



Poynton u3a News

poyntonu3a.org.uk

Issue 34-3

17th Feb 2021

Editorial

Welcome to the eighteenth edition of these electronic newsletters. Contributions are fortunately still arriving from members otherwise this would be a very short document! We have a couple of new contributors this month including a new crossword setter. Contributions should be sent to news@poyntonu3a.org.uk.

Poynton u3a Update

Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

Last year we had a virtual Annual General Meeting (AGM) and it looks like the same may have to apply this year. Last year's AGM was a concession by the Charity Commission to allow an AGM to take place although it was not in line with the Constitution. This year there is no such concession. Therefore, we require a virtual EGM to change the Constitution before a virtual AGM can take place. To this end, you will be receiving documents describing the EGM process in the next couple of weeks.

Poynton u3a Membership Renewal

A message from the membership secretary:

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership of Poynton u3a.

For those who haven't: this is just a gentle reminder that to take part in any u3a activity - physically or online - or to receive any correspondence or newsletters from the u3a, you need to renew your membership. Thus, the regular newsletter and this year's AGM details will be sent to members only after the end of February.

Please send £5, or a cheque for £5 made out to Poynton u3a, with your details and a stamped addressed envelope to:

Cecilia Storr-Best, 62 Clarendon Road, Hazel Grove SK7 4NS.

Please also provide any changes in your contact information.

Many thanks, Cecilia.

Vaccinations

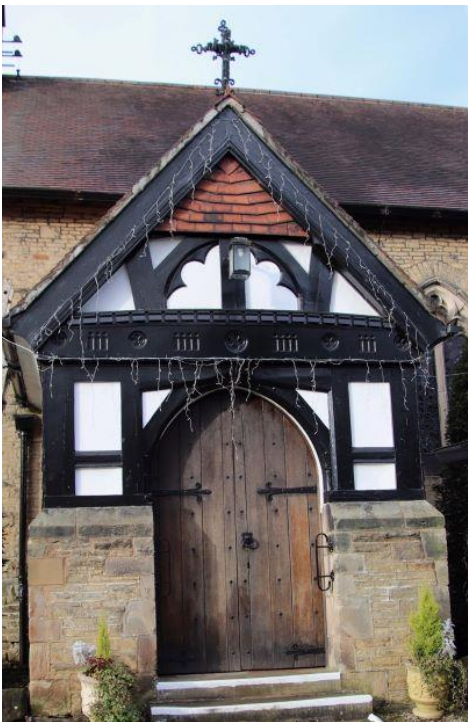
Remember you can keep in touch with the process through the Middlewood Partnership - <https://middlewoodpartnership.co.uk/blog>. Also, our Secretary has been emailing relevant

information derived from the blog and other sources. If you have not been receiving these, you need to check your junk mail.

Photographic Group

This month the group reviewed five more annual project photographs from 2020. The subjects included gardens through the seasons, fridge magnets, fallen trees, butterflies and a year of changes! We also looked at members' photographs of church architecture taken at local churches, the topic for January. We saw interesting features of various churches including Marton, St George's Poynton, Poynton Baptist church, St Peter's Prestbury, Nether Alderley, St Martin's Marple and the famous twisted spire in Chesterfield. All visits were made by individuals. We shall look forward to having group outings once restrictions are lifted.

One of our members gave us some useful information on taking close up photographs of flowers which is our topic for February. She explained the importance of lighting, background, shadows and overall composition. Hopefully we will find a few spring flowers to photograph as the month progresses.



Top Left -St Martin's Porch, Marple
Top Middle - St Mary's, Chesterfield
Top Right - St Peter's, Prestbury
Left - Lych Gate, St George's, Poynton

Kate Marsham

Members' Contributions

Significant Dates

Let us all hope this is the beginning of the end; to jab or not to jab shouldn't even be the question. We need it, Poynton needs it, England needs it, the whole world needs it. January 2021 will be a significant date in my history and for thousands of others, as was the end of the Second World War for my parents, and the rest of the world. I was too young to appreciate the relief they must have felt, like a large weight being lifted from all their weary shoulders.

We seemed to have a number of snowy winters when I was little. I learnt later that 1947 was a particularly bad one from a grown-up point of view, from my four-year old point of view it was great. Going in for your tea just after it went dark with rosy red cheeks and rosy red marks round your bare legs where your wellies had rubbed. Getting a washing machine in 1948, then an old van second hand, telephone in 1950, ringing the boy from next door, who was not next door but at his grandfather's, who was the only other phone owner he knew; although we were both too embarrassed to speak only to giggle, being only six and seven at the time. A ginger kitten, a very wild ginger kitten who turned out to be long-lived, and a very good friend to me.

