



Poynton News

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

poyntonu3a.org.uk

Issue 33-2

9th Sep 2020

Editorial

Welcome to the twelfth edition of the electronic newsletters.

Member contributions are still welcome. If you would like to contribute to the next edition, send your text and pictures to news@poyntonu3a.org.uk.

Poynton U3A Update

In her note in Issue 32-6 of this Poynton U3A News, Iris reported the decision to cancel all the coach trips for the rest of the year. Coach travel is not as amenable as some other forms of transport to personal distancing and what requirements next year will bring is not clear enough to envisage simply a postponement. So, it was decided to return all the payments which had been collected for the coach trips in 2020. We have now been through that process. On behalf of all of us who have benefited from the trips which Iris has now been running for several years, it is a lot more than simply appropriate that I should thank her for the foresight and all the detailed work which she has put in to such a varied and popular programme. So - thank you Iris.

It has been possible for your new committee to examine our likely financial position at the end of 2020. Those of you who attend our AGM will be aware from the financial reports that Poynton U3A is a member of the Third Age Trust and it requires us to pay a per capita annual membership fee of £3.50 which includes insurance on all U3A activities. A further £1 per person is paid for the use of the Beacon registration and management system which safeguards personal data. (These sums of money are payable early next year and we have to make sure that the appropriate sums are available at the appropriate time early in 2021.) So, the actual amount available to Poynton U3A from its £10 membership fee for its annual programme of activities in recent years has been £5.50 per member.

At the moment we are collecting the questions which need to be answered for next year. Not the least of these are responsibilities for specific jobs/activities in the future. We are hoping to come to some agreements on that in October and are still hoping and planning to present for 2021 the sort of programme we offered before the coronavirus brought a halt to this year's ambitions.

David Sewart

Thanks

In our last issue I referred to the loss of three committee members of longstanding. It has been customary to make presentations to members of the committee who have provided us with support over several years and to do so at one of our larger gatherings. As each day passes it seems less likely that we will be able to have any large-scale General Meeting before Christmas. But we have always felt that our thanks should be made in the presence of as wide an audience as possible and in the present circumstances what could be wider than our Newsletter which has carried the torch of our continuing existence!

There are four “Officer” roles which we are required by the Charity Commission to fill because of their significant importance in the operation of a U3A. Two of these are the Secretary and Treasurer roles and Kay Dacey, Beryl Simpson and Rose Diplock have between them covered both of these roles for over six years. Kay took over the role of Secretary in 2014 and then in 2015 took over the responsibilities of Treasurer from our original founding treasurer, Gerry Neale. The role she had filled as Secretary was then taken on by Beryl Simpson who passed it on to Rose Diplock in 2019. That represents a very significant input and over a considerable amount of time. Kay, Beryl and Rose were all present when chocolates were handed round to celebrate the one hundredth committee meeting of Poynton U3A on the 4th of February 2020. The subsequent committee meeting was the last we were able to hold before the Coronavirus imposed a new world on us. When (you will note that I didn't say “if”) Poynton U3A becomes fully operational again, we are expecting that the Interest Groups and General Meetings will continue in much the same way. But many of the practices which your Committee has carried out in the last ten years will change, some in quite noticeable ways. This is our opportunity to thank those who have made significant contributions to our operation in the BC (before corona) era.

David Sewart

Volunteers

Our volunteer coordinators, Sandra Batchelor and Jayne Barnes, have received a letter signed by Haf Barlow, the Town Clerk which contained the following paragraphs.

“Poynton Town Council would like to thank you for ‘stepping-up’ and responding to the needs of your neighbours and community during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been a challenging time for everyone, especially for the more vulnerable in our community. No matter how much or how little you contributed, your efforts, along with other volunteers, has meant that during one of the most difficult times that our community has faced, we’ve got through it together and supported those most in need.

We know that this support has been very much appreciated by the people who have required support, and the Town Council whilst not surprised, are incredibly proud of the volunteers who offered their help. We are also aware that for some volunteers, feeling

they were able 'to do something useful' for their neighbours developed a strong sense of pride.

It was a very strange time and we all experienced new things, some positive, others negative. It could be that these circumstances allowed you the time to offer the support you did. We are not sure what the future will bring with Covid-19, but hopefully we are all now slowly starting to return to some sort of normality. To reflect this, the response Poynton Town Council offered ceased on 1st August taking account of the Government guidance around shielding being paused."

