

LEARN, LAUGH & LIVE on the Isle of Wight

Welcome to the IoW U3A Newsletter No 8 - August 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,

Although we had hoped to hold a Speaker Meeting in St John's hall in August, this will not now be possible. We have enquired of the people who run the hall when they plan to open and have been told that they do not plan to do so until at least September and, maybe not even then.

However, instead, and because it would be lovely to see you, I, as Chair, would like to invite you to meet a few members of the committee in the afternoon of **Thursday 13th August**, in Church Litten park in Newport for an open air, socially distanced drop in. Let me know (chair@iowu3a.uk) if you are interested in coming and we will organise times so that it can happen in a way that meets the current government guidelines of no more than 6 from different households gathering outside at any one time.

Church Litten park is the green area between M&S in Newport and the bus station. It is a big area, next to both M&S and Morrison's car parks, both free for two hours, and is also next to the Newport bus station. Bring a chair, a snack and a drink if you would like to, but let's circulate and chat, at a safe distance of course. Invite friends to come too, if they are interested in the U3A. We are keen to meet up with you all. I will be there, as will Sally, the

Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Zoom expert, and Dina our Business Secretary and one of our Groups coordinators. Come and talk to us, it will be lovely to see your faces. Obviously, this is a fine weather plan with no back up for a rainy day. If it's raining hard don't come.

Our AGM is scheduled for **Thursday 8th October** but we now recognise that there is a possibility that this may not be able to be a face to face meeting and may have to be held on Zoom. We will keep you informed on how we will proceed and training sessions on Zoom will be available for all who require it. If it is to be a virtual meeting we will send, by post, all the necessary paperwork to inform you of resolutions to be voted on voting papers and procedures. Please consider getting involved, maybe by coordinating a new group or volunteering to be on the committee.

We hope you enjoyed the printed July Newsletter which you received in the post. Thank you to those who responded to the questionnaire. It's good to have feedback.

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 few of these groups are being held in person at the moment. We continue to consider ways for face to face meetings to resume with appropriate social distancing.

At time of going to press:

Books, Topics & Chat - not currently active

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 - August Zoom

Discussions at 5.00pm on 5 August (*12 Years a Slave*) and 19 August (film yet to be decided). Members can contact Jim Moody for further details: groups@iowu3a.uk



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

We have been meeting outdoors in Sally's garden, social distancing and being very responsible. At our last gathering in Yafford, we finally met Maggie, but were missing Alison who is away at the moment.

We discussed motivation, the difficulty of getting started (and finishing). Starting is often a challenge but keeping going is too.

We shared our work on a set task which was to write a story for children: we were free to decide the target age, and ended up with very different tales.

Carol's was a mysterious encounter of a little boy with the inhabitants of his garden, Sally took us on a meandering walk following an equally mysterious creature, Maggie wrote a story about a seagull who fell out of its nest and Christine wrote an amusing and imaginative story about cutlery.

Concurrently, we had another task: from a word chosen by 'the tenth book on your shelf/tenth chapter/tenth page/tenth line/tenth word' method. We have produced texts from 'Pale' and 'Clearing' so far.

Do you fancy trying any or all of these ideas?

Join us!

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

The Cooperative Gardening Group Report August Newsletter

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

We are all delighting in eating our own 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.

I am working my way through my list of jobs that I set myself when all of this started and,

on checking last week, I was pleased to discover that more than half of the jobs are complete, most of the others are well on the way to completion with only one job not yet started. I think I'll start that one this afternoon! Starting is easy, it's the finishing that I find hard.

One of Sally's jobs for this summer was to create a perennial flower meadow. It looked like a mud patch last summer - but this year the result is spectacular. She sent me this photograph of it for the newsletter.



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?

Carol

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>

And Stay Safe from our little friend here!



IoW U3A Film Studies Group

We had two more fascinating and engaging film discussions in July. Earlier in the month we each viewed separately and then discussed collectively *Brexit: The Uncivil War*. Throwing caution to the winds, though aiming to avoid any party political partisanship, our discussion was broadly based and threw up several areas of agreement and disagreement. Dominic Cummings was played by Benedict Cumberbatch to bring out the sympathetic side of his character, which jarred with some of us. However, it was clear to most initially that the film was not really about Brexit, which has been done to death elsewhere, but was precisely about this particular key player in UK politics and his motivations. In this respect a more rounded idea of what Mr Cummings might be about was glimpsed. It certainly provoked what was probably the most participatory and energetic discussion we had had. Perhaps it is true to say that our discussion was enriched by a full and open sharing of disparate views about an arguably provocative film.