Winter after winter I played schoolboy football then amateur football for eighteen years or so, but at no time did my team-mates come with their muddy knees and sweaty bodies to hug and kiss me, the most I got as they ran past was a "Well done", rather different from the love-ins the professionals seem to revel in currently.

Acquiring a television, sweets coming off rationing in 1953, this to a ten-year old was much more important than the Coronation, or even the ascent of Everest. The next momentous date was the football World Cup in 1966. I should not have to remind you we, that is England, won against Germany. Sixty-six is a very significant number to the English, or is it just to me, beginning with 1066, then 1666. Highlights after that were buying our only home, getting married, later twice becoming a father, then a grandfather. All these events have significant dates to me; no doubt there will be others, as some dates just occur totally out of one's control - best not to speculate.

A date that will have to come one day is having my hair cut, until then I have a decision to make about whether to have my hair in a ponytail or not, because bunches just don't seem to suit me.

There must be a significant date to signify Trump's departure, but which to go for I am not sure, inauguration Wednesday the 20th of January will do for me. Who will hold The Donald's hand whilst he's walking down the steps to Hell I wonder?

Clive B Hill

Duty

I have been thinking about my father recently as his birthday approached. I have not seen him in 50 years. He died in 1970, but I have felt his presence. He could teach me a thing or two about duty.

Faced as a young man with the German Kaiser's aggression, he left his uncle's farm, walked into a recruiting office in Macclesfield and enlisted in the army like so many others, donning khaki in place of overalls.

Instead of tilling the English soil productively with a horse-drawn plough, he was equipped with a rifle and posted to France, where he lived in the mud and squalor of trenches. He became acquainted with the rat-a-tat-tat of machine guns and the whistling of shells before they exploded.

What could he do as a single man, one cog in an Imperial war-machine, against a determined, highly disciplined, and mechanised foe? Nothing less than his duty, to fight and protect his comrades and to stay alive!

Against the odds, my father survived and returned to Deganwy, North Wales, where he was demobbed in 1919. However, on his return, he faced another enemy. Like German bullets, the Spanish flu was equally adept at settling the young and the weak in their graves, efficiently and deliriously. My Dad was lucky; he survived that too.

Now what of me, one hundred years later? What can I do against Covid-19? Very little, it seems on the front line since I am not a doctor, nurse, pharmacist, hospital porter, cleaner or health-care worker. Nor am I a research scientist, teacher, farmer, soldier, delivery driver or another critical worker. So, what am I? As a 72-year-old Covid-19 non-combatant with co-morbidities, what shall I tell my grandchildren when they ask me, "What did you do during the Covid pandemic, Grandpa?".

I can tell them. It was not much. I did not have to go to foreign fields to fight. Instead, I stayed at home, protected myself, others, and the National Health Service, washed my hands regularly, wore a face mask, kept my distance and had the vaccination. I did what I could. It was necessary and sufficient. It was my duty.

John A Cooke

Feed the Birds

Any bright sunny afternoon in late January is a reminder that the days are slowly lengthening. I walk up the track through Coppice Wood. A song thrush is practising its song. A pair of great tits look very smart in their blue, yellow, green and black plumage. As I reach Keepers Cottage, I notice a neat trail of bird seed along the middle of the track. A few metres further up is a depleted log pile and I stop there to wait and watch. A robin darts out from under the hedge to grab a seed and retreats, alerted by a dog walker. Then a blackbird does the same thing but from the hedge on the other side. More walkers pass.

A coal tit pops out and back as a family goes by. It's almost like a game of 'dare' amongst the birds, tempted by an appetising selection of seeds.

Now in its forty second year the Big Garden Birdwatch always takes place the last weekend in January. It is hoped that more people than ever will take part in 2021. Since March last year and the start of the Covid Pandemic in U.K., the 'stay at home' policy means that our gardens have become more important to us than ever. Consequently, we have found increased pleasure in watching our garden birds.

When our two grandchildren were younger, they were keen to do the Big Garden Birdwatch with us. We explained we had to write down the largest number of any one species seen at one time. Bird feeders had been filled, crumbs and raisins scattered on the patio. Faces glued to the window, tick list and pencil to hand, two excited children would call out "a robin, two blackbirds, five sparrows, three blue tits...". They did need help to identify some birds less familiar to them, chaffinch, wren, coal tit, dunnock, (sometimes mistaken for a sparrow, as it is about the same size but has a greyish head and breast, used to be called hedge sparrow). After they had completed their tick list, I would complete the form of sightings and send it to RSPB. Now it is done online.

