



Extra Bulletin 7

NEW GROUP: POETRY

Who would like to join me, Linda Doyle, in producing a collection of poems about every aspect of 2020?

Zoom and email would be our main means of communication as we could not have regular face to face meetings but this would be a creative outlet for your thoughts, hopes and fears about every aspect of 2020. Past, present futurethe sky's the limit. You could write one poem or many as you chose. If you are interested please email mepgroups1@gmail.com and you will be contacted with further details.

And here is Linda's poem that sparked the idea off.

Lost in Time at home

Every day seems the same

The days are no shorter or longer

But time seems to move more slowly for many

Time to relax, no pressure to be somewhere else

Time to acknowledge what is really important

Time to enjoy the sunshine, the plants, birds and the cleaner air

Time to appreciate music and the arts,

Time to delight in the smell, flavour and texture of food

Time to face the present and reflect upon the past

Time to think about what went wrong but not to dwell, not to be scared

Out there the invisible enemy waits to attack us or keep us apart

Time to pull together as human beings

To gather together in our communities, our countries, and the world in a common purpose

To discourage and destroy this silent enemy

Time to defeat it with science, perseverance, and resilience

Time to encourage empathy

Time to endeavour to make the world a better place

Time to think of positive things in a shrinking world where we are all interconnected.

OTHER GROUP NEWS

Our language groups are doing their best to keep in touch using social media. The **French Improvers** group meets via Zoom for one hour a week.

Needlecraft are keeping in touch using Houseparty. As you know members of this group and others are busy sewing bags for the NHS. Last week they appealed for more pillowcases, duvets and sheets and they were inundated with offers for which they thank you. Edina says that she hasn't been out for 4 weeks but she has seen lots of people through her windows as they have dropped off linen to her house. She can probably take more so if you have some to donate please contact her at sewbowls@yahoo.co.uk to check.



Patchwork Beginners Monday and Wednesday groups are keeping in touch via email and Instagram. Beryl tells us she has "lost her sewing mojo" (as if) but still manages to post pictures of the wonderful things she is creating.

Music for Pleasure are sharing their musical memories. So far these have included The Billy Cotton Band Show, My Old Man's A Dustman and Songs for Swinging Lovers...an eclectic mix that won't be found together on a desert island any time soon. These and the vinaigrettes of the famous and infamous put together by the History group can probably be found on our website on the relevant group pages.

IF your group would like some support to get started with meeting on one or more of the social media platform mentioned above please contact Gus or Andrew who will be delighted to help you get set up.

WANT TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL?

Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKkUvGH5ANQ> and you can watch live streaming from the International Space Station and a film showing the launch, life on/in the station and the return journey. There some amazing photographs of Earth too.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS ...REMEMBER THAT...?

The *House Beautiful* website is offering **8 tours of famous gardens** and there are many more available if you simply type virtual garden tours into any search engine like Google.

<https://www.housebeautiful.com/uk/garden/g31913008/best-virtual-tours-garden/>

London Parks and Gardens Trust have had to postpone Open Garden Squares Weekend 2020 but they have introduced a number of initiatives. Look at their website for a number of guest blogs about the gardens you could have visited which will give you some ideas for 2021. Take a look at the first guest blog and a short video from the Hammersmith Community Gardens Association. Their website is www.londongardenstrust.org/blog/index.htm

Millbrook Garden Centre are missing you very much and would like you to post pictures of your garden to inspire them. Please post your pictures on their Facebook page.

You may have seen the tulips at **Pashley Manor** on the news last week. Visit their website www.pashleymanorgardens.com/2020/04/20/if-you-are-missing-the-gardens to see views of the tulips at their current best. Sadly they will all be dug up shortly but Pashley are continuing with their autumn planting in the hopes that visitors might actually get to see these blooms in person. If you would like to plant some tulips of your own then you might like to have a look at www.blomsbulbs.com who supply Pashley.

Flower arranging is getting the Bake Off treatment. Have a look at **Big Flower Fight** on Netflix from 18th May 2020 to see how it's done and wonder at the arranger's skills.

The National Trust is on a mission to get us all up early...they recommend 3.45 am ... to enjoy dawn views and scenery. It can sometimes be difficult to become a morning lark but when you open your windows, feel the freshness of the early hours, gaze at a sun-streaked sky and tune in to the dawn chorus, you might never want to have another lie-in....or so they say. Wake up early to see how the dawn colours transform the appearance of your street, or glimpse a bird or two playing in your back garden.

Visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/dawns-to-brighten-your-day for more information.

The wildlife charity **Butterfly Conservation** is asking for volunteers to record butterfly and moth sightings in their gardens and on their exercise walks. The group has data going back over 50 years but its researchers cannot leave their homes to gather information for this year's survey so they would value your help. If you are interested then look at <https://butterfly-conservation.org/> for more details about how to get involved and all things butterfly and moth.



This is painted on the road opposite the shops in Meopham but many of you will not have seen it . Thank you to Mary Moss for the photo.



**Make sure you
take your clothes out of
your wardrobe over the next
silversurfers
few weeks and give them a
little shake and air them.
Rumour has it clothes kept
in wardrobes during
lockdown shrink!!**

shared by silversurfers.com

Wonder if this is true?

Only time will tell !

MUSIC

There are more **free musicals** (and plays) you can now stream during the coronavirus outbreak: Visit <http://www.filmedonstage.com/news/76-free-musicals-and-plays-you-can-now-stream-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak-updating-daily> to see what on offer at the moment.

