



## Editorial

Welcome to the third edition of our new style newsletter. In this issue there is some information about holiday cancellations. Remember that in the future there will probably be less new information available and members' contributions will be more significant. In order to contribute, please send text and pictures to [news@poyntonu3a.org.uk](mailto:news@poyntonu3a.org.uk), preferably text in Word format and pictures as jpgs.

## Poynton U3A

### General Meetings

We have now cancelled all the General Meetings up to and including August. As things stand at the moment it may well be the case that cancellation has to continue even further. However, you might be interested in this quotation from the front page of *The Times* Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April. Under the heading "Leading scientist 80% sure drug will work" it reports

*"Sarah Gilbert, professor of vaccinology at Oxford University, told The Times she was "80% confident" that the vaccine being developed by her team would work, with human trials due to begin in the next fortnight."*

Professor Gilbert's team is one of dozens around the world trying to find a vaccine and is the most advanced in Britain. *[Fingers crossed everybody! – Ed]*

### David Sewart

### Volunteers

We still have about 20 volunteers. They are not receiving a large number of requests for assistance probably because of the many local self-help groups that have sprung up. Prescriptions are being handled by the Town Council volunteer group.

It is worth repeating that if you know of any U3A member who is feeling isolated and not on email, I'm sure they would be pleased if you could contact them to let them know that they could phone Jayne or Sandra to be added to our telephone list.

## Day Trips and Reading Group 1

The May and July Day Trips are both cancelled. I hope to rearrange them for next year and monies will be held until we can make future plans. We will review the Autumn trips nearer the time.

Reading Group 1 plan to hold the book group meetings by group email for the next few months. We can't get the library reading packs at the moment so we will all be reading our own books and reviewing and recommending to the other members and keeping in touch by phone.

## Iris Neale

### Virtual Meetings

The Spanish group are carrying on with their virtual meetings and I am told that the Photography group are planning their first virtual meeting in the near future.

### Information

The following is taken verbatim from a recent communication from the Third Age Trust.

#### **Holidays and Trips**

As you might expect many of you either have or are looking to cancel or postpone trips and holidays and this is causing concern across the movement. Not only is the trip/holiday not happening but there are lots of problems concerning refunds. We have had a great number of written and telephone enquiries and sometimes I need to take legal advice so I apologise if the responses don't follow swiftly.

#### **The Trust's standing advice is that wherever possible:**

- members should book the holiday direct with the tour operator and so outside the U3A books of account
- scrutinise the terms and conditions and pricing, beware contracts that refer to minimum numbers of travellers as the costs could increase significantly
- pay by credit card
- use an ABTA registered tour operator, check the cover is still in place when you pay
- keep updated with travel advice from both the UK and overseas governments

#### **With regard to overseas holidays:**

On 17th March the FCO advised against all "non-essential global travel" for 30 days (so expiring 15th April), this has now been "extended indefinitely" and has been widely reported:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/coronavirus-foreign-office-travel-advice-warning-fco-uk-government-a9448986.html>

This updated FCO advice should allow U3As to claim back all monies paid for such trips including “non-refundable deposits”.

Under the Package Travel Regulations, the travellers would be entitled to a full refund within 14 days if the trip is cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 virus.

## **The guidance to Regulations clearly summarises the position as follows:**

35. Travellers also have the right to terminate the package travel contract without paying a termination fee if unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances occur at the place of destination or its immediate vicinity which significantly affect the performance of the package or the carriage of passengers to the destination. If the traveller does terminate then the organiser must provide a full refund without undue delay and in any event no later than 14 days after termination.

36. Unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances are defined as a situation beyond the control of the party who seeks to rely on such a situation and the consequences of which could not have been avoided even if all reasonable measures had been taken. Examples given in recital (31) of the Directive include warfare, other serious security problems such as terrorism, significant risks to human health such as the outbreak of a serious disease at the travel destination..."

This would be the position even if the contract stated that the deposit is not refundable. Regulation 30 is clear that any contractual terms which seek to circumvent the protections under the Regulations are not binding.

