

The Viral Times

Issue 8 03-07-20 (Published by Bourne U3A WEB : - <https://u3asites.org.uk/bourne/home>)



These pictures were the winning entries in the Photography Challenge "Summer"

From the Newsletter Editor

I hope you all enjoyed the last issue, if you have any comments please let me have them. Thanks again to all who volunteered their time to distribute hard copies to those members without e-mail.

I appreciate any and all contributions for this newsletter so please don't be shy. Put your 4 pennyworth in (to paul.smith2000@talktalk.net) and let us know what you are doing to cope with this really difficult situation. **I would like to put out a request for some more contributions as I am beginning to run out of copy. Thanks to all who have responded to my appeal which has resulted in some new things in this missive, however I am now running out of comic pieces and / or cartoons. If you have any please pass them on. Thanks.**

A Photography Challenge?

The challenge was to take photos on the subject of "Summertime". 8 Entries were received (thanks to all of you) and selected as the best 3 were those above from Dave Pask Jean Dee and "Colin" (sorry I don't have a surname).

The new challenge is " Sky " (entries by 13-7-20)

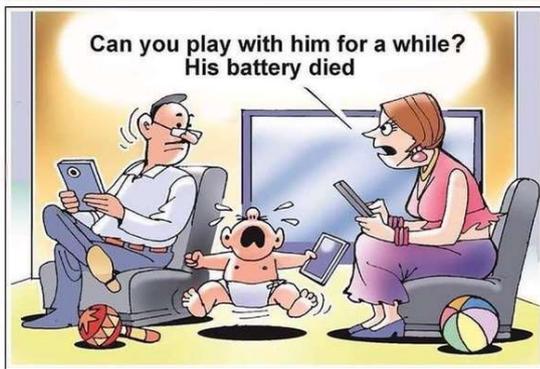
The next challenge is " A Family Pet " (entries by 27-7-20)

Entries to :- vasmroberts@gmail.com

A little bit of humour

iToons

Sunil Agarwal & Ajit Ninan



I don't care who your dad is, this is an illegal gathering



An Alternative view of the lockdown

In issue 4 an American friend of mine gave us his alternative view of lockdown, here is another view from one of our members who wishes to remain anonymous.

I was captivated by Prof. Czerwonka's account of his lifetime of isolation due to cerebral palsy in a recent Viral Times which immediately resonated with me. Although I obviously cannot begin to imagine what he has been through with his condition, I can understand to a degree the isolation caused by illness because for 11 years I have been a carer for my husband.

There are 2 types of isolation which full time caring brings.

The physical isolation, whereby one cannot go very far away because your loved one cannot be left unattended for long, so you are, in effect, in a permanent "lock down".

The mental isolation caused because carers priorities and mindsets are completely different to friends and acquaintances. Carers are consumed by the needs of their loved ones along with medical emergencies, life changing deteriorations, potential sudden death and the unspeakable side effects of a serious condition. For most people a broken washing machine or a flat battery on the car create major stress, for carers they are relatively minor irritations. We have to show sympathy to our friends with these problems while depressing stuff in our own lives for fear of never seeing that friend again.

All this sets carers apart and it is isolating. We are in a bubble with our loved ones.

The initial strict lockdown, for me, brought the first sense of "normality" in years because my life was suddenly the same as everyone else's and it brought the perverse sense of contentment. I have recently spoken to other carers and disabled individuals who have felt the same. One asked whether I thought the caring community spirit would continue after the pandemic has passed. I hope so, now that people have experienced themselves, for a short time, the isolation we carers and the disabled have to live with permanently. I hope they will go on empathising with those of us for whom isolation is the norm and that we will in the words of Professor Czerwonka "shine a light into the lives of those left in darkness"

How are you keeping yourself occupied ?

Some notes on how some groups/members are dealing with the current situation.

Birdwatching and Natural History report following our meeting of 5th June 2020.

Inspired by comments from Pat Howes, our worthy group coordinator, the nature group decided to convene as usual on the first Friday morning of the month. Instead of our usual walk / expedition we met in our back garden which is developed as a wildlife habitat. We planned to stick to the recommendations with no more than six people present, gathering outside and at 2 metre distancing. The weather forecast did not look good and an hour before the scheduled rendezvous, when it was raining, we had some communications lest the event was cancelled. However, undeterred, we bravely went ahead and had an enjoyable and educational session, meeting in 2 groups in order to accommodate all members- like first and second sitting for those school dinners just a few years ago! We learnt that we had all benefitted from the reduction in traffic noise and time at home, facilitating our appreciation of the wonderful natural events happening in our own gardens, whether it be watching the blackbirds nesting or the unhurried progress of spring. We had a canopy prepared in case of rain but we were fortunate as we had sunny intervals- it was not until an hour or more after the meeting finished that the heavens opened and our water butts began to fill! We found the empty case of an emerged dragonfly and a selection of wildflowers nestled amongst the yellow rattle. Families of tits passed through the garden whilst robins and sparrows visited the bird feeders. It was good to catch up with each other and we look forward to our next meeting, although we cannot currently say in what format it will take. We wish “Happy Nature-watching” to all U3A members- “Springwatch” on television is OK but it can be more exciting to have your own experience of nature, even if it is just looking out of your window!