Two weeks later we gathered again online via Zoom to discuss the second film of the month: *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* A vigorous film of verve and humour directed by the respected Coen Brothers and starring George Clooney, it was a hoot. Propelled by music appropriate to the times in which it was set, mid 1930s, the odyssey of the main characters carried all before it. In our discussion of the film we were divided along a spectrum from those finding it funny and with hidden depths to others who were not that impressed. Members identified distinct gestures toward Homer's epic, including the

Sirens and the Cyclops Polyphemus (John Goodman as Big Dan Teague). But as discussion developed, it opened up into the social background portrayed in the film. How the Deep South of the USA was still at the time suffering under a resurgent Ku Klux Klan, racism and segregation were rife, and the slavery from which they sprang not so distant a memory. Indeed, our discussion prompted us to decide that our film for online discussion on 5 August will be *12 Years a Slave* (2013), available on Netflix. Perhaps interesting is that the discussion flowing from our different perceptions of crime comedy caper *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* should lead us to choose next a film with a more serious overall presentation, set in a historical period in the USA when racial slavery was still very much part of the country's economy. We intend stimulating discussion shall follow.

See you there!

Jim Moody



Film Club Films which are available on Netflix - suggestions welcome

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

Spanish Group

We have had a number of requests for a Spanish language group. Have you had a passion to learn Spanish? Now's your chance! Make contact through the usual email at groups@iowu3a.uk



Video Making/Filming Group

I offer to have a group which would make films on video about the Isle of Wight. It might be called 'U3ATV' I have previously made videos under the title of Ventnor TV (*VTV) and have all the equipment needed.

Anyone interested can see examples on Facebook under VentnorTV This would mainly be outdoors or on locations with a few occasional meetings to set things up. Opportunities for Internet Designer/ Manager; Producer / Director; Editor; Camera/ Photographer; Front of camera Interviewer.

Make contact with Louis through the usual email at groups@iowu3a.uk



GDPR

That stands for “General Data Protection Regulations” which means the rules which protect your confidentiality. All U3A groups across the country have to abide by these rules to ensure that your data remain your property and are managed properly.



That's why we don't publish any direct contact details, but you can contact us through the group's email address which recurs throughout the newsletter and direct to specific committee roles on the Contact page on our website - again repeated though this newsletter.

There is a link on our website for full GDPR “Privacy Policy” statement.

There is one personal contact reference here - that of your editor - who is happy to take a call from you if necessary.

Facebook page

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



Survey Results from Last Month

Thank you to all of those who responded. It was reassuring to know that some of you were happy with the email distribution and had been enjoying the newsletter on line.

3 responses were received by email while 8 came by post, using the questionnaire that Sally had inserted into the envelopes with the newsletter.

Only one respondent did not regularly check their email.
All respondents read the newsletter via the link/download provided.
8 out of 11 said they preferred a printed copy.

U3A Living with Covid

Your Committee meets regularly to keep U3A living with Covid afloat. While we are being let out a bit (as on a leash) we are a long way off resuming normal activities.

It certainly looks as though there is going to be no sense of real normality until and if a vaccine is available for everyone. Until then preventive measures appropriate to restraining the pandemic will be the order of the day.

From the recent minutes of your Committee we can report that (with help from the Third Age Trust, or TAT), finances are in reasonable shape but your Committee is always seeking best value.

At the moment there is no prospect of holding any speaker meetings, and it even looks as though the AGM on 8th October will be held by Zoom online. This may be difficult for some members but meeting in a public hall would be an unnecessary risk. Papers will be sent out by mail and email giving members the opportunity for their votes to be counted even if they are unable to attend.

Membership - we are still gaining members slowly and now have 42. We continue to promote the loWU3A by various means, but of course the best way is by word of mouth and recommendation.

An offer had been received to run a local paid-for Zoom talk or presentation but the opinion was expressed to offer a suggested free TED talk of general interest which could be discussed among members.

The committee revisited the suggestion of printing and posting every month and recognised that in the long term it would be too expensive.

It was agreed that when speaker meetings resumed we would move the publication date to coincide with the Speaker Meeting date and have hard copies on hand for people to take away. In the mean time, if you would really like a copy posted to you please let us know - by post to Yafford Mill, PO30 3LH again.