## **Software for Virtual Meetings**

As mentioned in the last edition there seem to be two main options for video conferencing software, Skype and Zoom. We have done some trials with both and Zoom seems to be the more satisfactory although there remain some concerns over security and privacy. Zoom have been issuing updates in the last few days in an attempt to address these problems. The 40-minute limit on Zoom meetings of more than 3 people (in the free version) is still not being applied although no official statement about this has been found and hence it could be reinstated at any time.

The Poynton Town Council website has lots of information on its website - [www.poyntontowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.poyntontowncouncil.gov.uk) and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/poyntontowncouncil/>

In addition, you can [subscribe to the PUN](#) (Poynton Update and News).

If you need help or if you have any non-medical concerns regarding a vulnerable neighbour, ring the Town Council number during working hours - 01625 872238.

The current list of local businesses who are able to deliver provisions, take-away meals and food to residents collated by the Town Council can be viewed or downloaded as a PDF at <https://bit.ly/2J8OWxL>

## Members' Contributions

### In our New Zealand 'Bubble'

Having left home on February 23 for a much-looked-forward-to holiday in New Zealand, travelling around and visiting family, we are now locked down for the duration! There were no Covid-19 cases here when we arrived and we naively thought we had left it behind. The first four weeks were idyllic, starting in Auckland we explored parks, gardens and islands. The weather was hot and sunny.



We then travelled south to the Coromandel Peninsula, visiting an interesting shorebird centre where we saw flocks of pied oyster catchers, godwits, red legged stilts and golden plovers, some getting ready to migrate. There were even a few rarely seen wrybills.

*[The wrybill is a species of plover endemic to New Zealand. It is special since it is the only species of bird in the world with a beak that is bent sideways one way, always to the right. – WikiEd]*

A few days later we travelled north to the Bay of Islands staying for a week before driving further north to Doubtless Bay. We were lucky to be staying in our nephew's holiday home close to the beach. A feature of this part of New Zealand is the lack of light pollution. At night the sky was a mass of stars. I've never seen anything like it in my life. The Milky Way was splashed across the night sky.

By this time, the Covid-19 virus had reached New Zealand and we were self-isolating. Which wasn't difficult as it is a remote area with vast, empty beaches! We had little contact with other people other than in a supermarket where we observed 'social distancing'. There was no panic buying and the shelves were well stocked with a few exceptions.

By this time, we had been advised that our flight home on 5 April had been cancelled, things were getting serious. We were not too worried, having got family here, we would not be homeless! On the afternoon of March 23 while watching the news in our Air B&B, the New Zealand government declared a state of emergency. We even had a siren emitted from our phone! We were told that by midnight that night everybody would have to be in the place where they could stay for the foreseeable future. After speaking to our host and our family we packed our cases and moved into our nephew's house who had moved his family north to his holiday home.

We are here with my brother and his wife in our own bubble. We are very fortunate to be here. It is very rural but not far from town. We can walk in the area and cycle. We have two pigs to feed, there is a cow in the paddock and an alpaca farm opposite! Sadly, we have no broadband so arrangements have to be made to sit outside our niece's house to pick up their wi-fi!

Of course, we miss our family back home but have managed a few video chats with them. Even if we were at home, we couldn't see them or the grandchildren.

If we have to endure isolation then this is a lovely place to be! The mornings are very cool now being autumn but the days are very warm, around 22C.

The government here locked down hard and soon, and signs are that the number of cases is levelling out. We are optimistic that in a couple of weeks time, they may drop down from level four to three which means we will be able to drive further afield.

There is still no news of when we will be able to return home. We have been impressed with what the Poynton Town Council has been organising to help the elderly and vulnerable. I'm sure the U3A is involved too. It's times like these when we realise what a great community Poynton is! We shall look forward to coming home one day!



Heading for a local fish restaurant one day we found there was already a queue!

