

Hollywood at Home Issue 12

(of 20 February 2021)



The Chairperson's Letter

Welcome to our 12th Edition of Hollywood at Home.

I hope you are all getting through lockdown and like me, are feeling that there is light, hope and spring in the not too distant future.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to our Magazine this month and to Rosemary and Robin for their great work collating it. Any articles to share with our members are always welcome.

Our speaker is Prof. Annie Tindley at our General Meeting on Tuesday 23rd at 10.30am on the First Marquess of Dufferin, Clondeboy and Ireland in the 19th century. The Zoom link will be sent to all members via email in the next day or two.

It's great to see some Interest Groups up and going via Zoom; keep your eye on the Newsletter for dates and information to sign up if required.

The Executive Committee has been busy keeping in touch with those members who don't have emails and can't share a Zoom screen with friends during lockdown. If you know someone in this situation perhaps you could give them a call for a chat.

We are always looking at ways to update and improve our u3a and with this in mind we are taking on the Beacon System. Beacon is a Data Management System designed by u3as for u3as to manage communications, memberships, finances and Interest Groups all under one umbrella. Beacon will hold our data together, secure and in one place, and it meets all GDPR requirements. It will be a huge time saver for Committee allowing them to access their relevant sections easily and efficiently.

It will allow Group Convenors to communicate more easily with their members about events and activities.

The Executive Committee unanimously feel that Beacon is the way forward for our u3a and are currently working through the process to set up and migrate onto the system.

It will be a gradual implementation before going live in the next couple of months. We will keep you updated on our progress.

In the meantime, keep well and keep safe,

Best Wishes to you all,

Liz and your Committee

The Creative ~Writing Group

During our Zoom meeting in January, the Creative Writing group was given the prompt '*When spring comes, we will . . .*' to encourage them to write a piece for the February meeting. Below are three of the pieces created from the prompt. We hope you enjoy them!

Fragile Blooms by Denise Dichard-Head

When spring comes, we will hesitate
like fragile blooms perilously unsteady
on long green stems come up too soon,
come out too soon with the false premise
that it's time (and ready) to open.

Wait. We will wait.
Behind—rarely opened in a year—doors.
Not for friends, not for family.
Only cautiously for delivery men.
(They were always men.)
A few with a close smile,
some stood well back with a very outstretched arm,
many dropped and ran.
Who can blame them?

Waiting is hard, wondering worse.
Who has seen us? (Truly how?)
Behind closed doors.
Behind masks and winter layers
taking our daily exercise
often in the cover of night
on well-bored paths.
Then with our nose in a book.
Then smiling (truly or not) for the cameras
on Zoom, FaceTime, Skype.
Then scrolling without comment
on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter.
Then binge-watching (life-evading)
Netflix, Amazon Prime, BBC, ITV, YouTube
Alone on a sofa or not.

Do not blame yourself
for what has become well-rooted
since its planting last spring.
What will this one bring?
What will this one bring when
we open our doors and let it all in?

Pastures New by Janine Houghton

When spring comes, we will probably wonder: What now? In the cold dark days of winter, we had dreamt about the things we would do once our freedoms were restored. Yet as the reality of these strange times begins to sink in, we stop to ask ourselves exactly what freedoms will be returned?

We find ourselves looking askance at the uncomfortable truth that the main freedom we all desire, namely freedom from the pandemic, is not on the horizon this spring. Coronavirus is not even on its knees, never mind out for the count, and this is no time to prepare the victory feast.

How then should we envisage the coming new season? Some are requesting a road map for release, but in truth, this is uncharted territory. The landscape is shifting and directions uncertain so expecting a return to "normal" in these changeable times may court disappointment. We want to be able to proceed into the unknown, yet maintain enough hope and confidence to progress. With no map for guidance, the secret to navigating this new territory may be adaptability. It will be our willingness to remain flexible that will determine our ease, or otherwise, of passage.

Like pioneers, we will also need to advance with a measure of caution and a sense of discovery, being wary of dangers yet savouring the delights of the welcome familiar and the wondrous new. We may encounter different customs and fresh perils, but just as the traveller needs to adapt, so must we to embrace our changing world.

What an opportunity! To rediscover and reassess what we have lost and what we have found! For a year of pandemic we have observed the triumphs of human innovation over unprecedented challenges. Our own primary objective, that of satisfaction with life, requires us to be equally resilient and creative in order to match our desires with sustainable possibilities.

In contradiction of A Brave New World of superficial fulfillment and loss of personal freedom, we have the option now to grasp a Bold New Normal, where we realise true contentment and a greater sense of humanity.

