

COUNTESTHORPE U3A

UPDATE AND CURFEW CHRONICLE No 5

Dear Member

Once again, a big 'thank you' to all the contributors who have made this issue possible. We hope that everyone is continuing to keep cheerful and occupied during this extended lockdown, and it is good that the restrictions are easing a little now.

- **Full refunds** have been posted to anybody who paid for "Strictly Ballroom" scheduled for 21 October. We have been offered a new date of 22 June 2022 – and yes, I do mean 2 years hence, it is not a typo! No action at this point!
- **All U3A outings, general meetings and group activities** remain suspended until further notice. More information as soon as things 'unlock' sufficiently. However, many groups and the main meeting are dependent upon public venues and so are unlikely to be early resumptions. Additionally, our U3A insurance would not yet cover us.

Now that restrictions are easing a little, and we begin to 'unlock', the country will be relying on the NHS Test and Trace System. With this in mind, you might find this a useful source of information about the system, designed to let you know what to expect, and how to avoid scams. This was provided by the Neighbourhood Watch, and sent in for circulation by Barry Hillyard:

The NHS #TestandTrace system has gone live to help reduce the spread of #Covid19. Here's some information on how the system works and what to be aware of.

NHS Test and Trace will only call you from 0300 0135000, or send you texts from NHS directing you to <https://contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk>

WE WOULD ADVISE TYPING THIS IN TO YOUR BROWSER RATHER THAN CLICKING ON A LINK IN A TEXT MESSAGE

You could, if you wish, visit this website and save it in your browser so that if you do get a message, you can go to your saved page safe in the knowledge that you are on the safe and correct page.

UK GOV have a webpage all about how the Test and Trace system works and it also contains a section detailing what tracers WON'T do or ASK to help you avoid being caught out by potential fraudsters <https://gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works> (if you prefer, rather than clicking this link search for GOV UK Test and Trace)

Contact tracers will:

- call you from 0300 013 5000
- send you text messages from 'NHS'
- ask you to sign into the NHS test and trace contact-tracing website
- ask for your full name and date of birth to confirm your identity, and postcode to offer support while self-isolating
- ask about the coronavirus symptoms you have been experiencing
- ask you to provide the name, telephone number and/or email address of anyone you have had close contact with in the 2 days prior to your symptoms starting
- ask if anyone you have been in contact with is under 18 or lives outside of England

Contact tracers will NEVER:

- ask you to dial a premium rate number to speak to us (for example, those starting 09 or 087)
- ask you to make any form of payment or purchase a product or any kind
- ask for any details about your bank account
- ask for your social media identities or login details, or those of your contacts
- ask you for any passwords or PINs, or ask you to set up any passwords or PINs over the phone
- disclose any of your personal or medical information to your contacts
- provide medical advice on the treatment of any potential coronavirus symptoms
- ask you to download any software to your PC or ask you to hand over control of your PC, smartphone or tablet to anyone else
- ask you to access any website that does not belong to the government or NHS

⚠ PLEASE HELP US TO RAISE AWARENESS BY SHARING THIS INFORMATION ⚠

And finally, please don't forget to renew your membership if you haven't already done so – full details have been shown in the last few Chronicles, so I won't repeat them all here. If you have internet access, you can also look this up on our website. See the 'membership' item featured on the right-hand side of the homepage. (Remember, it is now £15 or £8 for Associates, and you don't need to fill in a form!)

One idea that has been forthcoming is for members to share suggestions for good books they have read, radio or TV programmes or podcasts which are perhaps more interesting than they sound, or films worth watching if you have Netflix, Sky Cinema, YouTube or Amazon Prime for instance. That way we might get to hear about things that we hadn't known about or considered. I guess we are all a bit more dependent on the radio, TV and internet than we thought we ever would be.

I have vowed to read Ken Follett's Kingsbridge trilogy during this lockdown. Book One (Pillars of the Earth – 1027 pages) is now read, and I am on Book Two (World Without End – 1237 pages) with Book Three (A Column of Fire – a mere 827 pages) to complete the saga. I have a lovely little 'lap beanbag' which helps support the weight of these tomes! Expensive, but well worth it. (Well, there's not much else to spend money on, is there!)

Perhaps also, if you know of short walks around the area, you might want to write them up and we could put them on the website, or include them with the Chronicle if space allows.

So now, relax and enjoy our next selection of items in the Chronicle. Keep safe, keep smiling and keep remembering the good times we had, and will have again, in our U3A! Don't forget to send your contributions for Chronicle No 6!

