



Sheffield

Links 200: December 2020



November in the Commemorative Garden

Contact Us

Our website is at: <https://su3a.org.uk>

Here you will find all the latest news and information about SU3A, including items that do not appear in *Links*. To find out about our Groups you should visit <https://su3a.org.uk/grouppages/>

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Links no. 201 April 2021, last date for copy : 26 Feb 2021

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The *Links* Team is not responsible for the content of any articles. Any queries please contact the author of the article.

I am writing this at the end of October and things can change rapidly because of the dreaded Covid-19. As we near the end of 2020, we are once again in lockdown. Not quite as severe as it was earlier this year, but nevertheless will play havoc with our festive plans. Our butcher has already warned us that he will not be ordering any large turkeys as family gatherings will be smaller than usual and the usual Christmas Day stroll to the pub before lunch is now unlikely. A Christmas like never before!

Despite all of this, Sheffield U3A continues to function one way or another. Walkers are still walking for exercise (in pairs), all other outdoor activities have ceased for the time being, and outdoor and indoor groups are meeting, for chats, quizzes or whatever, via Zoom. If you are aware of anyone in your activity group who is living alone or is lonely, please talk to them and help them if you can, especially over the Christmas period.

Many of you have expressed surprise that Rita Carr (aka Webster-Carr) is no longer the main contact for joining our U3A. Regretfully, she has had to retire from her role due to ill health. Rita has been a member of Sheffield U3A since 1995 and became our 'poster girl' for new members shortly after. We wish her a speedy recovery and good health for the future.

You may remember in the October *Links*, I asked for volunteers to help with the production of this magazine. Thankfully, a number of you have stepped up and as you can see, we have the December issue done and dusted. Normally, *Links* is used by Groups to advertise available places, new activities and future trips both in the UK and in Europe. However, Covid-19 has curtailed many of those activities and many of these adverts are no longer appropriate. To help keep *Links* a 'must read' publication for our members, please forward any story, anecdote, picture, poem or puzzle that you feel will entertain, amuse and be of interest to our members.

You may also remember that, in last October's *Links*, I mentioned that a group of intrepid adventurers were hoping to visit Umbria and explore its Hidden Secrets. Unfortunately, 18 hours before we were due to leave Sheffield to catch our flight, the Italian Government imposed new admission rules with immediate effect, thus making our tour impossible. Fortunately, our tour operators, Tailored Travel, refunded the costs within 48 hours. Our thanks to them for their prompt action.

2020 has been an exceptionally busy time for some of our EC members. On behalf of all our members, I would like to express our thanks and gratitude to Chris Jones, Camilla Jordan and Elaine Burtoft for all their efforts in keeping our co-ordinators and members fully informed on how Covid-19 and the ever-changing rules affect group activities. Keep looking at our website for the latest news.

I wish you all a Very Happy Festive Season and hope that 2021 eventually brings back a near normal way of life for you all.

Brian Cave

U3A Thanks

The current Editors wish to thank Maggie Bower for her sterling work in editing *Links* in recent years. We also thank Jenny Emby who, at short notice, did much of the editorial work on the October issue.

News from Groups 🏹 🎨 ✨ 🌀 🌱 🚪 📖 🎵 🚴 🏠 🧑

Table Tennis News



It is fantastic to report that a team made up of SU3A Table Tennis Group members won the 2019/20 Sheffield Table Tennis Winter League Division 6 Championship which concluded in March. The team playing as Abbeydale 'K' (U3A) consisted of (L to R in photo) Steve Ludlow, Phil Wright, Mick Warwick, John Warwick (capt) and David Elliott. All put in a sterling effort over the

course of the season.

The SU3A Table Tennis Group is a thriving group with a good cross-section of abilities in both the women and the men. The restrictions of Covid-19 have made playing a bit difficult in recent times but have not spoilt the overall enjoyment of all players.

John Warwick

The Mindful Ageing group has continued to meet on a fortnightly basis throughout these turbulent times, providing a supportive network for participants. As one has put it, 'I have found the Mindful Ageing Group very supportive and encouraging. I have particularly enjoyed the guided meditations which have helped me challenge my natural negativity'.

During lockdown we have developed an online course in Mindful Ageing, based on the Mindful Ageing course and continuation group we have been running for several years. This course has been mentioned in the last two editions of Third Age Matters – a brief mention, but enough to generate more than 100 expressions of interest from members of U3A branches across the nations. Partly as a result of this, there are now more than 150 people taking the course – and several have already completed it.

