



## **Hollywood at Home Issue 11 of 20 January 2021**

### **Chairperson's Letter**

Welcome to Hollywood at Home.

Your u3a Committee wish you a Happy and Healthy 2021.

You will see from our Newsletter that we have an ever increasing number of talks to help keep us entertained with our General Meetings and Interest Groups.

The Newsletter will continue to be emailed to members as well on our website.

Do check out the dates and put them in your diary.

Thanks to all our Magazine contributors and to Rosemary and Robin for their work putting it all together.

We hope you keep safe and well and that you will join us via Zoom until we can meet again in person to learn, laugh and live together.

Best Wishes,

Liz

PS A reminder of our Zoom Advice: Before you join a zoom meeting, you will need to download the Zoom facility to your device, if you do not already have it. (There is no charge.) You can use this link to do so: <https://zoom.us/download>.

And when listening to a Talk, *do please ensure your microphone is muted.*

### **Our AGM held on 19 January**

Over 60 participated in our delayed AGM for the 2019-20 year. The business was skilfully conducted in just 10 minutes. We can look forward to the AGM for 2020-21, to be held, no doubt on Zoom also, in due course.

The AGM was followed by a great illustrated talk by Dot Blakely on our Over-wintering Birds. As she rightly said while getting set up – ‘*birdwatching is an awful lot easier than this carry on!*’ She also told us firmly: ‘*Talk to your birds*’.

Dot has created 3 lovely colour booklets to help us all identify what we see; the three are a) Dot's Parks and Gardens ID Book, b) Dot's Waterbird Easy ID Book, and c) Dot's Local Butterflies and Ladybirds Easy ID Book. Each costs £3. You can email her at [dotbirdblakely@gmail.com](mailto:dotbirdblakely@gmail.com) to ask how to pay and order one or more copies. They are highly recommended for young and old alike!



### **u3a History Group Invitation**

The History Group is now operating our Talks on Zoom. As this facility can include up to 130 participants at once, we are extending the invitation to join our scheduled History Talks to all paid-up u3a members. If you are not in the History Group but wish to join us, please email the secretary, Audrey Lockhart, at [lockhart440@btinternet.com](mailto:lockhart440@btinternet.com).

The Talk at 10.30am on Wed 3 February is by local historian Richard Holmes on the topic of 'Thomas Sinclair and Liberal Unionism'.

### **Have we progressed?**



## **Did You Know? (From our Gardening Group)**

Just in case you are involved in any actual or virtual quizzes with family or friends at present, here are some gardening facts which might prove useful:-

- There is a garden in Northumberland called The Poison Garden. It is home to 100 murderous plants. Visitors to this dangerous garden are prohibited from smelling, touching or tasting any of the plants.
- Three of the gardens voted the most beautiful in the world are Châteaux de Versailles in Versailles, France; the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew; and Powerscourt Gardens in Enniskerry, Co Wicklow.
- Small pockets of air inside cranberries cause them to bounce and float in water.
- The daffodil's name is from the Old English, *affo dyle*, or "that which cometh early".
- There are at least 10,000 varieties of tomatoes. Over 60 million tons of tomatoes are produced each year, making it the world's most popular fruit. The second most popular fruit is the banana.
- During the 1600s tulips were so valuable in Holland that their bulbs were worth more than gold. The craze was called tulip mania, or tulipomania, and caused the crash of the Dutch economy. (Note that tulips can continue to grow as much as an inch per day after being cut.)
- Lacanophobia is the fear of vegetables.
- The word pineapple comes from European explorers who thought the fruit combined the look of a pinecone with flesh like that of an apple.
- A sunflower looks like one large flower, but each head is composed of hundreds of tiny flowers called florets, which ripen to become the seeds. This is the case for all plants in the sunflower family, including daisies, yarrow, goldenrod and bachelor's buttons. Both the fuzzy brown centre and the classic yellow petals are actually 1-2,000 individual flowers held together on a single stalk.
- The first potatoes were cultivated in Peru about 7,000 years ago.
- The most popular flower in Britain is the rose which topped a 2014 poll by the BBC to claim the title of the UK's most popular flower. With 37% of the largely online vote, this was a decisive victory over the sweet pea (29%) and the iris (14%). Despite its funerary associations, the lily scored 12% of the vote and the tulip 8%. Hydrangeas came last out of the 30 options in the vote, beaten by dandelions!
- Peaches, pears, apricots, quinces, strawberries, and apples are members of the rose family. So are ornamental species such as spirea and mountain ash.
- The average strawberry has 200 seeds. It's the only fruit that bears its seeds on the outside. Strawberries are not berries BUT avocados, watermelon, bananas, and pumpkins are! Note - The bumps on raspberries are called "drupelets."
- Grapes explode when you put them in the microwave – please do not try this at home.
- The biggest garden in the world is the Dubai Miracle Garden, which covers 72 square km and contains over 60 million flowers.