Saturday 30th January this year, hardly a bird to be seen. They are obviously sheltering from a relentless, viciously cold easterly wind. But Sunday is calmer, though still cold, and the birds need to refuel to survive some freezing cold nights. Boisterous starlings are first to appear. A gang of them attack fatballs with their long, strong, probing beaks. Scraps fall to the ground and are quickly picked up by ground feeders. We have a pair of resident blackbirds which aim for the raisins. A third blackbird, a male, keeps its distance. Its beak isn't the usual yellow, so it is either a juvenile or a winter migrant from the continent. Blue tits land on the feeder of kibbled sunflower seeds. Then it is the turn of goldfinches. This is a bird which has increased dramatically in numbers, due to bird feeders. A wren hops along a low fence, finding tiny insects.

Winter is the season when birds most need our help. By feeding them you may be rewarded by seeing some more unusual species than we saw in one hour on 31st January 2021....Here is our list...7 starlings, 3 dunnocks, 3 blackbirds, 2 blue tits, 1 robin, 3 goldfinches, 1 wren, 1 jackdaw, 1 magpie, 1 wood pigeon, 4 feral pigeons and 8 sparrows.



Watercolours by Viv - great tit, goldfinch, chaffinch and blue tit

Viv Arnold

Remember When...

There has been lots of time for reflection just lately.

I got out the old family album and began to travel back in time to when I was a small child. This photo of my Grandma reminded me of those times; she's wearing a frock and her best hat and coat. Back then if we were going shopping to the city (a rare treat) she would say in her regional dialect "First I must wash me."

She would go into the bathroom (it was downstairs) and soon reappeared in a clean vest and drawers, stockings fixed to her salmon pink corset. It was important, she taught me, to have clean underclothes when going a distance from home, for think how ashamed you would be if you got run over by a bus and were found in your old underclothes, she would tell me.

I think I took this lesson to heart; the only time I was rushed to hospital in an emergency a few years ago, I had been playing an energetic game of rounders with the children in a field. I was more concerned that my feet were hot and sweaty than that my arm was broken!

Grandma smelled slightly but not unpleasantly of mothballs and coal-tar soap.

Along came the trolleybus with the bus conductor in his cap with his leather money bag and machine to print tickets. Grandma paid our fares in big round pennies (how big they were!) and silver sixpences, and the bus started off with a jerk. It made a rumbling and swishing noise but it was not loud like the motorbuses. The bell "ting"ed as a signal when people wanted to get off, but Grandma warned me that it was the conductor's job to press the round button to stop and start the vehicle.

My favourite shop was one where the door was held open for you and a smartly dressed man would ask which department you would like. He directed you to the correct area with a flourish of his arm and called my Grandma "Madam".

This particular shop, (Holdens I'll call it) sold clothing and strange things called "Haberdashery" and "Lingerie". Great glass windows exhibited a model or two who stood frozen, gesturing to no-one and wearing lovely seasonal clothes and carrying smart handbags. It smelled lovely; a waft of fine perfume met you at the entrance; it was staffed by senior uniformed assistants and their juniors. If you looked rich, the experienced assistant served you, but if not, the junior was summoned to attend to your needs. Goods were kept in polished drawers under glass counters, and the experienced staff knew exactly what was kept in each drawer. They could tell your correct size at a glance!

I loved going there for the most marvellous and magic thing happened; when Grandma had chosen her goods, the junior assistant was instructed to wrap them for "Madam" while the senior made out the bill and showed it to Grandma.

She produced her purse and counted out the money. Then the assistant took Grandma's money and the bill and put them into a small canister, which she pushed into a tube. There was a shoosh! And the money vanished.

The assistant congratulated Grandma on her purchase and discussed the weather.

I was frantic; my Grandma's money had gone! I thought she might get cross; but then with another whoosh! and a click the canister shot back down the tube with the bill and Grandma's change inside.

It was a marvel I never tired of seeing; I could never believe Grandma would get her change back, even though I learned to look upwards to an office above the sales floor where clerks received and emptied the canisters and re-filled them with the correct change. And sent them back!

Such pneumatic wonders have gone now; I pay for my purchases by waving a plastic card at a small screen. I wonder what Grandma would think of that?

Ruth Howard

Eating Up

In these difficult days when we don't, or can't, go shopping, we forget how lucky we are to be able to have groceries delivered. Some of us have kind and generous friends and relatives who shop for us when we are shielding.

Or we can just pick up our mobile phone and order.... and soon a burger meal or a delicious Pizza is on its way to your home and you can "Just Eat" as the adverts say.