The Coming of Spring by Ellie Duly

When spring comes, I will welcome it with open arms, full of joy in anticipation of the coming abundance. Over the last few months, the third lockdown has been a challenge. I have tried to make the best of it, remembering that sunsets, friendships, hobbies, hopes and dreams are not locked down. I have structured my days, making Zoom and telephone calls to family and friends, exercising regularly and even joining new groups like creative writing! These have been helpful but I still miss the human physical contact so much.

My heart goes out to the schoolchildren and teenagers who have been forced to stay at home. Thinking back to my own youth, I know I would have found this very difficult, if not impossible. For others, the worry and stress of job losses, financial crises, bereavements and long-term illnesses must be so difficult. However, the arrival of the vaccine coinciding with the hope and possibilities of spring tantalise us that maybe the pain will end.

The lengthening days of spring with the crisp air and clear blue skies cannot be beaten. I go for my morning jog along Belfast Lough, which is sometimes calm and silvery, other times grey with majestic waves crashing onto the shore. It really lifts my heart to see all the human activity, people out walking their dogs, families playing with their children on the beach, watchful parents trying to ensure the excited wee ones do not run into the sea. And the birds on the lough! There are waders – prolific gulls, of course – but also oyster catchers, plovers and those unknown birds that send me scurrying to my book on British birds.

I would love to be able to identify the delightful birdsong of the smaller birds in spring. Two years ago I hauled myself out of bed to witness the dawn spring chorus in the trees and bushes in nearby Redburn Park. An extraordinarily knowledgeable friend led a group of us from the lower woods to the top of the steep hill in Redburn. As we gradually climbed upwards with the dawning day, our guide pointed out the songs of the larks, robins, wagtails and more.

In my garden beneath the soil, life raises its head searching for light and warmth. It fills me with joy seeing them peeping through, the snow drops, crocuses and later the bulbs that I had planted back in dark November. On the bushes and shrubs the buds unfurl and burst into life.

Each day we force ourselves to don our waterproofs and boots to walk and observe the changes in the landscape. Even on the wettest day, this gives a wealth of pleasure, if we look closely. A snowdrop, a violet, a roadside daffodil. The sun returns to brighten up the day and hope springs eternal.

From The Gardening Group

The daffodils are coming! Keep them happy.

The marvellous thing about daffodils is that you simply stick some bulbs in and they grow. Many are just beginning to appear now and they are so darned cheerful, blooming year after year. Except that sometimes, they'll just . . . stop. Not that often, but they do. Why does that clump that used to be so good, which you used to pick dozens of flowers from every year, now produce only one or two heads if you're lucky? Here are the likely causes – and some easy solutions to keep them happy, whether you've just planted some this year or had them for a while.



Give them enough light

The flowers may be great, but daffodil leaves are a dull nuisance flapping about till June. No wonder we plant them at the back of borders or in long grass.

However, as the years go by this means shrubs can develop and cast more shade and the spaces between become too dark. Tree canopies extend further outwards until those bulbs that were

planted in something like the open are mostly overshadowed. Daffs emerge from the ground before the trees and shrubs are in leaf, then lose much of their light source, resulting in the bulbs being starved of flower-building energy. Out in the open the leaves would have been sunbathing until June.

Bulbs with no flowers — “blind” as we call them — need marking. Dig them up when they have died down in summer and replant in the light.

Probably the greatest threat to daffodils is the lawnmower, applied to the foliage before it has fully yellowed and fed the bulb ready for next season.

Keep soil watered

The chances are that in moving your bulbs to the light you have also moved them to a more moist position, for shade usually involves thirsty roots and dry summers, conditions daffodils will withstand but do not prefer. Moist but not wet fertile soil is best.

Too-shallow planting can keep them over-dry, so it's important as you plant to set them a couple of bulbs' depth below the surface.

Avoid crowding

Some daffs can be extraordinarily vigorous, in flowering and in developing from a single bulb into a large clump. Yet it all takes energy. Let's assume there's light, but what about food? A clump of hungry bulbs in the same spot for 15 years can exhaust the soil.

Dig a large clump up in summer and replant the bulbs singly, in better conditions. After a year or two they will undoubtedly be back to their normal flowering selves. There is no keeping a good daff down, provided that it is not diseased.

If you have smaller clumps or singletons that are failing to flower, a feed with compost and some fertiliser in spring can help. Dig one up and see if it's as big as the ones you planted originally or see for sale.

(This article first appeared in *The Times* Newspaper.)

The 2021 Census is almost here.....