Members' Contributions

Books, Birds and Blackberries

When Poynton library was closed during lockdown I relied on family and friends to lend me books. One autobiography led me to make a comparison with a current situation.

"The Invisible Line" by Harry Bernstein, is a fascinating account of the author's childhood in a Jewish family, living in a terraced house in Stockport a century ago. On one side of the street the houses were all occupied by Jewish immigrants many of whom, like the Bernsteins, came from Poland. On the other side lived Christian families. The two communities never mixed. They were separated by the invisible line which ran down the middle of the street. ("The Dream", the sequel which details the family's life in USA is equally interesting.)

Now, in the current COVID pandemic we find ourselves facing a totally different kind of invisible line. As lockdown restrictions started to ease in July, and were then re-imposed in Greater Manchester, extending as far south as Brookside Garden Centre, an invisible line came into being, separating Poynton from Hazel Grove.

And now to birds. This is a quiet period for woodland and songbirds which gave me so much pleasure in the spring. In August they hide away and moult after the breeding season. However, I am still making interesting observations as I walk my local patch. Goldfinches search for thistle seed heads, a particular favourite food at the end of summer. A nuthatch calls loudly from the stump of an old oak tree which I watched being felled a week earlier. It had massive branches dangerously hanging over the cobbled track.

On the canal towpath, after a fruitful hour blackberrying, I arrive at Lyme View Marina and spot a heron standing on the canal bank. Unphased by people walking past it seems to be posing for photos. But I prefer to do watercolour sketches, so will store away in my memory these bird sightings for art work at a later date.

As I walk home, I wonder if my kind friend who has a cooking apple tree will leave a bag of apples in our porch. The next day she does, and I can make blackberry and apple pie. It is comforting to know that whatever uncertainties exist for all of us at the moment, harvest time is a reassuring constant at this time of year.

Vivienne Arnold.

Pictures from Kate's Perambulations

All these floral displays are to be found along Chester Road, Park Lane and near the library in Poynton. In these strange times when so many of us are unable to leave our immediate area it is a pleasure to see these colourful displays when walking to the shops. We are grateful to those who have provided them and look after them.



Kate Marsham

Ponderations on a Monday

What on earth can I write about? Done nothing, seen nobody, been nowhere but had time to stand and stare, think, plan and generally open up my mind to possibilities. Memories crowd in of people and places which had lain buried deep down in my psyche. Questions I now need answering, although there is nobody around old enough to remember, so I must accept that my blanks will remain just that, blank for ever. Life is becoming like a crossword without ever discovering the solution. Is this really important?

Common sense tells me that the here and now is far more important; the happiness of our loved ones, safety of our children and grandchildren. Where we will all end up is another matter, and thinking and worrying about it is a complete waste of time. I can accept that at an intellectual level, but still find my mind wandering down the tempting road of “what if”. Must try harder.

Helen J Stanley

Whether or Not

At last we are now experiencing English weather again, giving us something else to talk about which is more normal, more English. Whether or not it may rain or stay dry, be warm or cool? Will it last? What will happen tomorrow? Next week? Or even in an hour, can I put the washing out? Of course, whether it will dry or not, is a different question. I have a bowls match and I'd like to play tennis: what will it do? It's a lovely morning. I'm playing golf this evening but will I need my waterproofs or just the umbrella? These unanswerable questions were part of life, and now are again in a limited way.

As in most countries we give employment to weather forecasters. Hoping they will tell us just what the weather will do, unfortunately they only tell us what the weather may do or what it did today and they even get that wrong. They tell us where the wind is coming from and how strongly it will blow, what the barometric pressure is, sunrise and sunset times. We can feel where the wind is coming from, unfortunately if you suffer from arthritis you know the pressure is changing. The sun will rise and set whether we know the times or not.

Such a change from those spring and early summer days with clear blue skies from sun-up to sunset, warm even hot. We just had to make sure we had the right clothes, in my case shorts and t-shirts. I even saw an elderly gentleman on Park Lane wearing sandals with no socks.

Some early mornings and evenings there is a slight chill. Poynton Show always brought summer to an end, no show this year. Glorious as the day could be, the following day always felt autumnal. The weather now is as I have known it all my life, unpredictable, and it's the unknown that keeps you on your toes, obsessed, but we are English.