But when I was a small child there was nothing like that. Our treat on Saturday night was Fish-and-Chips wrapped in an old copy of the Evening Post, fetched from the local Chippy. We were too poor to afford restaurants or cafes. Almost every meal was home-made by Grandma and I can still recall the lightness of her Yorkshire puddings and the crisp pastry of her jam tarts. A cheap bit of stewing steak or neck of lamb she turned into a savoury treat. The only dish of hers that I could not, *would not* consume was Tripe and Onion cooked in milk. She cooked on a range; the oven had no temperature control yet I can never remember anything being burnt. Our toast was made by fixing a slice of bread to a long-handled fork which we held up to the flames of the coal fire. You were careful because should your slice drop off into the hearth, you had to eat it, extra-crunchy with coal dust!

When rationing eased, we ate better; a tin of salmon for our tea on celebration occasions, served with brown bread, cucumber in vinegar, lettuce, half a tomato and Heinz salad cream. I'm still addicted to salad cream; some years ago, there was a suggestion that it would be discontinued; much of the country almost rose in revolution; I think Questions must have been asked in Parliament! The condiment is still with us!

On our week-long holiday in Skegness, Grandma persuaded the Landlady of our boarding house to fill a flask with boiling water (she only charged half-a-crown extra) and Grandma carried tea-leaves and sugar, a spoon and old cups in her capacious bag. She had brought a pint of milk from home and decanted this into a little glass bottle, though it had turned rather cheesy by the end of the week.

We had a breakfast in the boarding house and had eaten everything offered; you did not dare ask for more toast because the landlady served it raw or burnt but worse, she added it on to your bill.

Now you had to survive until 5 o'clock when the boarding house door was unlocked to permit you to enter and partake of High Tea. One year Grandad won the pools, £60, we were wealthy! After having treated all his mates down the Horse and Jockey and then those who favoured the Scots Greys, or the Red Lion, he decided that we would join the aristocracy and have Dinner as the posh people did, rather than high tea at "Sea View" Boarding House. To his everlasting disappointment he discovered that the "dinner" was exactly the same meal as served for High Tea except you got a small bowl of watery soup and no slice of bread with your main meal.

But during the day we children ate ice-cream or sucked on sticks of rock; Grandma might pop into a shop for two savoury ducks or faggots for the adults.

We had never heard of fizzy drinks except for a shared bottle of lemonade with two straws which we were given while Grandad and Grandma went into the pub, he for a pint of mild and she for a port-and-lemon. It was a holiday after all.

The best holiday I remember was the day Grandad got up early and let himself quietly out while the landlady prepared the rubber fried eggs and leathery bacon for her guests' morning repast. He strolled by the sands and watched as an entertainment group buried bars of chocolate and prizes in the sand in a roped-off area. Later that day, they held a competition for children to try to dig up "buried treasure".

"Well," said Grandad, indicating, "Dig there, And there. And by that rock".

I don't think I have ever felt so sick after eating all that chocolate!

Ruth Howard

Wintering

Daylight spreads on frosty dawn,
Birds stream across a steel-blue sky.
Crystals form on close-shorn lawn -
An urban fox lopes on by.

Mid-morning sees a changing view,
A northern wind shoots piercing waves
Light flakes just now a warning few –
Soon blizzard tempts out only braves.

Cars smothered white in driveways,
Anonymous they stand,
Few footmarks on the pathways -
Hedges, trees look bland.

True winter grips the hills and dales,
Traffic struggles through the lanes,
Snowdrifts pile, whipped up by gales,
Mother Nature once more reigns.

Ian Beverley

Pictures from Our Perambulations

As the cold and snowy weather limits perambulations, a few recent bird pictures from Poynton Pool and its environs.



A tufted duck having a bad tuft-day.



A wistful heron hides among the branches.