This piece comes from our AGENDA Friends on Hamilton Road in Bangor:

The Census only happens every 10 years and the next one is happening in March 2021. The information collected in the census is used to help make decisions about how vital public services such as hospitals, housing and emergency services are planned and funded. It is also used by community groups and charities to apply for funding so that they can provide the resources needed by the people they support. That is why your answers are so important.

Your answers are completely confidential. Your personal information will never be shared with any other government organisations. We do not ask about your income or bank details.

Census day is on March 21st, but you will receive letters with an access code to complete online or paper questionnaire in the post from the beginning of March 2021. As soon as you get the letter you can fill in the census.

There are options for you to complete online, on paper or via the telephone and anyone you trust can help you to complete. To find out more visit census.gov.uk/ni.

From the Hollywood u3a History Group

Learning from the past, to understand the present so that we can plan a better future!



Do you remember.....?

Sometimes we miss out on that simple thing we call 'the past'. Many of us only want to focus on what's going on now and what is next?

But the past holds the key to much learning – about life and how problem situations were resolved – more experiences than we can ever accumulate in one lifetime! But if people actually considered what happened in the past, would they change or would they make the same decisions all over again?

The Pandemic has taken us all by surprise! We knew Hollywood was beginning to change. In the last few years, we had noted there was an increasing number of coffee shops and charity shops but now we are wondering what businesses will survive – and thrive - this lockdown. In Issue 10 Norma Cooper wrote about many of our members enjoying a family outing to get a Tog’s ice cream on a Sunday afternoon.

Please let us know: **What did you most enjoy in Hollywood?**

We would love to hear from you as part of our ongoing Hollywood High Street Project.
E mail – secretary@holywoodu3a.org or Tel No. 077 30 892026.

PS The u3a nationally are continuing their High Street project, with a number of zoom workshops on topics like making a walking trail, the history of the High Street, and what its future might look like. The workshops are now fully subscribed, but we will keep you posted. Both our u3a History Group, members of which have produced a local walking Quiz which will be launched from Hollywood Library once lockdown allows, and members of Hollywood Shared Town, are already finding ways to help encourage us all out to walk and explore more, round our local areas. H@H will bring you updates!

Forthcoming Events in the next few days!

There are two items which might be of interest to members next week.

One is organised by the NI Community Relations Council – a Resource Fair marking the Centenary of the establishment of Northern Ireland, over 24 to 26 February. You can find out more at the Community Relations Council website:



The other is a series of three evening lectures by Prof Peter Shirlow, run by the Ards and North Down Borough Council's Good Relations Team. You can book by contacting goodrelations@ardsannorthdown.go.uk.

Towards Reconciliation in Northern Ireland

A three-part series of lectures by Professor Peter Shirlow followed by Q and A
23, 24 and 25 February 2021 | 7-9pm | via Zoom

Where have we come from?

An overview of conflict and what has happened over the past 50 years.

What does change mean?

The shift out of violence has led to significant changes in society and a younger population that has very different ideas about the past, the present and the future.

The next generation of reconciliation

Evidence of a changing society, but are we living in a negative peace?

If you wish to register for the programme, please email
goodrelations@ardsannorthdown.gov.uk



All About Birds - the editor asked Dot Blakely:

*Do the Birds know the weather? Do they eat in advance of rain or strong winds?
Does the cold or frost impact on feeding?*

Here is her Answer:

I have been asked questions like this before, but anyone that knows me won't think I have 'lost it', when I answer YES, YES and YES. I am a great believer in nature and part of that is to understand it. I am not a scientist, but I do have the total understanding of birds. And it didn't come from books, it came by watching and listening to them, and what is going on around them. If I take the first question, in fact I will put all the questions together, we will just look at garden birds. Do birds know the weather etc? Yes, they do. From early morning as soon as the sun comes up, birds can be cold from night before, so first thing is food. Winter is hard on all birds, that is why birds are in your garden - more shelter, (buildings, houses, warm walls, streetlights) plus whatever is in the garden (hedgerows, trees, etc) so the food is also there for them, (fat balls, seeds, apples etc). They have to eat as much as they can, (short, cold, windy days) this is our winter.