Those sunny days were foreign to us, how should we behave? In some cases, badly it seemed, not in our usual understated way, or is this the new English way?

The north south divide is not only economic and social, also temperature related. The hot air of the south might explain attitudes. In the south people crowded together in eighty degrees plus, in the Fahrenheit of our youth. Whereas separated by several hundred miles of M1, in the north-east not even sixty degrees, as the wind blows heavy clouds across the North Sea, clear and bracing, ideal for a swim, but you had to be northern and hard.

Clive B Hill

The Farmhouse Tea

I never thought I'd live to see
The passing of the farmhouse tea.
The undervalued simple fare
Served with modest pride and care.
The clean-kept room made Summer cool
Yet petals falling formed a pool
On scrubbed white table, roses-why
Did colour fade and fragrance die?
So down to earth, the farmer's wife-
'Sad' she said 'but that be life'
And set before us eggs and ham
And home-made bread with scones and jam.

And nothing she did bake or cook-
Lacked or wore a plastic look.
Winter came, soft lamplight shone,
A generous fire with logs piled on.
And we were friends-that was the way
Which added joy to yesterday.

The farmhouse tea's long out-of-date-
It's dinner now, maybe at eight
With artificial candle-shine
And knowledgeable talk of wine-
Allowed to breathe or slowly chilled
Before a gourmet's glass is filled.
The waiter, thinking it's one's wish
Suggests some esoteric dish
And craven creature that I am-
I dare not order eggs and ham!

Ian Beverley

The Remnant

The Craft Fair was well-attended because it was a wet day, and here at Carleton Sands there was little else to do when games and rides at the Amusement Arcade began to pall.

So, families crowded in the Community Hall, besieging the tea stall and pacifying shrieking toddlers with a cute gingham-dressed teddy or a floppy-eared stuffed bunny.

Aymer Sprotovski 's stall was by the stage, so he had been able to hang up some of his quilts where they would show to best advantage

Recently, a reporter from "Modern and Stylish" magazine had featured his products in its glossy pages under the headline "Beds for Blokes". It had used one of his designs made from men's suiting.

It was flattering, Aymer supposed, but a bit dangerous too. He could not do with too many members of the public coming around... he did not want to draw attention to himself. So, he had no email, no phone number. Anyone who wished to purchase a quilt must write to him care of the local Post office and he'd arrange an appointment for them to view his stock.

True, the quilts were well-made, in beautiful geometric designs; and Aymer let it be known that he also made flowered ones that might appeal to the ladies, and brightly-coloured small bedcovers, featuring teddy-bears, for children.

It was not a hobby he had chosen, exactly, but had arisen from necessity. Because what could you do with people's clothes once you'd eaten the bodies? Well, not exactly eaten, for Aymer, being a Vampire, just sucked all the juices from his victims and hung up their empty skins to dry. Quite quickly the desiccated skins turned papery, and he was able to crumble them up. They blew away in the sharp easterly breeze that always blew on this coast.

And the left-over bones he reduced to a fine powder with a hammer. It was easy to get rid of them; you simply cut a small hole in the bottom of a shopping bag and went for a good long walk along the shore early in the morning as the tide came in. The ivory powder mixed easily with the sand grains and was quickly scoured away by the incoming tide, as were his footprints. And he took care to stoop occasionally to collect a shell or stone and put it carefully into his bag in case anyone was watching him.

Life was fine except for one thing. The clothes. You had to dispose of their clothes. That was the problem.

Now he was not a wicked or cruel man...sorry, vampire. No more than, say, a lion or an elephant is bad; the one hunting and bringing down a gazelle, the other trampling down the crop that would have fed a village. That is just their nature, and it was Aymer's nature to be a vampire, a creature left over from the dawn of time; one of the last of his breed who had

been themselves hunted nearly to extinction. Cows eat grass; foxes eat chickens and vampires... eat humans.

Yes, he had the specialised teeth, but kept them tucked away until he needed to feed. People rarely looked at him twice, and if they did, they came to the conclusion that the dusty-looking old chap wore badly-made dentures a little out of scale with his mouth.

No, he did not go fluttering about with a billowing cloak and blood-stained chin. Hollywood films had a lot to answer for. Aymer lived quietly among humans and was not afraid, unlike the last Neanderthals still living in the cold remote uplands; the creatures that humans named Yeti or Bigfoot. And he hadn't glimpsed a gnome or fairy for centuries.