**Kate Marsham**

**Glimmer**

It is difficult to see a silver lining under this dark Corona cloud but there is just a glimmer in that the pollution levels have fallen. The powers that be are saying it is because of the reduced numbers of vehicles using the roads, mainly in the cities. Minimal number of aircraft flying has nothing to do with the reduction, we are led to believe. I am just pleased that the blue skies we have been seeing have not been streaked with contrails containing pollutants and global warming gases. The asthma sufferers may get some relief and not have to use their inhalers as frequently as in the past, great for the children; just in time for the pollen season. Nature's spring is carrying on totally unaware there is a problem in the world; if only we could all have the same attitude. We will just have to enjoy the new growth and colours and be grateful that we live in Poynton. Many of us have gardens and those who can get out also have the country side albeit with limited access.

**Clive B Hill**

## My Daily Nature Walk



It's over 50 years since I was at primary school where I enjoyed the nature walks and collecting specimens to take back for further examination.

For the past two weeks I have been walking round the field at the back of my house for my daily exercise. It's peaceful and I am usually on my own apart from the occasional dog walker. The sky is a beautiful blue with fluffy clouds gently floating by. At my feet I see the dew glistening on the green blades of grass. On taking a closer look at the trees and shrubs I see them emerging from their winter sleep and am fascinated by their intricate structures. The birds are heralding the arrival of spring with their musical serenades. I spied a long-tailed tit with a tiny, soft black feather in its bill fly into a bush to continue building its nest ready for the next generation. Butterflies fluttered by and the bees were busy looking for flowers to land on. Nature is wonderful and will continue to bring me pleasure throughout the changing seasons. I know that some of you are confined to your homes but I do hope that you can all gain some pleasure from nature, be it on your daily walk, in your garden or looking at your beautiful houseplant or vase of flowers.

**Jill Hargreaves**

### Populating the UK

The story of planet Earth is one in which it goes through long glacial periods, when life disappears as ice takes over, which are interspersed with much shorter warm interglacial periods. The last full glacial period ended some 13,000 years ago and this provided another opportunity (the first had been perhaps some 30,000 years earlier) for human beings to expand into the world in which over 7 billion of us live today. It has been calculated that the world population of humans had probably reached 1,000,000 by 10,000 BC – about the time that human beings began occupying what is now northern Britain.

*How did my early ancestors get to Britain?* The simple answer is that they walked. At that time there was a land bridge, nowadays referred to as "Doggerland" which linked Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands across the North Sea. At the beginning of this period it was probably feasible to walk to Ireland although there is no evidence that they did so at this stage. We have to remember that enormous quantities of water were still locked up in the

mountains of ice which had accumulated at the height of the glacial period. (20,000 years ago, Poynton was covered by a sheet of ice about 1 kilometre thick.) What there was of the North Sea was between 200 and 300 feet lower than it is today. People began to migrate to the southern part of Britain perhaps as early as 14,000 BC but there is no evidence of occupation in Scotland before about 9000 BC. There can be no accurate way of defining population numbers but one often quoted source suggests that our total population in 9000 BC might have been about 1200 rising to 2400 by 8000 BC and perhaps 5000 by 7000 BC.

*How did people live?* Well they were hunter gatherers who would move about and perhaps used a range of regular bases. Humans had learnt to make use of fire perhaps 150,000 years ago. Cooking food allowed them to get far more nourishment from the animals which they caught and the vegetation which they had gathered. Doggerland would have been an area of mudflats, lagoons and marshes. An area of shallows and mixtures of fresh and salty water with a huge variety of vegetation and animal, bird and fish life would have been very attractive to hunter gatherers. They lived for the most part around the coast. That was not because the centre of Britain was covered by more or less impenetrable forest but rather because food was more plentiful and travel easier along the shoreline. Although we would consider these people to be human, they had not yet appeared as the dominant animal form on earth. They were still part of nature and very much subject to it. Their distinguishing characteristics included the fact that they regularly used a variety of tools in support of their daily ways of life. They also had a facility to make a range of very complex sounds. Human vocal language does not resemble any form of animal communication in the wild. This is because human vocal language evolved as a distinct and autonomous function together with human speech organs and the human brain.