**and one for your 2021 diary:-**

- World Naked Gardening Day is celebrated on the first Saturday in May. It aims to promote harmony and peace with nature. Please note that the Gardening Group will not be planning a garden visit for Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021!!

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## SMILE

Smiling is infectious  
You catch it like the flu  
When someone smiled at me today  
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner  
And someone saw me grin  
When he smiled I realised  
I'd passed it on to him

I thought about that smile  
Then realised its worth  
A single smile, just like mine  
Could travel round the earth

So if you feel a smile begin,  
Don't leave it undetected.  
Let's start an epidemic quick  
And get the world infected!

*by Spike Milligan (or Jez Alborough?)*

**This is Wilson. He is now  
working from home 😊**



## Poem for this edition

The editor invited Denise Dichard-Head to select a suitable poem for this edition. She chose this. Simon Armitage, the UK poet laureate, wrote 'Something Clicked' for National Poetry Day, held on the first of October last year:

## Something Clicked

Then something clicked  
and the day quivered and rang like a question mark!  
Why grit your teeth in the gridlock now the commute's  
a superfast hop and a skip from toothbrush to keyboard,  
from bed-hair to screen-call?  
Why wrestle with glitches and gremlins  
or tussle with gubbins and gismos, or idle and churn

in the swirling pit of the buffering wheel  
now you're fine-tuning the senses, enrolling for real life,  
getting to grips with arts and crafts  
that were only a keystroke away all along -  
you're a rhythm guitar, a poem, a garden, a song.  
You've learned to cook -  
you're a Sunday roast, a multigrain loaf, a recipe book!

Why be garbled and scrambled again  
now you're mindful, resourceful, neighbourly, human?  
Now you're curious. Fruitful. Meaningful. Tuneful.  
And why twiddle your thumbs, though sometimes it's good  
to kick back, to noodle and doodle  
letting dreams swim into pin-sharp-focus,  
meander through luminous moments. Why stall,

why settle for knowledge arriving granule by granule?  
No more fishing for news with a butterfly net,  
doing the human aerial. You're bright of late, ideas hitching  
and switching from one domain to the next,  
thoughts swiping from subject to subject, planet to planet,  
globetrotting the universe. And you're riding a bike -  
you're a walk, a hike, a mountain, a lake.

It's a new world - you're at school in the kitchen,  
at work in the attic, in Ancient Rome in the lounge,  
on Mars in the basement. Why tear out your hair  
while the present dithers and loads, you deserve  
to lean on the airwaves and not fall over,  
to feel the hub of your heart's heart  
pulsating and purring with life's signal.

So you're right here this minute being your best being.  
And now you've hooked up  
with the all-thinking all-feeling all-doing version of you  
why sit in the future's waiting-room  
drumming your fingers,  
why lose the connection  
when you could be your own greatest invention?

## Some Presidential Thoughts

The editor invited our President, Joy Montgomery to contribute to this edition. She reminds us what a vast range of resources are out there, if we choose to access them:

- ‘If not have you considered learning how to play an instrument, master a new language, improve your cooking skills or taking up Yoga, Lifelong Learning at Stranmillis and Open Learning at QUB both offer a large variety of online courses. There is a charge but what else have you to spend your money on? The Open University and Future learn offer free online courses some with qualifications.
- Daily the BBC email me inviting me to join their virtual audience for programmes as diverse as Jay Rayners Kitchen Cabinet, Just a minute or Gardeners Question Time (they can’t have seen my garden!)
- Mirthy who provided the Christmas talk for the general meeting offer a free talk every Thursday afternoon or a Tuesday talk for the princely sum of £2.99. Ted Talks are all free and offer a variety of new experiences.
- The Edible Flower who did a cookery demonstration to our food and drink group are offering a free talk on preserving - jams, chutneys, ketchup and Sauerkraut. It is part of the Out to Lunch Festival which offers free talks every lunch time in January.
- Learn to play the piano at Casio Music lesson or strum a guitar at Ultimate Guitar. Remember as a paid up member of Holywood District u3a you can join other groups in North Down if they have space. Look on their websites and see if there is anything you fancy.
- Look on the general u3a website - [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk). They provide a selection of events, talks and visits most of which are free.
- How about a talk on the role of the National Trust or Happy Ever After, the History of Fairytales? Would you fancy a visit to the National Gallery or take part in a nature ramble without leaving your chair? While on their website go to the volunteer section and see if you recognise anyone.

