

LEARN, LAUGH & LIVE on the Isle of Wight

Welcome to the IoW U3A Newsletter
No 7 - July 2020



The U3A is an educational and social charity which encourages people in their third age to carry on learning. It encourages social interaction and combats loneliness.

www.iowu3a.uk

info@iowu3a.uk

www.facebook.com/groups/iowu3a

Dear Members,

I am sure that all of us are now looking forward to the easing of most of the restrictions that we have had to endure during the Covid-19 pandemic. Things have changed and getting out and about is obviously easier. Next week some of us may even be able to get a haircut! However, most of us are, rightly, still cautious. With that in mind the Committee have made the following decisions:

Firstly, the July speaker meeting has been cancelled. During July, members of your committee will undertake a risk assessment of St John's Hall where we hold our speaker meetings and take any steps required to prepare us for the return of the meetings when the time is right. We will also consider the government and U3A recommendations and make a decision about when to start our programme of speaker meetings in a way that ensures the comfort and safety of all members.

Secondly, If you are reading this you will know that we decided to send our newsletter by post to every member this month rather than just to those who do not have access to the internet. We would be delighted if you would all respond to the short questionnaire contained therein. It will really help us to plan for the future.

It has been encouraging to hear from our members either directly as a result of phone calls or from the small but encouraging response to our questionnaire in the June newsletter. Most members seem to be managing very well in lockdown but are looking forward to a time when group and monthly gathering events are available and safe to attend. Your responses will be gratefully received.

Stay Safe and Well

Carol Bradshaw
Chair

Please check for errors and omissions.

News, articles and updates always welcome.

Newsletter editor Roger Skidmore, rogerskid@zen.co.uk, 01983 822900



Group Meetings

All Groups are listed on the web site at www.iowu3a.uk.

Or email: groups@iowu3a.uk

Because of the **Coronavirus** problem none of these groups will be held in person for the time being, but we will begin to look at ways that face to face meetings can resume with appropriate social distancing as soon as the rules allow.

At time of going to press:

Books, Topics & Chat - Tuesday p.m.

This Group takes it in turns to suggest Books, TED talks, newspaper articles, etc., to discuss. We also look for appropriate trips to literary festivals, etc., to go to. The aim is to cover a wide variety of subjects to achieve variety and hopefully widen horizons.

Film Studies Next Meeting - July Virtual

Discussions at 5pm on 8th July, 22nd July. The films are yet to be decided. Members can contact Jim Moody for further info - groups@iowu3a.uk



The Cooperative Gardening Group - July Report

The group continues to communicate by email and photos but alas cooperative gardening is still not possible.

We are all delighting in eating our vegetables, being amazed once again about the difference in taste that home grown crops deliver. The lovely weather has helped to produce some early crops but the shortage of rain in most gardens has caused watering to have become hard work. Our flower gardens were looking lovely but have been battered by the recent strong winds. Worries have changed from how dry everything is to bean sticks being blown down and crops being flattened. Our wonderful, variable British weather certainly keeps us on our toes.

We look forward to meeting up when and where it is safe to do so and plan some cooperative gardening projects over a cup of tea, and maybe even some cake. Courgette cake anyone?

The idea of 'cooperative' gardening may have to wait a while. Anyone who has not signed up for Garden Cooperative but who would like to be involved in monthly, or more frequent, emails about garden hints, tips, successes or failures, successes or failures email me, Carol, through groups@iowu3a.uk.

All welcome

from Carol

Rummikub -
Contact Sally by email -
groups@iowu3a.uk



Scrabble -
Contact Sally by email -
groups@iowu3a.uk

Walk and Talk about Gardens -
Wednesday p.m. - Beryl
Contact by email - groups@iowu3a.uk

This Group is still continuing and a flourishing email and photoswapping system has sprung up which is motivating, informative and supportive. Sorry no cake at the moment.

Writing Group - Christine

The writers' group met on 4th June: outside and distancing but it was lovely to see each other for real.

We discussed some pieces produced for that occasion, and there is news: Carol's painting is finished and the carpets are down !

We looked at various 'prompts' we could use for inspiration and the list of Shakespearean insults was popular. Our next project is a story for children. Other offerings always gratefully received.

You could join us. Or write about anything - or just how you are managing.

Planned:
(these are listed on the web site but some are awaiting "adoption")

DIY & Tool Knowledge;
French; Mah Jong;
Medical Matters; Photography;
Posh Dining/ Theatre;
Spanish; Using Technology;
Walking; Cycling;
Genealogy - starting November - Alison;
Local History - in the Autumn - Sally

Starting a Group - if your group isn't listed here then it probably could be!

U3A subject advisers cover a wide range of subjects.