If you go out in winter with no coat on, you will soon feel the frosty, cold, wind, so you will go back indoors have a cup of tea, perhaps stay in. Birds can feel this too, if a bit of sun comes out, they will make the best of it, you can see and hear them (especially the lovely house sparrow) in a hedge, where they will be all chatting to each other, while making the best of the wee bit of

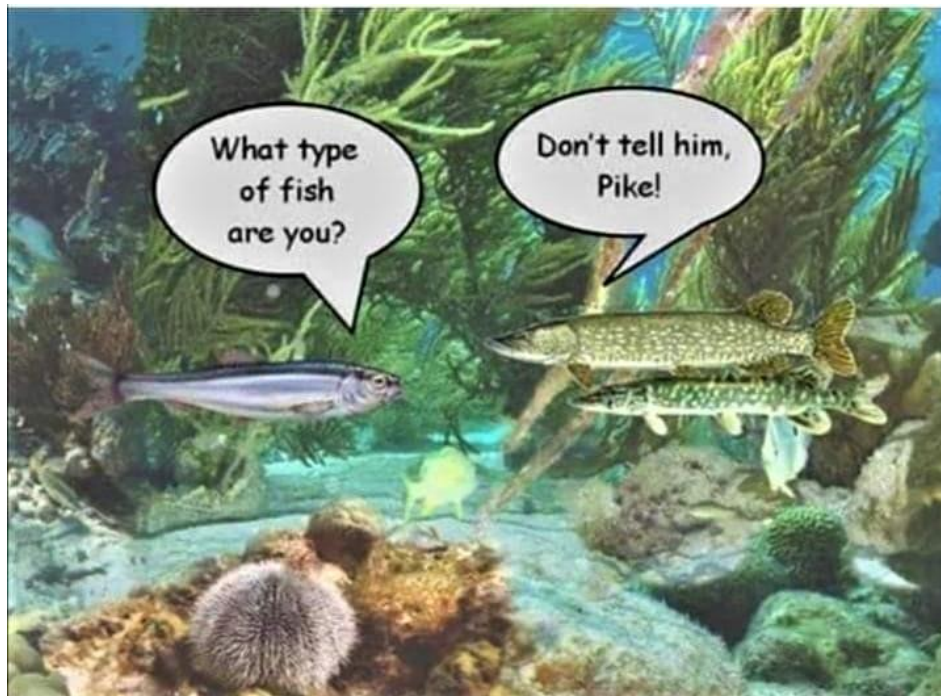


(The photo shows a pair of Long-Tailed Tits)

warming sun, but as soon as it dulls down, all will go quiet and be a mad dash to the feeders. Again, if you go outside, see dark clouds, and feel dampness in the air, you would go back indoors to get your Brolly. Birds feel the chill and dampness, so again they get as much food as possible, find shelter, and if it is cold will snuggle together and wait for the worst to pass.

This is just a tiny bit of understanding birds; it is something everyone can do in their garden. Fill your feeders at the same time each day, take your time, let the birds see you, don't let them down on cold wet days. Get to know your birds, but even better, get your birds to know you.

Or, if you prefer Fish:



Or Maybe You Just Like Words:

If so, you may be a lexophile – now there's a thought!

1. A bicycle can't stand alone because it is two-tired.
2. What's the definition of a will? (It's a dead giveaway).
3. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
4. A backward poet writes inverse.
5. In democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism it's your count that votes.
6. She had a boyfriend with a wooden leg, but broke it off.
7. A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.
8. If you don't pay your exorcist you get repossessed.
9. With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.
10. Show me a piano falling down a mineshaft and I'll show you A-flat minor.
11. When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
12. The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.
13. A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.
14. You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
15. Local Area Network in Australia: the LAN down under.
16. He often broke into song because he couldn't find the key.
17. Every calendar's days are numbered.
18. A lot of money is tainted. 'Taint yours and 'taint mine.
19. A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.
20. He had a photographic memory which was never developed.
21. A plateau is a high form of flattery.
22. The short fortune teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
23. Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.
24. When you've seen one shopping center you've seen a mall.
25. Those who jump off a Paris bridge are in Seine.
26. When an actress saw her first strands of gray hair she thought she'd dye.
27. Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.
28. Santa's helpers are subordinate Clauses.
29. Acupuncture is a jab well done.
30. Marathon runners with bad footwear suffer the agony of defeat.



Our President Writes:

Trust u3a

Trust u3a is an online u3a that gives you the opportunity to join groups, talks and courses. It provides a chance to continue your creative, educational and social activities.

Groups vary from Bridge to British cemeteries, from Latin to Maths, from singing for Joy to Ukulele - getting started. There are over fifty courses.

As a member of Holywood District u3a the cost is normally about £6 for the year but if you are joining during February or March you will not be charged a fee for those months as the year starts on 1st April.

For further details go to u3asites.org.uk or type in Trust u3a to your search engine.

u3a shows the value of communities of interest and learning which are not defined by age, or past experience, but instead are defined by the experience still to be explored.

Stay safe

Joy

And finally: as so often Rowel Friers was a man ahead of his times. This cartoon about Customs searching has a contemporary feel!