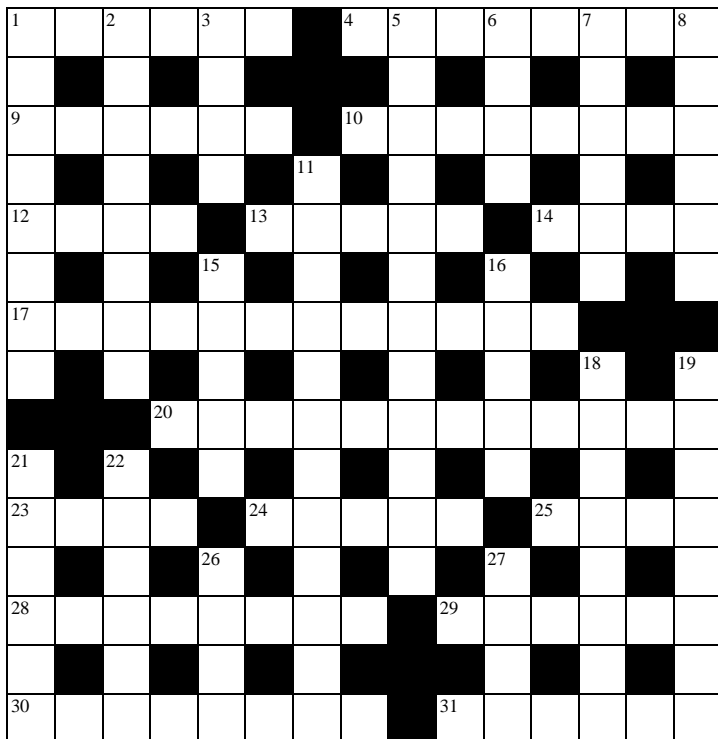
This does not appear in any bird books but Peter Kirk of the Bird Watching group has identified it as a mallard, probably involving a cross with a white farmyard duck.



A little egret seen in the field on the opposite side of the main road from the Pool.

Things to Do

Crossword No.29



Submitted by **Nigel Burin**. If you are interested in being part of a U3A group to set crosswords, please email Nigel via groups@poyntonu3a.org.uk.

ACROSS

1. Dream of transforming Persia. (6)
4. Muscle from conductor with scam replaced by sailor. (8)
9. Tutorial, not having much to do? (6)
10. Make a start to egging in a scramble. (3,5)
12. Sun god heads west in Religious Education. Very unusual. (4)
13. What is charged for a poem. (5)
14. Good French containing Northern German city. (4)
17. Confused old-timers aim to be long remembered. (12)
20. Girl goes on a journey, her first. (6,6)
23. Fruit crop each ear from Puglia. (4)
24. You sound certain of the practice of charging unlawful interest. (5)
25. Legs back, and cut. (4)
28. Police chiefs with a plant – catastrophe. (8)
29. Stick notice in this spot. (6)
30. Way in, we hear, for candidates. (8)
31. About Senor upset for giving ban. (6)

DOWN

1. Ill-grace, delirious, and hypersensitive. (8)
2. Ordered one smart secretary to produce smoked beef. (8)
3. Jumper with old model Ford on for England captain. (4)
5. Prize loafers? Quite the opposite. (12)
6. Get rid of topless desire. (4)
7. Dog and soldiers for outfitter. (6)
8. Stormy drink in tabloid. (6)
11. From old Peruvian ancestry, shining brightly. (12)
15. Huge fireplace by the sound of it. (5)
16. He can sing a shaky note right. (5)
18. Illegally transfers funds from three European articles with last of Scots. (8)
19. Harvest fruit and make a comeback. (8)
21. Way into cryptic clue, clot. (6)
22. Be defeated in court cupboard. (6)
26. When one answer gives a continent. (4)
27. Lazy Python. (4)

Sudoku No 18

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

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

Below is the solution to No 17

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

More quiz questions from Hooha.

1. How is Stephani Joanne Angelina Germanotta better known?
2. In which year did the last flying Vulcan Bomber XH558 celebrate its 30th birthday at Woodford Air Show?
3. Name the birthplace of Elvis Presley.
4. How many times did the 6th wife of Henry VIII, Catherine Parr, marry?
5. In which year did the wearing of seat belts become compulsory in this country?

Answers to the quiz in the previous edition

1. In which year did Torville and Dean win a gold medal at the Winter Olympics in Sarajevo?
1984
2. What is the carat value of pure gold?
24 carat
3. In 1994 who recorded the song "Fields of Gold"?
Sting
4. Who were the two monarchs who met at The Field of the Cloth of Gold in Balinghem in June 1520?
King Henry VIII and King Francis 1 of France
5. What is the first name of Goldfinger, played by Gert Frobe in the 1964 James Bond film Goldfinger?
Auric

And finally.....

Captain Sir Tom Moore

Between the 6th and 16th of April 2020 Tom completed his walking target of covering one hundred twenty-five metre laps of his garden. He aimed to raise £1000 in aid of various NHS charities, Eventually, the total reached more than £32.7 million!

He quickly became a figure who inspired us all - from young children (who is that ancient man?) to seniors such as me.

An immaculate figure, leaning on his 'Walker', in grey slacks, navy blazer and highly-polished shoes.

He raised our spirits and probably shamed a lot of us who were full of self-pity at our restrictive lifestyle during last Spring. I'm sure his memory will remain strongly in our hearts when, at last, this COVID nightmare is over.

Bless you, Tom, may your feet remain grounded for ever.

Ian Beverley