

Hollywood at Home, issue 2 of 7 April

*'There are tall ships and small ships that sail across the sea,
But the best ships are Friendships and may they always be'.*

Letter from your Chairperson

Welcome to the 2nd edition of *Hollywood at Home*. We are continuing to face very challenging times which we could never have imagined in our normal lives. The U3a Committee hope you, your family and friends are well.

Our General Meetings and Interest Groups have all been postponed until further notice. Don't worry about renewing memberships at the moment, we will deal with them in due course.

As members you might enjoy the monthly National U3a Newsletter which you can sign up for on www.u3a.org.uk and then you will be sent it by email.

Thank you to Robin and Rosemary for all their enthusiasm and hard work compiling this month's Magazine. Also thanks to everyone who has contributed so many interesting articles for us to enjoy.

Take care and keep healthy as we continue to learn, laugh and live.
Best Wishes,
Liz

Hollywood and District U3A Gardening Group

For our December 2019 meeting, various members of the Gardening Group kindly contributed their 'Tried and Tested Tips' for sharing. Here are some of the hints which may prove useful at this time of year. We cannot take responsibility for any of the tips which do not work out for whatever reason nor do we take any credit for those that work for you! Happy gardening.



1. Before planting, soak evergreens in water for 20 minutes so the rootball is wet to the centre. If they are planted dry, they can take weeks to hydrate fully. When moving established evergreens, soak the roots the day before to reduce the shock.
2. Specific plants:-
 - (i) Cut back Hydrangea Paniculata by one third each year and blooms will remain showy;
 - (ii) Clip over winter flowering heather in spring to remove dead flowers and keep the plant compact;
 - (iii) If growing foxgloves, remove the main (King) spire. This allows the smaller (Prince) spires to grow better and will prolong flowering;
 - (iv) Before planting wild flower seeds, read the list of contents carefully! (The daisies which delighted me in years 1 and 2 are now making a bid for World domination in my garden and are indeed going wild.)
3. When pruning an overgrown shrub do it gradually and only reduce by one third each year, when the new shoots start to appear, so rising sap will seal cuts, prevent infection and die back. Also always prune to an outward facing bud or leaf joint.
4. Feed weekly and weakly.
5. Pest repellent spray - crush garlic bulbs and add warm water. Allow to steep for 24 hours and then use as a spray on all manner of plants. Needs to be repeated every 7 to 10 days but will make the leaves unpalatable to slugs and other pests.
6. Keep a Garden Journal and include photos. You can build up a very heartening record of amazing changes and growth; it's also useful to log details of dates, names, and successes/failures (and why). Great reading on a cold winter's night! *This hint may be particularly relevant in these times and will remind you later of all the work you are currently doing in your garden rather than being out and about.*

Here is this week's Rowel Friers cartoon, captioned *Night Rise*. Not a model to follow when getting your exercise once a day!



Launch of the new Hollywood Connects website

Local charity Hollywood Shared Town are delighted to announce the launch on 7 April of a new website, **Hollywood Connects** – a way for the people of Hollywood to find information in the local area during the current Coronavirus pandemic. It will be particularly valuable for vulnerable people self-isolating, others self-isolating and people wanting to volunteer their help. The site is www.hollywoodconnects.com

For people without access to the internet, a telephone helpline donated by local Hollywood firm **mpl contact** has also been set up - **02890 393 636**.

The website enables local organisations, groups and businesses to say what help they can offer to local people and also to say what help they need, such as volunteers or food donations.

Ambling with social distancing

Our founding chair, Joy Montgomery has suggested this new Group. She tells us:

'Every morning I take my two dogs to Belmont Park for our daily constitutional. I find everyone is good at keeping their two metres distance. I smile at everyone I meet and give them a cheery "Good Morning". The dogs greet everyone with the enthusiasm of a long lost family member. It's hard to remain gloomy when you have a tail wagging at you. Often I arrive home with a sore throat having 'chatted' at a safe distance to both friends and complete strangers.

Halfway round I sit on a bench for ten minutes to practise some Mindfulness. I enjoy the peace and tranquillity - little traffic noise and few children. The daffodils are at their best and remind me of Wordsworth's poem – "I wandered lonely as a cloud" I roll my shoulders, close my eyes and listen to my breathing. When I wake up I finish the walk. An elderly friend once told me every morning before she opened her eyes she flexed her elbows and if she didn't feel wood it was going to be a good day! On the journey home I always think - "It's going to be a good day".

