



# Poynton News

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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[poyntonu3a.org.uk](http://poyntonu3a.org.uk)

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## Editorial

Welcome to the ninth edition of our new style newsletter. The member contributions have returned and there is a lateral-thinking puzzle. If you would like to contribute to the next edition, send text and pictures to [news@poyntonu3a.org.uk](mailto:news@poyntonu3a.org.uk).

## Poynton U3A Update

On Monday you should have received details of the revised procedures for the AGM and on Tuesday you should have received an email through the Beacon system suggesting that, if you haven't received the revised procedures, could you please have a look in your Junk. If that fails, could you look to see if you have a Spam folder and, if so, look in there as well. It is obviously important that as many members as possible have a chance to look at the new procedures. Remember that if you wish to respond, you need to do so by 27<sup>th</sup> July.

Humans are very versatile creatures. In our life times we have seen huge developments in communication at a distance, from simple telephones to the complex virtual communication across thousands of people employing countless arrangements of technologies. We are using an element of this new technology to complete the business of our AGM. If it has its drawbacks, it also has its advantages. Our AGM meetings in the past disenfranchised members who were unable to attend. What we are doing now is engaging, albeit in a very simple way, with the wishes of all members. Nobody is disenfranchised and that is something which we need to take with us into the future.

Having started with our AGM in a new way, we will be coming to the end of an era. We will have to proceed in different ways which some are describing as a "new" normal. We will learn from operating in a virtual environment to keep in closer contact with members. For some time, we have to continue to live with Covid-19. While it's out there we must be constantly vigilant. But the efforts being made throughout the world to provide a viable vaccine will, we hope, allow us in time to provide again a workable programme for Poynton and one which will in future constantly provide us with feedback from which to learn.

**David Sewart**

## Members' Contributions

### Spanish Group

The Spanish group continues to meet virtually thanks to Zoom and has done every week since lockdown. We are all becoming experts at communication technology, although Zoom does seem to have its occasional peculiarities. We have a regular 9 or 10 attendees each week with lively conversation, mostly in Spanish! We split our time across 2 consecutive meetings with a break for tea between them.

Recent topics of conversation include a country you have visited or would like to visit, what you miss most during the lockdown period and your favourite book. We spent three weeks working through exciting episodes of Superman in Spanish. We have also been working on our verbs and on a vocabulary quiz going through every letter of the alphabet. We have even been doing homework consisting of a verb exercise and a weekly translation. So far nobody has been in detention for not doing their homework. Who knows when we will be able to meet again in person, but in the mean time we will keep Zooming.

### Paul Freeborn

*The muse seems to have taken the Creative Writing group and we have several poems - Ed*

### Bubble

We have now been advised to form a bubble  
To be very careful and not to burst that bubble  
We can have a hugging bubble and a sleep-over  
There are enormous bubbles on the beaches  
In the countryside there are bubbles  
Water seems to be creating bubbles of its own  
When there are bubbles all over the country  
Will there still be room to roam or get inside the pub?  
Maybe you will have to park your bubble outside  
Then pass your order through an app on your phone,  
Plus your name, address, nation of origin, gender at birth.  
If you have a problem with your gender there are help groups.  
These restrictions only apply to England at the moment  
Wales & Scotland somewhat behind, Ireland way out in front  
These moves are for our mental or economic health, I think.

### Clive B Hill

## Birds of a Feather

Sitting in the garden is  
one of the pleasures in life.  
Contemplating the native birds,  
observing their trouble and strife.  
Never without a bird song  
is a comforting sort of sound.  
I wish I knew what they were saying,  
as they scuttle across the ground.  
The Sparrows bob along the grass  
looking for titbits lying there.  
Then the Blackbirds come into view  
and hope there's enough to share.  
The top of the shop in the pecking order,  
Magpies make an awful din.  
Till Mr Jackdaw hears the noise  
and decides to muscle in.  
Nyjer seeds hang from a tube,  
Enticing Goldfinch to come and dine  
They are very messy eaters,  
chomping together, all in a line.  
The feral pigeons then arrive,  
ready to scoop up the seeds that drop.  
Feathers in blue/grey and cinnamon/brown,  
pick up a take-away, at a known pit stop.  
It is reassuring in the land of lockdown,  
for many of us it is much the same,  
but life goes on and there is much to do,  
until it's time to board a plane.  
Is it safe to fly, to faraway places?  
We have yet to know the truth.  
Better safe than sorry,  
like chickens, locked up in a coop.

**Susan J Pyett.**



A couple more poems from **Ian Beverley**.