June Hawkins
Information and Publicity Officer



Contributions by 20 June, please, to me at:

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post to
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So many of you enjoyed Jenny Mills' nostalgic piece last time that she has put 'pen to paper' once again to tell us of her . . .

FIRST FAMILY HOLIDAY

Soon after the end of the war my Dad came to live with us in Blaby and returned to his job as an insurance agent for the Co-op. Each year the whole country seemed to stop work for our Annual Holidays – the first week in August. Great excitement – we had a week's holiday booked at Rogerson Hall Holiday Camp, Corten.

The journey to the east coast was made by train, firstly from Blaby to Leicester London Road and then to the coast. I can still picture hoards of families waiting on the platform at Leicester London Road Station, all with suitcases and the children carrying their bucket and spades. On arrival at the coast the holiday camp was still about a mile from the railway station and there were no buses or taxis so the local children used to be waiting at the railway station with their homemade trolleys and would offer, for a small sum, to walk with us to the camp with our suitcases loaded on to their trolleys. Rogerson Hall was a one storey building with a canteen on one side of reception and ballroom on the other side and was situated on the east coast with fields of corn laying between the village and the camp.

On arrival we were allocated our chalet. En suite was unheard of and I remember a toilet block at both ends of the rows of chalets – the ladies at one end and the gents at the other. Outside was a large field, part of which was formed into a small golf course, a small children's play area and the sand-dunes and beach were on the far side of the field. The complex was managed by a man and wife, and staffed with waiters, waitresses, cleaners and a camp photographer.

Terms were full board and at the first evening meal we were introduced to camp traditions. Grace was sung before lunch and evening meals, but I'm afraid was rather irreverent. It was sung to the tune used for the hymn "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and went like this:

*"Always eat when you are hungry
Always drink when you are dry
Always close your eyes when sleeping
Don't stop breathing or you'll die."*

If you committed the crime of arriving late for lunch or dinner you were not allowed to take your place at your table until you had paid a forfeit. This could be of your own choice, such as the recitation of a poem, the singing of a song, or a joke or story, but it had to be over the PA system! If you were late you had little chance of sneaking in without being seen because the canteen had windows all round and the custom was that the first campers to spot latecomers had to bang the shafts of their knives and forks on the table! Another custom, if you were off the camp site and you saw other campers and whether or not you knew them, you had to greet them with the words “Hi-de-hi” and they had to reply “Ho-de-ho”. *(Re-created for TV some years later, I seem to recall!)*

Most of the entertainment was run on a DIY basis and the programme for the week was organised by a small committee of volunteers who met on the day of arrival to agree the activities.

Firstly, there were many competitions both for children and adults, including sandcastles, races (egg and spoon, sack, one-legged), golf, table-tennis, fancy dress, knobbly knees, etc. Then there was the team games – football, cricket, and rounders. Lists were displayed on notice boards and campers were urged to put their names down for as many as possible!

Secondly, there was the evening entertainment to be organised. Any camper who was able to entertain in any way was encouraged to volunteer for the weekly talent concert, such as budding dancers, singers, comics, pianists, etc. Thursday night was the one I remembered – that was topsy-turvy night when the men were expected to dress as ladies and the ladies as men and the alternative dress had to be worn to evening meal – it was great fun.

Every evening there was what we called a ‘social’ in the ballroom. This was a mixture of games and dances. For instance, musical chairs was very popular, particularly amongst the children, and the dances were very varied from square dances, Old Time, and traditional, eg the Barn Dance, the Teddy Bears’ Picnic (danced in threes with a man in the middle and usually progressive), the Gay Gordons, the Palais Glide (an early line swing dance from the late thirties danced in rows), and the Conga. Young children were banished from the ballroom later in the evening and it was then that the more traditional dances, eg quickstep, waltz, foxtrot were done. If you had young children you could put them to bed and leave them in the chalet. Rotas of parents were set up to patrol the chalets and a white handkerchief had to be tied to the door knob to let those patrolling listen outside. The festivities in the ballroom were frequently stopped to allow an

announcement of “Child crying in Chalet No . . .” We also used to do the Hokey Cokey – do you remember that?

The final night of the week was given over to the ‘talent concert’ when campers put on their own concert. Well, I remember my Dad singing “Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes”, from The Gondoliers, or “Just a Song at Twilight” when everyone was invited to ‘join in’. Also competition winners were presented with prizes – goodness knows what they were because chocolate was still ‘on ration’. The evening would end on a final short ‘social’ and campers would join in a big circle and sing Auld Lang Syne.