Perhaps this is your perfect opportunity to do some of the walks you never get time to do. But you may ask, what do you do if it rains?

a. Put on a waterproof.

b. Join one of Joe Wicks' workouts.

c. March briskly on the spot for ten minutes swinging your arms. (Remember to pull the curtains first or the neighbours will think you have lost your marbles.)

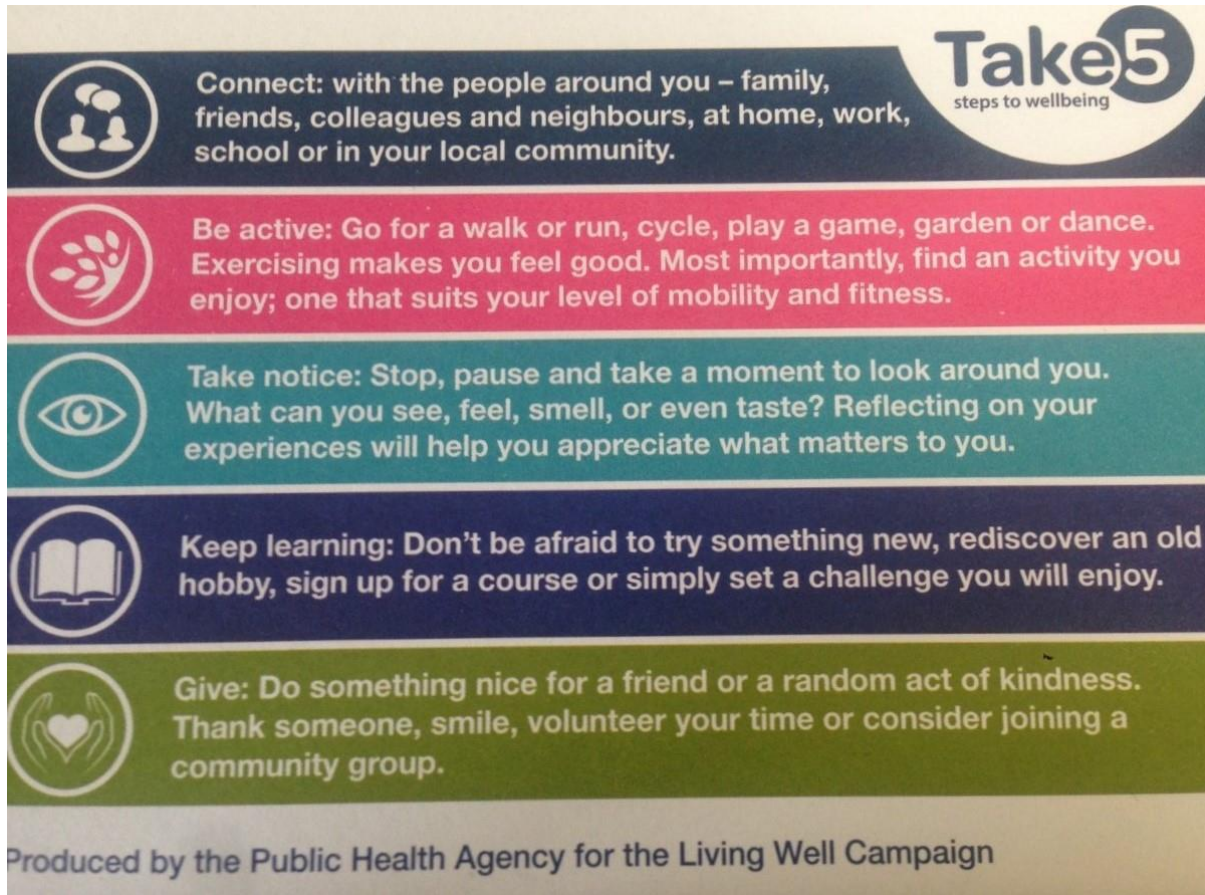
P.S. Assorted dogs available to borrow for walks. Poo bags provided.'