At first he'd used every Charity shop within thirty miles, taking bags full of clothing saying mournfully "My dear late wife...." or speaking of "The sad loss of my older brother..." as he handed over the packages. He actually rather enjoyed the condolences and sympathy expressed by the Charity Shop volunteer assistants.

Just lately the caravan site owners had got quite particular about residents sorting and recycling rubbish. Aymer didn't dare dispose of the clothes in the ordinary bin. Clothes could be evidence. Evidence meant police poking about. No, it was too risky. He couldn't keep going back to the Charity shops as they might recognise him and become suspicious...yet another of his relatives dying? They would wonder.

Recently though, a large green container had appeared in the far corner of the supermarket carpark and he stuffed a few items in it. But it did not do to go there too often. It led to people wondering and gossiping.

So, he'd bought this sewing machine and a "How to" book about quilts and taught himself. He sold a few, which gave him a little income that paid the rent on his caravan in the back corner of Sunnyside Caravan Park, "a stone's throw from the beach" as the advertisement said.

He was careful never to take his food from this site. No, he chose them from "Timney's Camping and Touring Caravans" site or from the Amusement Arcades in town. Or for preference, among the day-trippers and coach parties arriving every day during the season.

It had been a good life so far, allowing him to sleep all day in the least popular corner, for as you know, vampires prefer the evening or night. Hollywood did get that right.

Some early evening, he rose, refreshed and ready, dressed respectably in worn but clean clothing. A straying toddler or an older disobedient teenager storming off after a family row, poor old Gran or Grandad trailing along slowly after the family to the pub; they were his goal.

Gin, Prosecco, ale and cider were ordered from the bar, well, it was a holiday, so lemonade and crisps for the kids....and we'll all go for a chips and a burger on the way home

... and we won't worry about the bills till we get home.....another round, then. What you having, Frank? Make that a double, barman.

The pub roared with life, music, television, chatter, tension, argument, quarrels and occasional fights.

Aymer waited in the shadows at the edge of things. Until the time was right, and he led, carried or dragged away his meal.

So occasionally, as in every town or city, someone went missing. A toddler, thought to have wandered off and tumbled off the quayside, or Grandad unsure on his feet, might have fallen from the cliff, or the stropky teen must have gone skinny-dipping. There were strong currents round the bay; drowned bodies got swept away out to sea and were never found.

Yes, though his real name is not Aymer, he makes beautiful original quilts.

I know, see. I've got a quilt here on my bed; blue flowers from her dress, the leaves made from Grandad's green t-shirt, the yellow stamens from young Tommy's holiday shorts.

Ruth Howard

Things to Do

Sudoku No 12

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

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

Below is the solution to No 11

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

More quiz questions from Hooha.

1. Which battle took place on 22 August 1485?
2. The Battle of Maldon was fought between which 2 armies?
3. In 1900 where was the battle of Spion Kop fought?
4. In popular myth how did the recipe for Chicken Marengo come into being?
5. Where did Davy Crockett die?

Answers to the quiz in the previous edition

1. In which country did the last VW Beetle ever made come off the assembly line?
Mexico
2. What is the nationality of Erno Rubik who invented the Rubik's Cube?
Erno Rubik is Hungarian
3. Where was the first football World Cup match held in 1930?
1st World Cup match held in Montevideo, Uruguay, and that country went on to be the first cup winners
4. Where was the original destination of the Eiffel Tower, before its siting in Paris?
The Eiffel Tower was originally planned for Barcelona
5. Where in Wales was the seat of the Princes of Wales from the 10th century?
Aberffraw, Isle of Anglesey

“Connect” Puzzle Solution

Here is the answer to the third (more difficult) one.

IT terms:	E-Mail, HTTP, Torrent, Instant Message
Cakes/biscuits:	Biscuit, Crumble, Brioche, Gingerbread
Words contain numbers:	Scone, Network, Feminine, Cheltenham
Racecourses:	Aintree, Ascot, Newmarket, Epsom

[The “Connect” puzzles were created by **Mat McClaren** (not a U3A member) and supplied with permission by **Wendy Bailey**.]

Town Council Information

The Town Council website has up-to-date information about Poynton on its website - www.poyntontowncouncil.gov.uk and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/poyntontowncouncil/>