## **Unworldly Wise**

Flee from the feverish city streets,  
The country heart has gentle beats,  
No concrete towers obscure the sky,  
But curving hills seduce the eye.  
Where are the thrills - what can transcend  
The town's sophisticated blend?

Only the simplest things, of course –  
Year-long sunlight trapped in gorse.  
Black, witch-clouds riding swift and high,  
Old villages so slow to die,  
Strong with stone of gold and grey  
And charm ensured for many a day.

Hope in the tumbled greens of Spring  
Zest in a fell-top's keen wind's sting;  
Exciting helicoptering larks,  
Furled bracken shoots like question marks  
Gaunt crags face-washed by timeless rains.  
And still the twining thorn-hedged lanes  
That in solitude and pride  
Maintain the peace of countryside.

## **Lost for Words**

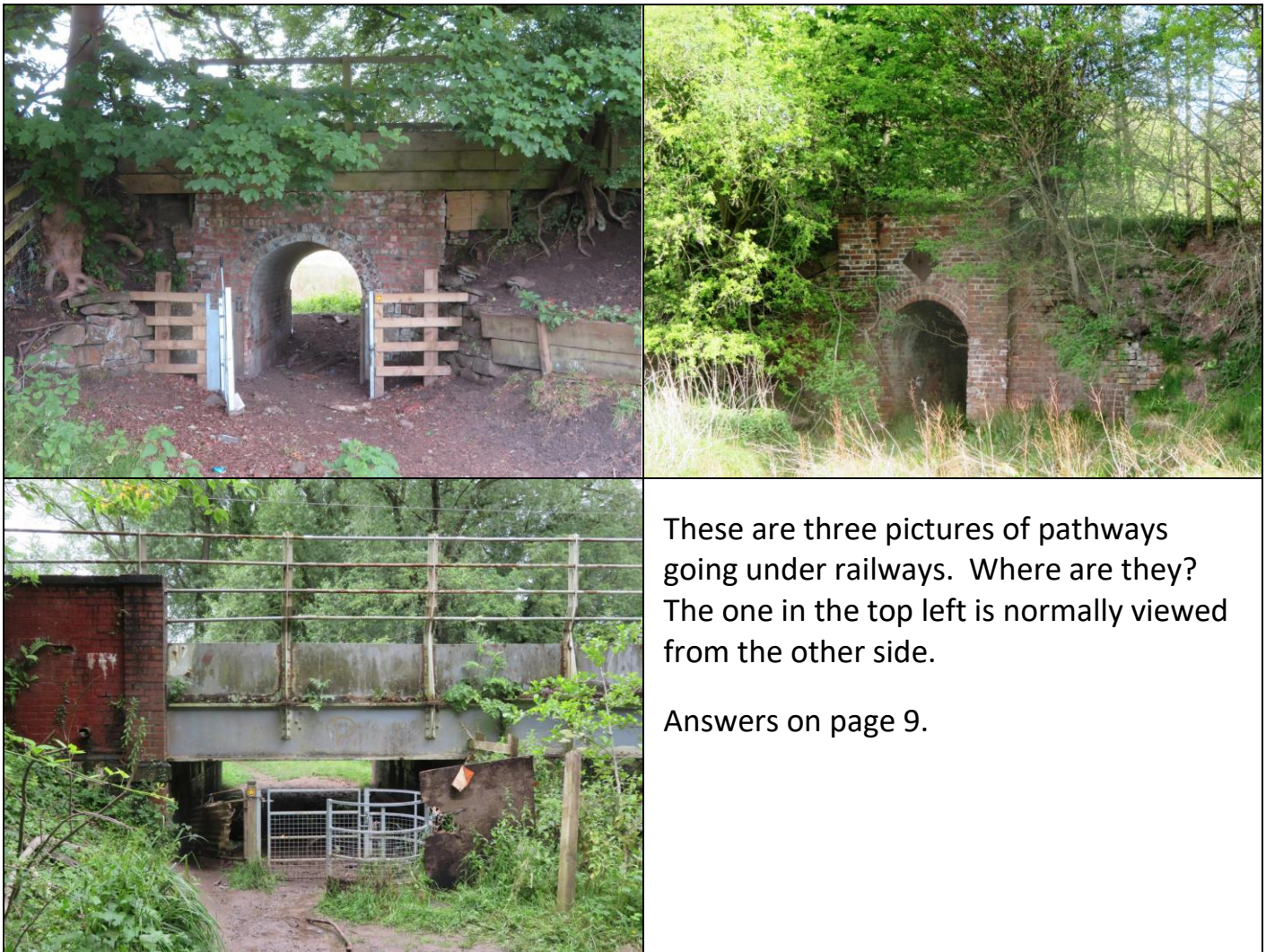
A tangled hedge where honeysuckle spills,  
Clean herb scents from the wide moorlands winging;  
Cloud -shreds skimming sun - smoothed hills,  
Tall rushes by swift river singing;  
A beech with glossy leaves astir,  
A fellside, plumes of bracken greening.  
A bird asway on crested fir:  
Moments fraught with poignant meaning.