PPS, The editor cannot resist adding a lovely piece that Chris Hewitt wrote, which conjures up a wonderful image:

'Am just off to stride along the Esplanade towards the Army as not many folk there. Seems important to get out once a day and nod to any others as folk seem withdrawn. But then I look like a cross between the Mad Hatter and the French Lieutenant's Woman!'

Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing

This is a good note, very much in line with the U3A ethos.



Bird-watching notes by Dot Blakely, (chair of the North Down Bird Watching Group)

Dot writes for our BayBurn Life Newsletter, and I thought U3A members might like this:

Sitting in your house, look out the window, get a cup of tea, bird book, note pad. You might wonder how your birds are going to survive if you can't get to the shop for bird food. Once you start looking at what is happening, you will feel better. As we are now in spring, the trees are starting to blossom, shrubs are getting leaves; if you have blackthorn the beautiful white flowers will be out - hawthorn has leaves first. Depending on what flowers you have, there have been queen bees and butterflies out and about.

So what has this to do with feeding the birds? Well because of our wonderful weather, a bit of rain, a bit of sun, we have a beautiful green country, hence bird food, the more trees and shrubs that open their cones and buds to bring on leaves, the more tiny flies, insects, ants, spiders come to life. They have been hibernating in the trees etc, lots of live bird food. So, on a sunny day you might notice your birds are not around, not coming to your feeder. Great, they are away getting the live food, which also awakens a new breeding season for birds.

Some are already nesting - robins, blackbirds, and the thrush family, because they feed on earth worms etc. The tit family will nest a bit later, late April/May, and by this time there will be lots of live food in the trees etc.

Your wee birds only totally depend on your food in winter. Keep an eye on what is happening, watch for the numbers of birds coming into your garden. They will not be in big groups anymore, but in pairs, the large groups are only in winter. Now they are pairing up looking for nesting sites. If your birds are not clearing the feeders, don't put so much in them - just enough to cover the feeding hole. Currants and old apples are good for thrushes as they are now feeding young.

As for other common birds, sparrows and starlings do stay in a community, and help each other in family groups. Chatting to each other in gardens, they are sometimes overlooked. Enjoy your birds, and let them help you get through this.

Corrigendum

(Isn't it good to get a bit of Latin in?) I was delighted to be contacted by Noel Brown who advised me that the two stanzas of the poem about Hollywood in Edition 1 which I had attributed to the pen of Con Auld, were actually part of a longer poem written by his late wife's uncle, George A. Osborough. George, a Hollywood resident who worked for the Belfast Gas Co., published a booklet of 25 poems, including this one, entitled *Musings of an Irishman*. George had served as a writer on the Rushen Castle, a Corvette, in the Atlantic convoys in the winter of 1944. (The photo of her comes from the Imperial War Museum.)



George's father, Andrew, had been a Constable in the RIC stationed in Hollywood. A question was asked in the House of Commons in 1887 about his transfer from Hollywood by the County Inspector. The local magistrates were so impressed by Andrew Osborough's work in Hollywood that they – successfully – petitioned for his return. (At that time the RIC Barracks was on the corner of the High Street and Downshire Road.)

I am most grateful to Noel, as we plan to include a piece about old characters of Hollywood in future editions.

Mindfulness Meditation by Fiona Montgomery

Practising mindfulness meditation is so simple, and possible to do at any time during the day without any special equipment. Just our own body and breath and the intention to be kind towards ourselves, no matter what distraction comes along to take our attention.

A very simple practice is to feel the sensations created in our bodies when we breathe. If you want to give it a go here are some instructions.

Awareness of Breath Practice Instructions:

Sit in a comfortable, supported position perhaps on a straight-backed chair. (You can do this lying down as well, but you may fall asleep!)

Eyes can be closed or open but if open have a soft unfocused gaze to minimise distractions.

Let your attention drop down to **feel** your body seated on the chair, maybe noticing where you can feel the hardness of the floor or softness of chair where your body is supported. Take a few moments to feel the weight of the body coming down but also the sense of support available for the ground and chair.



Next, notice where you can feel the breath moving the body. This could be the rise and fall of your abdomen or chest and shoulders, or maybe the cool breath at the mouth or nose as you breathe in and the warm breath as you breathe out. Stay with these sensations, feeling them, rather than thinking about them as best you can.