You can watch **Les Mis in Concert** in your living room but you have to pay for this one. Visit <https://www.lesmis.com/concert> to order your download. Half of your £9.99 fee does go to charity though.

Hope Mill Theatre are excited to announce their first ever online concert featuring the music of Rodgers and Hammerstein. West End stars and cast members will unite for a special online concert to be streamed on 26th April. "Some Enchanted Evening" will feature highlights from Oklahoma, Carousel and South Pacific.
www.hopemilltheatre.co.uk

Amazon is offering an extended trial of its music streaming service for those who haven't tried it yet. It's a decent offer that lets you stream as much music as you like from more than 50 million tracks for a 3 months rather than the usual 30 day trial. This offer ends on April 30th 2020 so you need to be quick. Make a note to yourself to cancel in good time if you don't want to continue as after the trial its £9.99 a month. (£7.99 for Prime customers)

Online Jukebox Jury

Other U3As are setting up an online jukebox, which goes something like this: Members take it in turn to choose a favourite record, which must be available on YouTube, and recommend it to those members taking part, with reasons why it is a favourite. Members give feedback and make comments online with an online vote each week for a top three. Does anyone fancy taking this on?

IN HOUSE IT SUPPORT

Don't forget Gus and Andrew have offered support with IT queries. Don't sit and ponder ...drop them an email and they will try to help.

There is no end to their helpfulness. Last week they managed to convert a Mac document into Word for the Food Group making for some very happy people. Thank you both.

The document was a quiz and you will find it attached so you can have a go too.

Week 3 Maths Puzzles

Question 1.

In a batch of 8 correctly manufactured balls, a faulty, slightly lighter ball has been accidentally added. With a traditional style balance and no additional weights how could the lighter ball be identified and what is the minimum number of weighings needed?

Question 2.

In '*Die Hard with a Vengeance*' Bruce Willis and Samuel L. Jackson were called upon to measure out exactly 4 gallons of water at a fountain to defuse a bomb. They were to use just a 3 gallon container and a 5 gallon container. How would you have solved this puzzle? Can you find a way of measuring out all amounts from 1 gallon to 8 gallons?

Question 3.

Show that if p is a prime greater than 3 then $p^2 - 1$ is divisible by 24

Question 4.

What is the probability of getting a one pair hand in poker?

KEEPING FIT AND HEALTHY

Did anyone follow **Mr Motivator** last week? His course is now finished but you can still watch the videos via the National U3A website or at the U3A Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheU3a>.

Week 4 of the **Mindfulness** Sessions with U3A Subject Adviser - Nancy Taylor is now available to listen to on the Youtube Channel along with weeks 1-3. This week she talks about calming and settling yourself with a session of mindfulness before tuning into the news and talks you through one you could use. If you find the constant news and updates make you anxious it could be worth a try.

Laughter is the best exercise ...?

Pam Ayres has posted a fantastic performance about the joys or otherwise of physical exercise on YouTube which you can view at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7b_GleX0EQ.

You may never view exercise in quite the same way again! Pam certainly has a humorous take on keeping fit.

75th ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY

The national commemoration events to mark VE Day 75 have had to be scaled back due to the ongoing spread of coronavirus. Our own planned celebrations at Meopham U3A and those in the village itself have, following the latest advice, cancelled for the foreseeable future.

Some national events are probably still going ahead on 8th May including a 2 minutes silence but nothing is certain. It would appear that the ban on unnecessary travel does not apply to vintage aircraft so a fly past or two could be a possibility.

We are being encouraged to take part in the 'Nation's Toast to the Heroes of WW2' timed at 3pm to coincide with the moment Churchill addressed the nation 75 years ago. You are asked to do this from the safety of your own home, standing and raising a glass of the refreshment of your choice and giving the following 'Toast' –

"To those who gave so much, we thank you," using this unique opportunity to pay tribute to the many millions at home and abroad who gave so much to ensure we all enjoy and share the freedom we have today. Currently a rather poignant thought.

We are also invited to join together and sing "We'll Meet Again" when it is broadcast on BBC1 at 9pm. More information will be available nearer the time.

It was hoped that all formal National VE Day plans could be moved to the weekend of the 15-16 August, to coincide with VJ Day – which commemorates the surrender of Imperial Japan during World War II, but that is looking increasingly unlikely.

There are however some VE day virtual events that you may like to consider.

Spitfire: The Peoples Plane is a 10 part series commissioned to mark the anniversary of VE day launches on BBC Sounds on May 8th and on the World Service on May 10th at 11.30. This BBC podcast tells the forgotten stories of the young people who helped to build and fly the aircraft and which served in every theatre of war. It draws on many unpublished letters and diaries as well as more well-known sources.

Bletchley Park are asking people to make bunting to decorate their own home on May 8th. After that they would like the bunting to be sent to them so they can use it to decorate the site once they are able to open. They have also prepared an activity pack which you may like to share with your family. These can be found at

<https://bletchleypark.org.uk/cms/2020/04/ve-day-activity-pack-3.pdf> and

<https://bletchleypark.org.uk/cms/2020/03/ve-day-pack-bunting.pdf>

Looking for a new book?

People sitting about in their dressing gowns in 2020 seem to have been drawn to the teachings of men who sat about in togas almost 2,000 years ago. Sales of the e-book version of *Letters from a Stoic* written by Seneca and of *Mediations* by Marcus Aurelius have risen over 750 % since the middle of March to the amazement of their publishers. Both books speak of the difficulties of enduring an epidemic and extol their readers to be virtuous in their conduct, show care for others and stay at home. Second villas were a problem in ancient Rome too!