The structure of the course allows you to take it at your own pace, and you can access all the guided meditations, including a number specially created for this programme. There are videos of mindful movement, and short videos and presentations which explain the key principles of mindfulness and mindful ageing. All these resources are web-based.

The course provides a firm foundation in mindfulness practice, which involves meditation, mindful movement and informal mindfulness. It explores themes such as kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity, as well as aspects of positive psychology such as gratitude, forgiveness, hope, savouring, and challenging negativity. The course links these to issues important to ageing, including stereotyping, physical fitness, and lifelong learning. Here are a few of the comments that have been sent to us by participants. 'The course is excellent. It is a very good format. ... This education has changed my life.' 'Thank you so much for the precious and invaluable gift of your Mindful Ageing Course. For me it has been, and continues to be, transforming.' 'I sense a great deal of knowledge and experience behind this course.' 'I am very much enjoying it and find the format clear and easy to follow. ... I have found the content immersive, intensive and enormously valuable.' If these comments have whetted your appetite, contact us for more details: courses@mindfulenhance.org.

John Darwin and Mike Pupius



Walking Group R go to The Scillies

On Wednesday 23rd September eleven relieved members of Walking Group R arrived in St Mary's, the largest of the Isles of Scilly, one flying in from Exeter and the others arriving on the Scillonian ferry from Penzance. We had each booked our accommodation, in a local B&B, and travel well in advance but the probability of the holiday going ahead had been wavering for months and took a downward turn in the week before departure. As it turned out, we could conform to the rule of six by splitting into groups of five and six. Although it didn't appear logical, the guidelines appeared not to be broken by our practice of changing the make-up of these groups on a daily basis.



Scillies View

Our relief on finally arriving was not only due to the Covid-19 situation but also to the weather forecasts which had been mentioning storms. Indeed the Scillonian did not sail on the following day or, as it turned out, on the two days following our departure a week later. So our luck was in and we were able to enjoy some excellent walking in unusual circumstances.

Each of the main five islands has easy paths that go round sandy bays and rocky promontories. Due to the windy weather, we spent our first two days walking round St Mary's, including the Garrison which overlooks the harbour and offers a reminder of the islands' strategic significance in the past.

On the subsequent days we made use of the boat trips organised by the St Mary's Boatmen's Association to visit the other four main islands. The Association posts its timetable each morning and departure times may vary for tidal reasons. In particular the two quays on Bryher, the setting for Michael Morpurgo's book 'When the Whales Came' are not accessible at low tide so, for a full day visit, it is advisable to visit Bryher at the first opportunity. There are some tidal issues



View of Hugh Town harbour

elsewhere, for example both St Agnes and St Martin's have offshore islands, The Gugh (rhymes with Hugh) and White Island, that are inaccessible by foot at high tide.



Attempt at Semaphore

On most of the islands, our two groups did the same walk, some minutes apart, and only communicated when, for example, the second group arrived to take over the first group's chosen spot for coffee or lunch. The one attempt at communication by semaphore was an abject failure.

However, on Tresco, perhaps the best known island, we split by choice into those who wished to visit the famous Abbey Gardens and those who wanted to do the coastal walk which, through the Castles of Cromwell and King Charles, offered further evidence of the historical strategic importance of the Scillies.

The sites for our coffee and lunch stops are traditionally chosen for the view. There was no problem finding suitable spots here. As one member commented, 'it is one continuous wonderful view'. Almost always this involved a splendid seascape with wonderful shades of blue and green and dramatic breaking waves.



Coffee at Droppy Nose Point



Sanderlings

There were many natural sculptures to admire and over which to argue about which parts of which animals they resembled. Some of these arguments were settled by the map through such names as the Old Man of Gugh, the Nag's Head and Droppy Nose Point. The latter had a seal sitting above the nose. Or was it an otter? or a puffin?

The islands are famous for their wild flowers and birds. Although there were some unfamiliar shrubs that we were unable to identify, it was not the best time of year to see the wild flowers. However, we did enjoy the birds, some of whom, unlike those elsewhere who tend to fly away as soon as a camera appears, were very approachable. On one occasion one of our party was looking through her binoculars wondering what kind of bird she was looking at when a couple of very excited birdwatchers professed their eternal gratitude in being led to see their first wryneck.