Add contentment - inward glow,  
And you were the cause  
I know, I know;  
But I hadn't the sense to tell you so.



## Pictures from our Perambulations

### Three Pathways under Railways – Past and Present



### The Problem with Calendars – Part 3 The Gregorian Calendar

The impact of the great Plague in 1347 had put an end to Pope Clement's plans for establishing a new and agreed calendar for Christendom and the confusion and contradictions in the calendars was to continue for well over another century.

Regular attempts were made to remedy the matter and finally Pope Gregory was able to launch a new calendar in 1582. Most of the Astrologers and Mathematicians considered that what had been published was good or even better than they had ever seen but you can't please all of the people all of the time.

On 24<sup>th</sup> February 1582 Pope Gregory signed the papal bull which would soon come into effect. As 4<sup>th</sup> October 1582 came to an end the Gregorian calendar moved 10 days forward. Rioting arose as people thought that 10 days had been removed from their lives. Some had lost their birthday that year. Others were dubious as to whether the Saints to whom they

prayed would be aware of this and so might not be listening for them. But these were relatively minor points. These were not times when news was virtually instantaneous and in any case the Vatican no longer held the same sway over such a broad area as it had a century earlier. So the response to Pope Gregory's edict was bound to vary. The Protestant countries of course objected to the new system as did Jews and Moslems. The statement was seen as a political attempt to establish authority rather than a technical and much needed reform of an obsolete calendar

Even some of the Catholic countries were slow to react. France waited until December and Belgium and the Catholic states of the Netherlands delayed until the beginning of 1583. Chaos reigned in the German states as they chose individual times to change. People now had to deal with 2 calendars as the Julian calendar continued in the Protestant countries. Protestant Germany and Denmark only adopted the new calendar in 1700. The Eastern churches continued with the old calendar until after the First World War.

What about Britain? The Archbishop of Canterbury opposed the change and an attempt to get the change through Parliament failed. There was at the time a very strong anti-Rome/anti-Catholic feeling and a considerable hatred of Spain. It took Parliament a further 170 years before it voted unanimously on the Calendar Act 1750 to accept for Britain and its colonies (which at the time included the American colonies) the new calendar. This was not straightforward. At the same time New Years Day was moved from 25<sup>th</sup> March to its present position of 1<sup>st</sup> January. This meant that 1751 was a short year, lasting just 282 days from 25<sup>th</sup> March (New Year in the Julian calendar) to 31<sup>st</sup> December. The year 1752 then began on 1 January.

Christians did not use the "reverse" of *anno domini* until 1627 when the French astronomer Dennis Petau seems to have become the first ever to use BC (before Christ) dates while teaching at the Collège de Clermont in Paris.

The failure of some countries to adopt the new Gregorian calendar sometimes gave them problems even fairly recently. For example, in 1908 the Imperial Russian Olympic team arrived in London 12 days too late for the Olympic Games as they were still using the Julian calendar!

Arguments about updating/improving/simplifying the Calendar continue. Perhaps the argument for making Easter an immovable feast might well come to pass at some stage. The Eastern and Western Christian Churches disagree about it and most of the world does not nowadays accept Christianity as a universal faith. Most would agree that we now live in a secular society. Our UK Parliament has never passed legislation for a reform of the calendar but a little remembered bit of legislation is still on the cards. The 1928 Easter Act allows an Order in Council to fix the date of this moveable feast in Great Britain for all time. Easter Sunday would always be the first Sunday after the second Saturday in April. Simple isn't it! So far this has not been taken up. Of course, there might not any longer be anyone

of importance alive in our country who remembers something which presumably was considered to be “a very good idea” at the time”.

Nowadays the terms BC and AD are often not used by people of different religious persuasions or none. For example, Jews and many other non-Christians refer to AD as CE (the common era) and before Christ as BCE (before the common era).

**David Sewart**

## Things to Do

And now for something different.....

A “Connect” puzzle created by **Mat McClaren** (not a U3A member) and supplied with permission by **Wendy Bailey**.