(Answers on a postcard!) I could do another page on the wonderful sites I have found in the last 10 months but I think the editor would prefer to hear from you and what you have been doing during Lockdown.

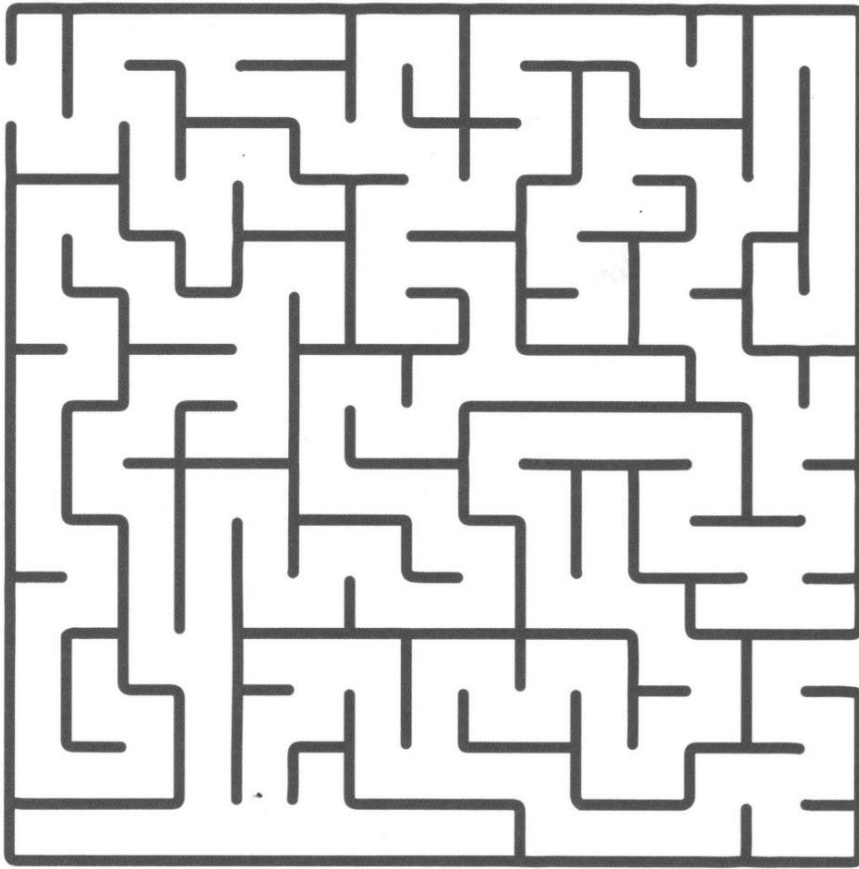
I should just like to finish with my favourite quote from CS Lewis – “There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind.”

Look forward to seeing you all soon.

Stay healthy and safe

Joy

Can you find your way through the maze?



**SERIOUS LOCK DOWN ADVICE, I think!**

- Everyone PLEASE be careful because people are going crazy from being locked down at home!
- I was just talking about this with the microwave and the kettle while drinking my tea, and we all agreed that things are getting bad.
- I didn't mention any of this to the washing machine, because she puts a different spin on EVERYTHING!! Certainly couldn't share with the fridge, cause he's been acting cold and distant!
- In the end, the iron straightened me out! She said the situation isn't all that pressing and all the wrinkles will soon get ironed out!
- The vacuum, however, was very unsympathetic...told me to just suck it up!
- But the fan was VERY optimistic and gave me hope that it will all blow over soon!
- The toilet looked a bit flushed but didn't say anything when I asked its opinion, but the front door said goodbye 2020. I was becoming unhinged and the doorknob told me to get a grip!! You can just about guess what the curtains told me: they told me to "pull myself together!"
- We will survive!!



Here is another lovely **Rowel Friers** cartoon, (which he gave to Rockport School). Alas remote learning doesn't allow for such entertainment!



**Postscript:**

Did you see the letter in the Times on 15 January?

*'Will the generation of children born during the Covid-19 pandemic be known as the "baby-zoomers"?''*

Just picked up my social distance support animal.