One person said that they would be willing to provide some stamped envelopes. Unfortunately they did not identify themselves. Please do.

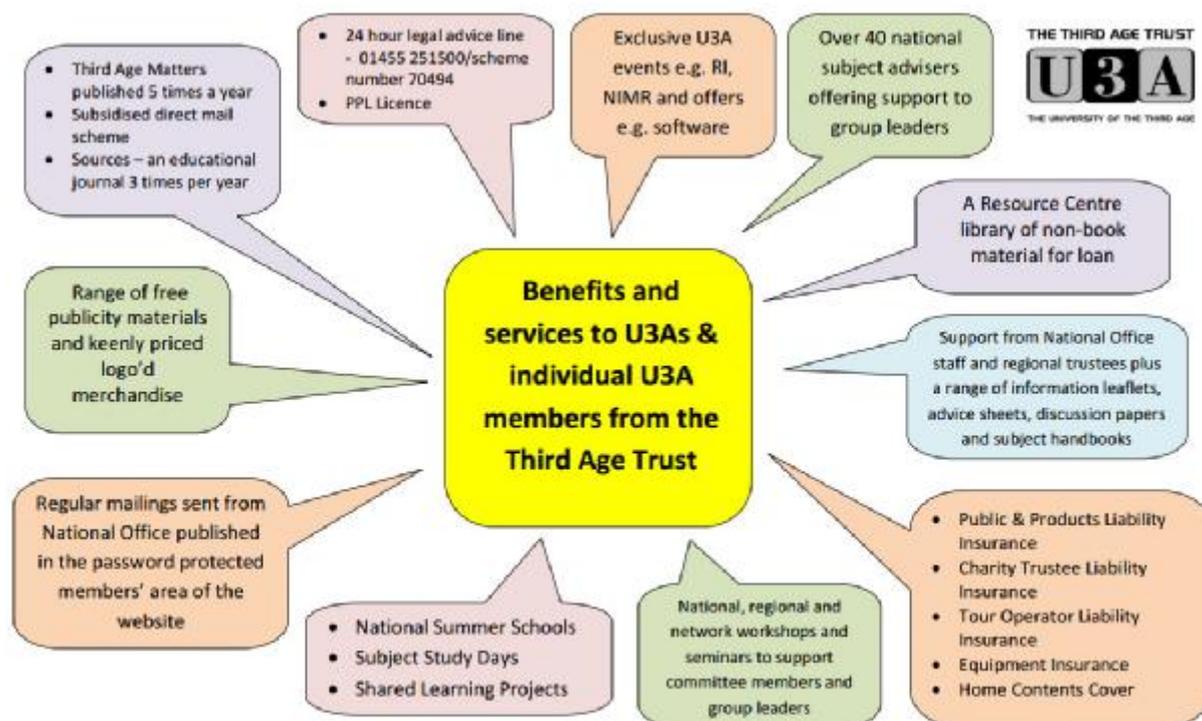


U3A on the Internet

Did you know that the U3A parent organisation, called the Third Age Trust (TAT) has a very extensive Internet presence? It's very easy to think parochially about the U3A but the TAT is so much more than that. The web link for the TAT is www.u3a.org.uk - very easy to find - and will take up many of your lockdown hours to explore fully.

Your local membership subscription includes a £3.50 contribution towards this as well as covering the cost of your "Third Age Matters" magazine (TAM) The TAM is almost completely self funded through advertising so comes in at exceptional value—it's even worth reading as well!

This is a diagram of all the goodies you get:



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON ANY OF THE ABOVE PLEASE CONTACT THE NATIONAL OFFICE ON 020 8466 6139

OR VISIT THE NATIONAL WEBSITE AT www.u3a.org.uk

Call for Papers!

This is your monthly newsletter and we try to keep you up to date on everything that is happening - well not much at the moment - but there is always space for anything you would like to contribute. Well, certainly in the months when we publish it electronically.

Do you have a bee in your bonnet? A poem you would like to air? Suggestions to share? Please send content to editor@iowu3a.uk - no prizes but you may achieve limited fame.