Re-arrange the words below into 4 categories and state the categories. The solution will appear in the next edition.

Butter	Marmalade	Gaga	Viscount
Earl	Nutella	Rihanna	Baron
Madonna	Sting	Jam	Bird
Prince	Duke	Adele	Cheese

Sudoku No 9

	4				6		7	
			8	7			6	
							3	
	1			3		8	5	
5		7		8		6		
		8	1				4	
		3						
			6		4	1		
8	2			5				

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

Below is the solution to No 8

5	3	4	9	8	7	6	2	1
1	6	9	2	3	5	8	7	4
8	7	2	6	1	4	5	9	3
4	9	8	7	6	3	1	5	2
2	1	7	8	5	9	3	4	6
6	5	3	4	2	1	9	8	7
3	2	1	5	7	8	4	6	9
9	8	6	1	4	2	7	3	5
7	4	5	3	9	6	2	1	8

More quiz questions from Hooha.

1. What was Christian name of the character played by Yul Brynner in the 1960 film The Magnificent Seven?
2. Which 1950s film was banned from being shown in cinemas in Stockport because of fears of rioting but was shown at The Brookfield Cinema in Poynton?
3. Who played the title character in the 1979 film "Mad Max"?
4. Name the Korean film which won the Academy Award for best picture in 2019.
5. Former child star Shirley Temple became U.S.A. Ambassador to which two countries?

Answers to the quiz in the previous edition

1. What is the connection between Croydon and Saffron Walden?  
*Crocuses. Originally called Waldon the Saffron was added in medieval times. The saffron trade was so labour intensive it eventually died out and none had been produced there for 200 years, but now a local farmer has planted 150,000 bulbs and is producing this very expensive spice once more. It is believed that crocuses were produced in Croydon from Roman times for the valuable saffron.*
2. When did Higher Poynton Station close?  
*January 1970*
3. What is the parentage of a mule?  
*A mule is the offspring of a donkey and a mare*
4. Name the former National Security Adviser to President Donald Trump who has written a book about Trump called The Room Where it Happened – a White House Memoir  
*John R Bolton*
5. What is measured by The Scoville scale?  
*The heat of chillies*

## Internet Culture

### The National Theatre

We are now on to the last three of the National Theatre productions to be broadcast for free.

Finishing at 7pm on July 9<sup>th</sup> - Les Blancs - An African country teeters on the edge of civil war in Lorraine Hansberry's epic, directed by Yaël Farber.

Starting at 7pm on July 9<sup>th</sup> - The Deep Blue Sea - Helen McCrory plays one of contemporary drama's greatest female roles in Terence Rattigan's masterpiece, directed by Carrie Cracknell.

Starting at 7pm on July 16<sup>th</sup> - Amadeus - Lucian Msamati is Salieri in Peter Shaffer's iconic play, directed by Michael Longhurst and featuring live orchestral accompaniment by Southbank Sinfonia.



## BBC Proms - 17 July – 12 September

The 2020 season will open on Friday 17 July on BBC Radio 3 and Sunday 19 July on BBC Four. There will be 8 weeks of broadcasts on television, radio and online. The Proms start with a unique First Night commission by Iain Farrington for a Grand Virtual Orchestra to mark the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth. There are plans for special live performances later in the season culminating in the Last Night of the Proms bringing the nation together on 12 September.

The current situation with COVID-19 means that the season that was originally planned is no longer possible. Instead the Proms in 2020 have been reconceived in a different format, but the aim remains the same – to create the world's greatest classical music festival by reflecting world-class music-making from leading artists around the globe, highlighting and featuring work by some of today's most exciting and innovative composers.

## Pictures from our Perambulations



This pathway goes under Prince's incline just before Rabbit Burrow Farm. It is normally viewed from the other side which is Davenport golf course. It is known locally as Yell Tunnel.



This one is close to the first one going under the route from the golf course to Park Pits. It is just to the north of Rabbit Burrow Farm. It was apparently intended for cattle to proceed under the railway.

*Does anyone know why Rabbit Burrow Farm is sometimes spelt without the "w"? - Ed*



The third pathway goes under the current main Stockport to Macclesfield line at the end of Lostock Road which is off London Road South. It is near to the site of the first Poynton station on this line. The clearance under the bridge is minimal.

All three pathways have one thing in common. When it rains, they get very muddy!

## Keeping in Touch

If you know of any U3A member who is feeling isolated and not on email, please contact them to let them know that they can phone Jayne or Sandra to be added to our telephone list.

## Town Council Information

The 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/>

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