To me, as a child, these simple holidays were absolutely magical and unfortunately “progress”, when we travelled by our own car and paid entertainers became popular, were never quite the same!



Now, do you want to give the brain a little workout and keep those aging grey matter cells active? The answers appear later on, but no peeking!

- 1 Johnny's mother had three children. The first child was named April. The second child was named May. What was the third child's name?
- 2 There is a clerk at the butcher shop, he is five feet ten inches tall and he wears size 13 sneakers. What does he weigh?
- 3 Before Mt Everest was discovered, what was the highest mountain in the world?
- 4 How much dirt is there in a hole that measures two feet by three feet by four feet?
- 5 What word in the English Language is always spelled incorrectly?
- 6 Billy was born on December 28th, yet his birthday is always in the summer. How is this possible?
- 7 In California, you cannot take a picture of a man with a wooden leg. Why not?
- 8 What was the US President's name in 1975?
- 9 If you were running a race, and you passed the person in 2nd place, what place would you be in now?
- 10 Which is correct to say, "The yolk of the egg are white" or "The yolk of the egg is white"?
- 11 If a farmer has 5 haystacks in one field and 4 haystacks in the other field, how many haystacks would he have if he combined them all in another field?



Just be careful! People are going crazy from being in lockdown.

Actually I've just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster while drinking coffee and all of us agreed that things are getting worse. I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything. Certainly not to the fridge as he is acting cold and distant. In the end, the iron straightened me out as she said everything will be fine, no situation is too pressing. The Hoover was very unsympathetic - told me to just suck it up, but the fan was more optimistic and hoped it would all soon blow over! The toilet looked a bit flushed when I asked its opinion and didn't say anything, but the doorknob told me to get a grip. The front door said I was unhinged and so the curtains told me to . . . yes, you guessed it . . . pull myself together.

Sent in by Maureen Leadbeater



Church Ladies With Typewriters

They're back! Those wonderful Church Bulletins! Thank God for the church ladies with typewriters. These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced at church services: *(Sent in by John Beaney)*

The Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled
Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water'. The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Pot-luck supper Sunday at 5:00 pm - prayer and medication to follow.

Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hospitality.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

This evening at 7 pm there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 pm. Please use the back door.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

And this one just about sums them all up:

The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new campaign slogan last Sunday: "I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours."

THE COACH TRIP

“Driver!” she called out as we all filed back.
“Have you moved my things from their place in the rack?”
“Only my sandwiches, ma’am,” he replied.
The rest of us listened; our eyes opened wide.

Who was this lady in such a fine state?
It wasn’t our Mary or Annie or Kate.
Here on our coach she seemed like a stranger.
The driver - he felt in imminent danger.

I scanned the fifty-odd names on my list.
Was this a new member who I might have missed?
I don’t know them all, but this one for sure
Was just not familiar. Oh dear, what a bore!

I’ll have to react, but can’t think quite how.
It’s all turning into a bit of a row.
“Where are you going?” she started again.
“To Countesthorpe”, Bill, our driver began.

The lady, she reddened and stammered “Oh dear!
I’m on the wrong coach and I shouldn’t be here!”
She hurriedly made her way off our bus
A little embarrassed at all of the fuss.

Hemel Hempstead was where this lady was bound.
What shock, when on the wrong coach she was found!
It’s easily done, so do please remember -
Get on the right coach, good U3A member!

(This really happened – some ten years ago now on a U3A theatre trip. It was one of the first that I had organised, and I was hoping for no problems. Probably it was not helped by the fact that there are TWO Robinson’s Coach companies which go to Milton Keynes theatre, but one has orange and brown livery, whilst ‘ours’ is white and blue! This may bring back some memories for those of you who were on that trip to see Alan Bennet’s “Enjoy”)

A CORONAVIRUS LAMENT

My hair has never been so long
And never looked so grey
I sing my COVID-19 song
And wait for hairdo day!

I fill my time with baking
My kitchen smells divine
And then I start the eating
So my figure sure ain't fine!

My car sits looking sulky
And gets lazier each day
The bodywork is filthy
Carwash is weeks away!

I could lie in bed for hours
What would the neighbours think!
Just get up and see the flowers
And make a nice hot drink!

