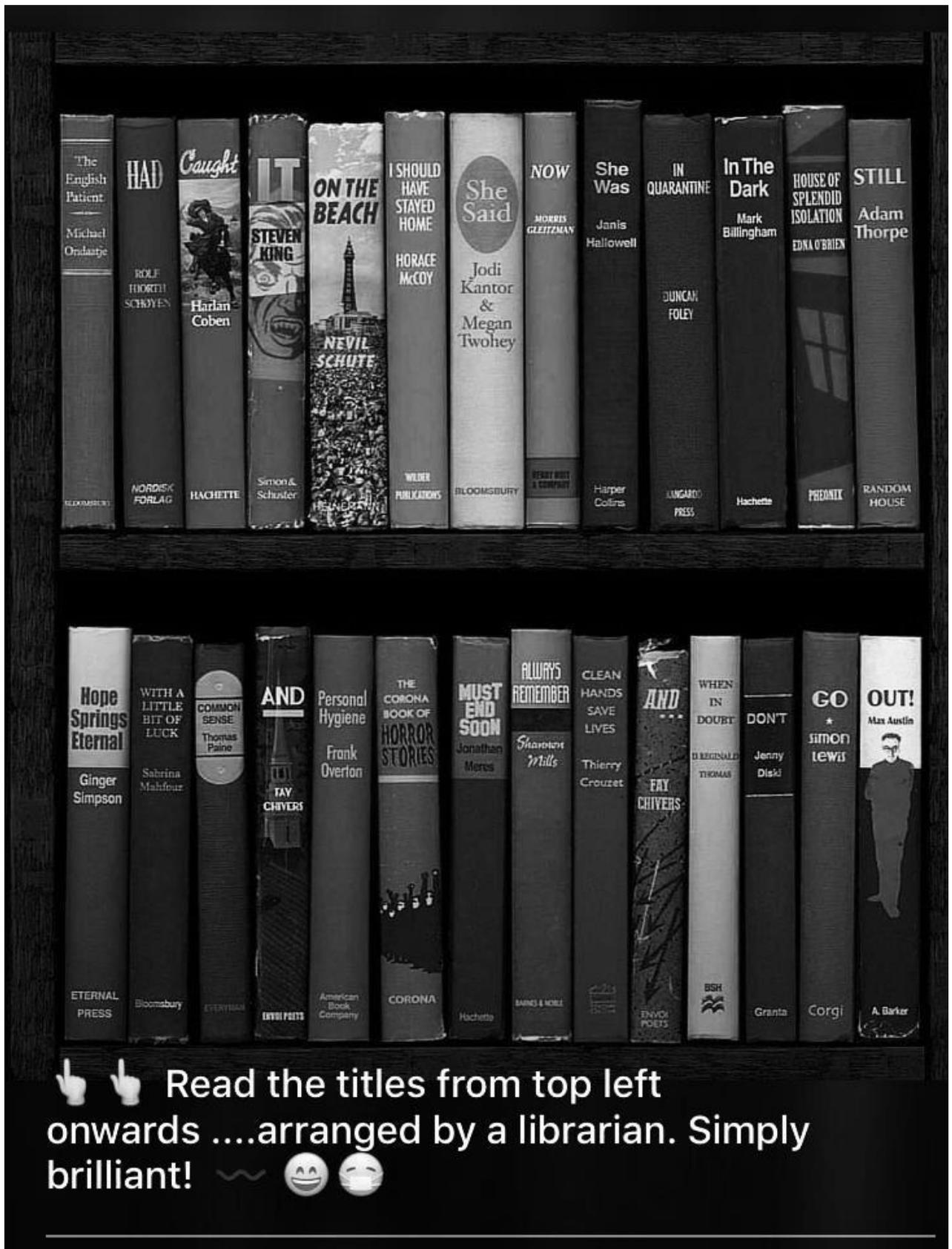
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### **SPARE PART SYNDROME!**

It is certainly frustrating to be prevented from continuing the voluntary work which so many of us did before Covid-19 changed our way of life. It can leave one feeling a bit of a spare part! One member has been feeling a bit sad about this and feels there is little she can do, except for 'obeying the rules' such as staying at home – and points out that this doesn't take much effort! She wondered whether we could mount a U3A campaign to donate a little each month to the NHS charities. A great idea; however, as a registered charity, we are bound by charity law which precludes one charity from donating to another. So, it has to be down to individuals. Perhaps each one of us could do something individually to help one of the many charities supporting our NHS, Care and other key workers who are doing such sterling work.

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**That's all for this issue apart from the novel book collection overleaf – sent in by Patsy Paterson! Please keep your contributions coming in to me for the next issue via email at [jhawkins45@talktalk.net](mailto:jhawkins45@talktalk.net) or by text to 07985 013015 or via WhatsApp. Take care, keep smiling and don't forget our U3A!**



The English Patient had caught it on the beach. "I should have stayed home," she said. Now she was in quarantine in the dark house of splendid isolation. Still, hope springs eternal. With a little bit of luck, common sense and personal hygiene the corona book of horror stories must end soon. Always remember – clean hands save lives and when in doubt don't go out!