<https://u3a.org.uk/resources/subjects>

Cycling Group

Lockdown has encouraged more people to venture out on their bikes as there is far less traffic about. We have started to become the "Green Island" which we regularly promote . I wondered if anyone would be interested in starting up an Isle of Wight U3A Cycling Group?

This is an interesting website to have a look at <https://bikemunk.com/cycling-ageing/>



Dina Jung

IoW U3A Film Studies Group

In June the Film Studies Group, sticking to the members' decision to meet every two weeks, was able to discuss two films. Early in the month we watched individually (via Netflix) and discussed collectively (via Zoom) the Basque-language film *The Giant*. This produced a variety of views, well expressed by group members it has to be said, around the questions raised by the film. The main character in this semi-biographical tale suffered from gigantism: excessive growth into the subject's 30s. Set at the time of Spain's 1840s wars of succession, the tall brother is paraded as a moneymaking freak around the country and then Europe by his older brother-cum-manager. This produces fraternal friction.

Later in June, our second film of the month was dealt with in similar fashion as to viewing and discussion. In possibly one of our liveliest sessions, group members dealt with the recent Mexican film, *Roma*. General agreement on how the well-off family in the Roma area of Mexico City looked after its servants was tempered by the latter's restricted lives. The

maid of all trades Cleo is played by a previous unknown; her place at the centre of the story is either mundane or revelatory, depending on different members' views. It was certainly a real slice of life from the early 1970s, when Mexico was not a place to be if you had little money. This really showed the worth of our group in drawing out such varied assessments of the same film.

Looking forward, group members have decided to keep on doing what works at the moment: online viewing and film group discussions every two weeks. This has the result that there will be discussion meetings on the following Wednesdays: 8 July, 22 July, 5 August, and 19 August. A group members' ballot will shortly decide what films we view and discuss in these meetings. Any member of IoW U3A who would like to find out more and perhaps join our group can contact its convenor Jim Moody at groups@iowu3a.uk

See you there!

Jim Moody

Film Club Films which are available on Netflix - suggestions welcome

Check out <https://uk.newonnetflix.info/>

The following message was sent via the Isle of Wight U3A Web Site. It was addressed to: Secretary. Please reply to Francisco Regalado fsfregalado@ua.pt.

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Francisco Regalado, researcher and student of the Master in Multimedia Communication at the University of Aveiro in Portugal and I am studying the habits of online news consumption by senior citizens. This research fits within the project SEDUCE 2.0 - Use of Communication and Information in the online community miOne by senior citizens.

I would like to know if it would be possible to count on your collaboration for the distribution to your students, preferably with more than 50 years old, of the questionnaire available in the following link - <https://bit.ly/questionnaire-miOne>.

Please note that all answers will remain anonymous and will be a great help in advancing the ongoing research.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration,

Francisco Regalado
Master in Multimedia Communication
Department of Communication and Art, University of Aveiro, Portugal.

Membership Survey

If you have read this far, please email membership@iowu3a.uk with answers to the following 3 questions (or return the enclosed slip to Yafford Mill, Yafford, PO30 3LH)

- 1) Do you regularly check your emails?
- 2) Do you usually read the newsletter when the link is emailed to you?
- 3) Would you prefer to regularly receive a printed copy by post?
- 4) Have you used the internet to chat to people during lockdown?
- 5) Would you be likely to attend a speaker meeting in Newport if the committee feel that it is safe to hold one in August?

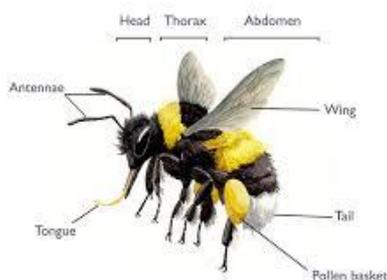
If you have ideas then please also answer these 3 supplementary questions:

- S1) If we were to start a new group or a new location for a group which group(s) would you choose and where would you like it(them) to meet?
- S2) When we restart speaker meetings what subject/s would you like a talk on?
- S3) How would you like to see the newsletter improved?

Bees and Bumble Bees

In the past two months, I have received about 35 phone calls about bees, and of those 30, 25 have turned out to be about bumble bees.

‘Why are people phoning you about bees?’ you might ask. The answer is because my partner and I are beekeepers and belong to the Isle of Wight Beekeepers Association (IWBKA), and my phone number is on the IWBKA website as someone to phone if you have a problem with swarms of bees. Since it is the nature of honey bees to swarm in spring and early summer, the phone has been busy. So far so good. As volunteers, we accept calls to capture and rehome swarms of bees which otherwise might become a nuisance. There can be as many as 30,000 bees or more in a swarm. It’s exciting. Every swarm is a different challenge and the people who have called us are fascinated and relieved in equal amounts when we turn up in our bee suits, capture the swarm in a skep (basket) and go back later to take the bees away to introduce them to a new home. The problem is, we can only do that with honey bees which are considered to be domesticated, and not any other sort of bee, all of which are considered to be wild.