You will notice that your mind wanders off to think, maybe planning, remembering, judging things as pleasant or unpleasant. Nothing wrong has

happened, all you do is label the thoughts “thinking”, “remembering” or whatever they are, and then bring your attention back again to the sensations of the breath moving the body. You can do this for a few minutes or for as long as you find it helpful.

This practice of bringing our attention back to our breath then helps us build a muscle of attention, which over time enables us to notice and move our focus away from unhelpful worrying, judging or ruminating about the past in our every-day life.

Here is a link to Jon Kabat-Zinn guiding a 10-minute breath awareness practice:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TzxPWmuEnU>

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to learn more. fjmontgomery@btinternet.com

Adapted from The Covid Winter by Katie Smith

It started slowly,
Like the first leaves in autumn.
First one, then two, then three at once,
And then a flurry.
Suddenly all the plans I had made were gone.
The calendar was bare – like a winter tree!

The people I loved – isolated.
The routine I know – decimated.
The pattern of my life – changed, almost unrecognisable.
But I want my plans.
I want what I thought I would have,
The meetings, the people and the places.

Spring is in the air,
But it feels like winter!
A worrying, questioning winter:
When will this end?

Will the world be the same after?
Who will I be when this is over?

Then I remember that despite appearances,
Winter is not just waiting,
It is recharging,
Strengthening,
Preparing for new growth, stronger life!

Local History

Members of the History Group are working, in their homes, on different Victorian documents



from the wonderful Finlay archive. Charlie Warmington's splendid Roamer section in the *News Letter* last month had another interesting piece about the soap factory, including the use of Finlay's soap to ease the passage of Harland and Wolff vessels down the slipway. This was 'Soft' soap, mixed with tallow and train oil – some 20 tons in all were needed to launch the Titanic!

Finlays indeed had a soap for every occasion! We could use some of their Castile for all the household chores that need to be done now.

A Quiz

If, like me, you struggled with the ditloid in Edition 1, maybe you can untangle these towns?

- 1 NOUDNAGNN
- 2 GLNARU
- 3 NRLSBIU
- 4 YFRCRDAUF
- 5 RENAL
- 6 LOGHCLILSUM
- 7 AEDREFOS
- 8 GDIEBNBAR

- 9 FEONWTVILEIM
- 10 LYLAENAMB
- 11 NATIFESDIL
- 12 HGUOLC
- 13 EGROTENLOPN
- 14 EAKLSANSI
- 15 TPROGMROSO
- 16 LODWOHYO

Here, by the way are the answers to the March ditloid, so you will be ready for the next!

- 12 signs of the zodiac
- 10 fingers on human hand
- 52 cards in a pack [excluding jokers]
- 90 degrees in a right angle
- 1 horn on a unicorn
- 7 wonders of the world
- 13 stripes on the American flag
- 32 degrees F at which water freezes

- 66 books of the Bible
- 3 blind mice [see how they run]
- 6 balls to an over in cricket
- 5 letters from alphabet are vowels
- 3600 seconds in an hour
- 13 unlucky for some
- 15 players in a rugby team

Free Pilates at Home video from the NHS

The NHS encourages us to keep fit - particularly during the big confinement - and Pilates is a great way to do that at home. If you don't know, Pilates is form of exercise for men and women at all ages and stages, and it focuses on balance, posture, strength and flexibility. **To view this free NHS video** [click here](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/pilates-for-beginners/) <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/pilates-for-beginners/> .

You don't need to have done any Pilates before to participate. The video lasts for 45 minutes. An exercise mat would be useful if you have one. Wear comfortable, loose clothing.

Cheer for Nursing Home residents

Robin has facilitated a connection between a Cultra nursing home and a village primary school. Already the children are making cards and rainbow paintings etc. which they have posted in to the Home to bring some cheer to the residents. Can we do the same in local Hollywood Homes?

Lather is the Best Medicine

Question: *Why are there so many jokes on the one theme?*

Answer: *Because we are suffering from a pundemic.*

And finally, continuing our scatological theme:



**Single woman with
hand sanitizer would
like to meet a single
man with toilet rolls
for good clean fun...**