LOVE AT 78

Having reached the age of 78 I did not think I would ever fall in love again, but I have. No, it was not the tempting offer of going down the Amazon with a boyfriend, or the seductive blink of a Toyota Celica winking its headlight covers as another boyfriend watches me cross the road to him. Nor the first stirrings of "something new" with my first husband or the instant flush when meeting my second husband for the first time (in a rubbish skip of all places). Yes, I am in love, 7 times over and I'm walking around with a big cheesy grin on my face.

Each time an egg started to hatch my heartbeat raced and maternal concern flooded over me, will it manage to get out of the shell without damaging itself, why is it taking so long, does it need help - no, it must do it by itself. Hours are spent just watching, meals get forgotten and the garden neglected. The wet bedraggled chick eventually comes out of the shell and promptly goes off to sleep. I, of course, think it has died and feel devastated. Five minutes later it wakes up and starts scrabbling over the other eggs in the incubator then promptly goes off to sleep again. This is nerve wracking. A couple of hours later after drying off, the newly hatched chick starts to fluff up revealing a gorgeous golden down coat, it looks at me and I melt.

Each time an egg hatches the same thing happens, and even at this early stage there are signs of personality showing. The first one to hatch knows it is Number One and acts accordingly, it is also the noisiest. Some eggs do not hatch out and I have to summon up the courage to break them open to see why, dreading seeing the curled up body of a fully formed dead chick which thankfully only happened once. Yes I am in love, every day, even clearing out the amazing amount of poo these chicks produce and I feel great.

Dina Jung.



Chicken's in Lockdown – Third and Final Instalment for 2020.

For those of you who read last months instalment of Chickens in Lockdown you will know that I have had 7 chicks hatch this spring which has been totally preoccupying. As a newcomer to chicken keeping, I have had to learn a lot and also had to wait patiently to discover how many of the seven would be hens. The goal was, after all, to have a ready supply of fresh brown eggs! Hence the choice of Cuckoo Maran birds.

With the first two chicks I carefully scrutinized every step of feather development and wattle and comb reddening to try and uncover the secret of their gender. The internet was full of information – some more and some less reliable. At one point I believed that early feathering might indicate a hen. Especially when associated with delayed reddening of the comb. So as the first two developed differently in these respects I was led to hope that I had one of each.

However, the arrival of the mature feathers at 12 weeks old revealed that indeed they were both cockerels. At about the same time it became clear that 2 of the second set of 5 were developing very differently from both their hatch mates and their older siblings – their feathers were much less speckled, their combs were much paler and they were not inclined to get into metaphorical pissing contests with each other. And so it would seem that, with luck, I will have 2 hens out of the seven. I will have to wait another 4 weeks to be sure.

Curiously, I then discover from Google that Cuckoo Marans are prone to favour male chicks? Fact or Fiction – I do not know. It is difficult to understand why nature would have arranged things that way.



In the mean time, all my undone jobs are piling up. My chicks and their welfare have taken over my life. My garden, my admin my work and other responsibilities all neglected. And tempting as it is to get some more hatching eggs, I must put my mind to other things and leave my next adventure in chicken rearing until next year. Indeed by next year there may once more be battery hens that need rescuing and that will surely be a quicker and easier way to put eggs on the table, although a great deal less fun – and indeed perhaps less love.

Sally Forster

The TAT AGM will be held by zoom on September 29th. All members are eligible to attend but only nominated voting representatives will be able to participate. If any one would like to have some support to get zoom up in running in time for either the TAT AGM or our own AGM on October 8th please let us know on info@iowu3a.uk.

InterU3A Quiz Night.

Inter U3A quizzes are being held remotely. If you enjoy quizzes and would like to be part of team IOWU3A competing against other UK U3As please let us know through info@iowu3a.uk.

Suggestion from your editor - watching a talk by “The Boy Who Harvested the Wind” - search on YouTube for this engrossing presentation of what is possible in a Malawi village.

“**TED**” stands for “Technology, Entertainment and Design” and comprises 20 minute presentations of high quality and interest which are available on Internet YouTube.

**Explore our Web Site regularly updated
Calendar at www.iowu3a.uk**



And U3A resources at www.u3a.org.uk/learning/subjects



Church Litten originated as a cemetery dating from 1582 when Newport was hit by the plague. Previously Newport had no burial ground, being part of the parish of Carisbrooke. 'Litten' comes from a Saxon word meaning a cemetery. The area has been an open space since the 1950's.



Get a flu jab and stay safe this Winter
(you can also get a flu jab at your local pharmacist)