What did you do in 2020? (from Jackie Searl)

A year we will all remember for what we have not been able to do – meeting our friends and family, participating in group activities, holidays, visiting gardens and other places of interest – the list is endless. On the positive side, what have we done that we would not have done in normal circumstances?

Here is what I have done personally. Apart from gardening, reading, wordsearches, needlepoint, spending too much time using the computer and watching (mostly rubbish) television, I have done a few other things.

- Dealt with a lot of legal and business matters;
- Made far more telephone calls to friends and acquaintances;
- Spoken to my daughters via Skype every morning and on the telephone every evening;
- My daughter’s 50th birthday was celebrated with a virtual lunch via Skype;
- Zoom was new to me but Wine III enjoyed a meeting via this facility;
- Logged onto the National Garden Website and watched its Virtual Garden videos instead of visiting open gardens. There are around 100 short videos to watch and enable you to visit gardens throughout England and Wales which you may never have seen any other way.
<https://ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits-collection>;
- I have participated in five Futurelearn courses – Royal Fashion Throughout the Ages from the Tudors to Modern Times, Life and Times of Richard III, Gender Inequality, Forensic Archaeology and Star Carr Mesolithic Site in Yorkshire. There are many courses to choose from, they last 2-6 weeks and take 2-5 hours work per week (if you do everything which isn’t compulsory). However, you can work at your pace, leaving out bits or looking at other parts in greater depth as you wish. And they are free unless you want a certificate at the end!
<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses>;
- Started to sort some documents left from Chris’s aunt’s estate which has proved fascinating and possibly will lead to presenting some stuff for auction. *Does anyone collect postcards?* I have found some dating back to the early years of 1900s as well as a huge collection of film stars from the 1930s. Do you collect stamps as I have many more with older stamps!
- I have spent time in my garden and am currently picking raspberries and strawberries.

Have you done anything unusual in these strange times?

My apologies to **Janet Downs** who was the author of the **The Best Seller** not Janet Dowse, a mistake that I understand has been made before.

From the Poetry Group

When You Are Old - W. B. Yeats

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
and nodding by the fire, take down this book,
and slowly read, and dream of the soft look
your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
and loved your beauty with love false or true,
but one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
and loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
and paced upon the mountains overhead
and hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was an Irish poet and one of the foremost figures of 20th-century literature. A pillar of the Irish literary establishment, he helped to found the Abbey Theatre, and in his later years served two terms as a Senator of the Irish Free State. He was a driving force behind the Irish Literary Revival. In 1923 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was long infatuated by Maude Gonne, an English heiress and ardent Irish Nationalist, for whom this poem was written, but his feelings went unrequited.

The Quiz Section

Answers to the "Cryptic Crossword"

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U	N	G	R	E	E	N		A	N	E	U	R	I	N
N	U					I		D		E		I		Z
D	A	L		N	O	C	T	U	R	N	A	L	L	Y
E		A		E				L				Y		M
R	A	R	E	R		D	E	C	K	H	O	U	S	E
		S		V		E		E		A		N		
F	R	O	G	E	A	T	E	R		B	E	A	C	H
I		L				E				I		B		O
F	A	D	E	D	T	R	I	C	O	T		A	D	D
T		I		E		G		R				S		D
H	I	E	T	I	M	E		A	L	C	O	H	O	L
S		R		C		N		T		A		E		U
	A	S	C	E	N	T		E	A	R	L	D	O	M

Now a General Knowledge crossword

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		
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9								10						
11				12										
13						14				15				
16										17				18
19				20				21				22		
23								24		25				
	26							27						

ACROSS

DOWN

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Iris's spectrum (7) | 1 Toothed device (7) |
| 5 Useful element, No. 6 (6) | 2 Numberless quality (15) |
| 9 Different line of thought (7) | 3 Busy insect (3) |
| 10 _____ Ann, Johnny Gruelle doll (7) | 4 ____ with Mother (on tv) (5) |
| 11 Poor actor (3) | 5 Pair of US states (9) |
| 12 An award to a school or university (11) | 6 _____ Moore, Bond actor (5) |
| 13 _____ Tatin, Hotel sweet (5) | 7 Very warm nature (15) |
| 14 Gaeltacht Gaelic spoken here (9) | 8 Short-sightedness (6) |
| 16 Fans of Parker, Monk & Gillespie (9) | 12 Gift from Somnus (or Hypnos!) (5) |
| 17 Proportion (5) | 14 Varied pattern (9) |
| 19 The History of Eliza Wharton by
Hannah Webster Foster (3,8) | 15 Eagle's nest (5) |
| 22 Crick & Watson double-helix (3) | 16 Courage (6) |
| 23 Lesser known US actor (3,4) | 18 Nell Gwyn's favourite fruit (7) |
| 24 Titanic's nemesis (7) | 20 Very overweight (5) |
| 26 Seaside near Bruges (6) | 21 Chubby Checker's dance (5) |
| 27 River Thames at Oxford (3,4) | 25 ____ of The Needle by Ken Follett (3) |