Some Bee Background

There are currently approximately 295 Bees species in the UK.

There is a single honeybee (*apis mellifera*) of which there are 5 sub species. There are approximately 25 bumble bee species in the UK.

There are approximately 270 solitary bee species in the UK. Most of our calls are in fact about bumble bees. When people call, they are certain that their problem is caused by honey bees usually in a bird box or in a hole in the ground. After questioning and often a photo by email to confirm, we can reassure the caller that what they have are bumble bees and that we can't remove them. We advise people to watch them and learn all about them. To live and let live.

Bumble Bee facts

Bumble bees do sting but only if they feel threatened or they think that the nest is being threatened. Leave them alone and they will leave you alone. The queen hibernates over winter in a dry location (shed or outbuilding) or a north facing bank of soil. This is so she is not woken up during the winter until the ground warms completely. She then emerges in the spring and looks for a suitable nesting site. This often is a bird box. Once she finds a site, she makes a nest and lays worker bee eggs, then incubates them and only leaves the nest to gather nectar for herself and feed the babies. There can be up to 400 bees in a nest – unlikely to be that many in a bird box but could be in a shed - but it is often as few as 40.

In late summer, she will lay male bee eggs as well as queen bee eggs. When the males leave the nest, they go for good but the young queens can return at night. The new queens mate with male bees after which the males die and the young queens feed on nectar to gain weight so they can hibernate over the winter. Then the cycle begins again. Bumble bees are very important pollinators.

They use a technique called 'buzz pollination'. This is when the bees dislocate their wings and uses the flight muscles to vibrate, this shakes the pollen from the flower onto their hair, then they comb the pollen from their hair into the pollen baskets on the legs. Approximately 40,000 to 50,000 bumble bees are imported into the UK from Europe to pollinate tomatoes and strawberries in commercial glass houses, including to Wight Salads here on the Island.

Bumblebees do not have ears, but they do have smelly feet. This enables them to identify which flowers have been visited recently.

Carol Bradshaw



Note from editor - team up with another member at Internet Scrabble Club - <https://isc.ro> for online scrabble.

Future Speaker Meetings

The AGM has moved to October 8th

We will be planning to restart Speaker Meetings as soon as it is safe to do so.

Check out our Facebook page
www.facebook.com/groups/iowu3a

Chickens in Lockdown – Part Two.

Last month I reported that I was the proud owner of 2 4-week old chicks hatched from eggs bought on the Island as part of my response to lockdown – if I was going to be here on the Island with no prospect of foreign travel then why not satisfy my long standing desire to have chickens? When I wrote for the June issue, I believed that, with luck, I had one hen and one cockerel. Knowing that two chicks didn't quite make a flock and that a ratio of one hen to one cockerel certainly did not make a happy hen, I acquired another 6 hatching eggs. My second foray into egg hatching was more successful and I now have 5 chicks who are just over 4 weeks old:



and 2 strapping adolescents of 9 weeks old:



I am still unsure if either of the older two is a hen – anyone out there have a view?

While the internet is full of amazing and useful information, it is of course also full of contradictory information, and like with lawyers you have to be careful about how you frame the question. I thought that I could trust that you could tell when your chick either laid an egg or cock-a-doodle-dooed! Both adolescent chicks are intermittently practicing what definitely sounds like a cock-a-doodle-do and now I read that often in fact hens will also do the same! Especially dominant hens. And both my chicks, as the eldest of the flock, are trying to establish dominance, neither with any permanent success over the other.

So now I read that you can not be sure until their adult plumage shows, when the hackle and saddle feathers of the cockerel will be definitive – or indeed one lays an egg.

In the mean time my 5 younger chicks cruise about as a completely separate flocklet – shadowing the older two in the way of younger siblings longing to be part of the grown up world of adolescence while trying to keep out of pecking distance at the same time. Until the sweetcorn comes out. Then all bets are off and the younger ones agilely weave in and out of the older two stealing niblets of sweet corn from under their noses, running rings around them and, between the 5 of them, creating such a diversion that the little ones manage to get their fair share of the treat to the evident irritation of the older two.

As for genders, the jury is completely at sea. On the basis of what I thought I knew from feather patterns and reddening of wattles and combs I might have two definite hens and two maybe hens and three probably cockerels.

But all bets are off until those feathers come through – or not. The cockerel feathers should appear at about 12 weeks and the first egg may not appear for 24 weeks or more!

Patience is another thing that I am having to acquire alongside my chickens and all their paraphernalia!

Sally Forster