It is probable that the early population tended to live in the East and south-east where food was plentiful and easy to catch. And so, most of them would have been wiped out by a huge natural disaster (between 6225 and 6170 BC) which came to light less than 20 years ago. (Of which more in a later edition)

**David Sewart**

## Things to Do

After last time's local quiz, a not-so-local quiz - questions again by Hooha

1. What was the name of the Queen's first corgi and who gave it to her?
2. Who rode into battle on a horse called White Surrey?
3. Another horse question – name Alexander the Great's horse.
4. In Robert Louis Stephenson's "Treasure Island" what is the name of Long John Silver's parrot?
5. Name the lion purchased from Harrods in 1969 and kept in a flat on the King's Road before being released in Kenya.

Answers to the quiz in the previous edition

1. What was Chester Road between the church and the railway line originally called?  
*Chester Road was called Station Road.*
2. In which year did the last coalmine in Poynton close down?  
*The last mine closed in August 1935 when 250 men were made redundant. The Norbury pits had closed previously and water from there was flooding into Poynton pits causing major problems.*
3. Name the farm which was situated between what is now Vicarage Lane and Glastonbury Drive on London Road North?  
*Between what is now Vicarage Lane and Glastonbury Drive was a row of small cottages built in the 1770s and 1780s with Village Farm the nearest building to Hazel Grove. This area was known as The Old Village, prior to the building of St George's Church when the crossroads become the centre of Poynton.*
4. In the 1950s Ida Goldthorpe, Arthur Walker and Charlie Brocklehurst all did what in Poynton?  
*They all kept shops – Ida Goldthorpe, on Park Lane where the new kitchen shop is now, selling haberdashery and clothing; Arthur Walker, butcher prior to Heathcote's butchers, where The Vine Hop is now; Charlie Brocklehurst grocer on Chester Road was at the corner of Highfield Road.*
5. When did the 100<sup>th</sup> Poynton Show take place?  
*The 100<sup>th</sup> Poynton Show was held in 2000, although it was well over 100 years since the first show had taken place, as some shows were missed during the world wars.*

Answers believed to be accurate but any new information most welcome.

Sudoku No 3 with the solution to the second one.

							<b>5</b>	
			<b>2</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>1</b>			<b>8</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>6</b>	
	<b>2</b>			<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>1</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>				<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>8</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>3</b>	
	<b>8</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>6</b>			<b>4</b>
	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>2</b>			
	<b>3</b>							

Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9

Below is the solution to No 2

<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>



## Internet Culture

The National Theatre is broadcasting some of its most popular productions for free during the lockdown. The new two-month National Theatre at Home programme began on April 2<sup>nd</sup> with *One Man, Two Guvnors*. The films start being shown at 7pm every Thursday to try to recreate, where possible, the communal viewing experience. They are then be available on demand for seven days. If you are quick you may catch **'Jane Eyre'**, adapted by Sally Cookson which started on April 9<sup>th</sup> and finishes on April 15<sup>th</sup>. After that they have announced

April 16<sup>th</sup> - **'Treasure Island'**, adapted by Bryony Lavery.

April 23<sup>rd</sup> - **'Twelfth Night'** by William Shakespeare, starring Tamsin Greig.

Andrew Lloyd Webber has released some of the films of his musicals. They start being shown at 7pm on a Friday and are available for 48 hours. The first two were announced in advance and are now no longer available. The next one starting on April 17<sup>th</sup> has not yet been named.

## Virtual Visits

Lots of the places where people would normally go and visit are now providing virtual visits. Some of the virtual visits simply provide access to pieces of video, others try for a more ambitious version where you navigate around a museum or art gallery. Experience has shown that some of these are like a video game where the main task is to successfully move around the building and the artefacts are a bit of a side-show!

Some suggestions are :-

Google Arts and Culture

National Trust

Canals and Rivers Trust

Woodland Trust

Wildlife Trust

On the Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April Chester Zoo had a Virtual Zoo day. The videos are still available on Chester Zoo's Channel on YouTube. It may help as a suggestion for the grandchildren (or their parents) if they are climbing up the walls!

For all of the above, simply go to your favourite Search Engine and enter the relevant title.