(written by June Hawkins)

TREES

One tree, another tree,
Each standing alone and erect
The wind and air
Tell their distance apart

But beneath the cover of earth
Their roots reach out
And at depths that cannot be
seen

The roots of the trees
intertwine

Written by Ai Qing, spring 1940

Sent in by Ian Paterson

LOCKDOWN CONFUSION

My routines have all gone to pot,
Organised I'm certainly not,
And will the weather still stay fair?
In the garden I will potter,
Maybe not, it's getting hotter,
Where did I put that garden chair?
Maybe I'll read, paint, sew, or bake,
Perhaps a new routine I'll make
But who is going to cut my hair?

We must stay in and toe the line,
Text some friends and check they're fine,
Or shall I make that cup of tea?
Cancel our holiday abroad,
Days out too, so I'll soon be bored,
Did I send the U3A fees?
Shopping for food my only trip,
The queue a sort of fellowship,
Is this the time for OAPs?

Boredom leads to scoffing treats,
Biscuits, cakes, puddings and sweets,
And is there honey still for tea?*

It's clear to all I've lost the plot,
My husband's worse but not a lot,
"So what's the day today?" says he.
An active mind I shall restore,
So join the writing group once more,
But will they all remember me?

(written by Patricia Brown)

** with apologies to Rupert Brooke*

WHAT DO THESE SEVEN WORDS HAVE IN COMMON?

1. Banana
2. Dresser
3. Grammar
4. Potato
5. Revive
6. Uneven
7. Assess

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE - RIGHT? NO – THINK ABOUT THESE!

- a) You can't count your hair.
- b) You can't wash your eyes with soap.
- c) You can't breathe through your nose when your tongue is out. (*Put your tongue back in your mouth, you silly person!*)
- d) Ten (10) things I know about you:
 - 1) You are reading this.
 - 2) You are human.
 - 3) You can't say the letter "P" without separating your lips.
 - 4) You just attempted to do it.
 - 6) You are laughing at yourself.
 - 7) You have a smile on your face and you skipped number 5.
 - 8) You just checked to see if there is a number 5.
 - 9) You laugh at this because you're a fun loving person and everyone does it too.
 - 10) You are probably going to send this on to see who else falls for it.



AND NOW, I GUESS YOU WANT SOME ANSWERS! SO HERE THEY ARE!

1. Johnny, of course.
2. Meat
3. Mt. Everest; it just wasn't discovered yet
4. There is no dirt in a hole.
5. Incorrectly
6. Billy lives in the Southern Hemisphere.
7. You can't take pictures with a wooden leg. You need a camera to take pictures.
8. Same as is it now - Donald Trump
9. You would be in 2nd. You passed the person in second place, not first.
10. Neither, the yolk of the egg is yellow [Duh]
11. One. If he combines all of his haystacks, they all become one big one.

AND FINALLY . . . ABOUT THOSE SEVEN WORDS

No, it is not that they all have at least 2 double letters . . .

In all of the words listed, if you take the first letter, place it at the end of the word, and then spell the word backwards, it will be the same word.

WHEN I GET UP FROM MY CHAIR

By Pam Ayres

Quiet please! Kindly don't impede my concentration
I am sitting in the garden thinking thoughts of propagation
Of sowing and of nurturing the fruits my work will bear
And the place won't know what's hit it
Once I get up from my chair.

I'm at the planning stages now, if you should need to ask
And if I'm looking weary, it's the rigours of the task
While the creation of a garden is a strain, as you can guess
So if my eyes should close, it isn't sleep of course, it's stress.

Oh, the mower I will cherish, and the tools I will oil
The dark, nutritious compost I will stroke into the soil
My sacrifice, devotion and heroic aftercare
Will leave you green with envy
Once I get up from my chair.

I've got lots of leeks to dibble and my runner beans to stake
And I want everything hung up – the garden hoe, the garden rake
I'll disinfect the green house, when I've finished in the shed
Then, beside my faded roses, I will snip off every head.

I will excavate the bindweed, treat the moss upon the lawn
That hairy bittercress will curse the day that it was born
I will rise against the foe, and in the fight we will be matched
And the cabbage caterpillars they will curse the day they hatched.

Oh, the branches I will layer and the cuttings I will take
Let other fellows dig a pond, I shall dig a LAKE.

My garden – what a showpiece!
There'll be pilgrims come to stare
And I'll bow and take the credit
Once I get up from my chair.

(Sent in by Ian Paterson)

That's all for now, folks! See you in a few weeks' time and don't forget to send in your contributions for the next Chronicle.