There were inevitably some ways in which Covid-19 had an effect on the holiday. The islands had been free of the virus until just before our arrival when two local residents tested positive after travelling abroad. Although pleased to see tourists, on whom the local economy is dependent, the local population, including proprietors of B&Bs, bars and restaurants, seemed anxious in our presence. In our B&B, the dining room was closed and breakfast was left outside our rooms with a knock on the door. Some bars and restaurants had closed and others were offering only takeaways so advance booking for evening meals was essential and we were grateful for the foresight of one of our number who set this in motion well before we left Sheffield. The local co-op had a queue, operated by red and green lights, that was often long and it was not open in time to be visited before the boats sailed. We were able to buy freshly made sandwiches from cafés on our way to the harbour, though some opportunists made tomato and bacon sandwiches from their bedroom breakfasts. Social distancing was much in evidence but not on the boats. Typically these were licensed to carry about 70 and they often did carry 70, who tended to be unrecognisable because of the combination of mask, sunglasses and woolly hats.

If there are other U3A groups, particularly walking groups or those interested in flora and fauna, pining for group trips when normality returns, we would be unanimous in recommending the Scillies. David Jordan with extra photographs by Carol Franks

[Group home page](#)

[More pictures from the trip](#)



U3A Members' experiences of the Covid-19 lockdown

Following the request in the October *Links* for members' thoughts on their experiences of the Covid-19 lockdown, we received the two contributions below. Further contributions of this kind would be very welcome.

Shielding

I was shielding until 1st August so plenty of time at home. I was so grateful to have a garden and for the good weather. I noticed, as never before, the unfolding of plants and flowers, and especially the leaves, buds, flowers, on my apple tree, the bees doing their stuff - and finally the growth of apples, of which I have had an amazing crop. The intensity of the birdsong during the quietest times was also wonderful.

My daily walk took me up the road to where there is a fine view over the moors, a grassy space, cemetery and allotments. I enjoyed watching the changing cloudscape from my vantage point, and I have become very well acquainted with the inhabitants of Crookes cemetery, including some Sheffield luminaries such as Sir Stuart Goodwin (who gave us the fountain) and T.W. Ward of the great scrap merchants firm.

I have also been initiated into much more modern technology, owing to the patient instruction of my church cell-group leaders. I am the proud possessor of a tablet and a webcam on the PC and have been to numerous Zoom gatherings.

I took up baking again and at last found out how to make decent scones - never too late to learn new stuff. So, definitely, Covid has been a learning experience.

Irene Davy

We are Covid-19 Vaccine Guinea Pigs

Having seen it mentioned in a news article that volunteers were being sought to take part in the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine trials, we indicated interest via an NHS website in late July. Three weeks later we received emails directing us to the Oxford University trial site to choose the

appropriate area in which to participate. There was then a lengthy online health questionnaire to complete and a 19-page information document to read. Having passed that initial assessment we were, the next day, each contacted by a doctor at Northern General Hospital (NGH) for further telephone assessment. As the same doctor contacted us both within the hour he was tickled to find two healthy oldies in the same household; we are somewhat *rara aves* (they were particularly keen to find over 65s).

A week later we were at the NGH on separate days for a 3-hour visit including being given more information, signing consent forms, a medical interview, having weight, height and blood pressure measured and blood samples taken before eventually being vaccinated. Because it is a double blind test we, and the Sheffield doctors, do not know whether we were given the trial Covid-19 vaccine or an established one against meningitis and sepsis. Michael had no reaction at all, not even the briefly sore arm after a flu vaccination, whilst Pauline found the vaccination area slightly swollen, tender and itchy for two to three weeks; did we have the same or different vaccines? We were each given a bag of self-swab test kits and have to post off weekly samples – all negative so far.

The next step is a further NGH visit in early October for blood samples to be taken – presumably to test for the presence of antibodies triggered by the vaccine - and, we believe, to have a second dose of the vaccine; as part of the trial they wanted to have a wide range of ages and to see the effect of single or double doses. There will then be four subsequent visits for blood samples to be taken over the next year.

As well as knowing we are helping to find an effective vaccine for everyone we of course hope that it does prove effective and that we have been given the actual vaccine thus acquiring early protection. It's also reassuring and useful to have weekly tests so that we can know if infected and can then self-isolate - test results usually come back to us within three days. Time will reveal all. Meanwhile we learn from the Covid-19 Vaccine Registry Newsletter that nationally just over 250,000 people have volunteered and that 18,000 are taking part in the Oxford vaccine trial, 2030 of them in Sheffield, but that only 1% are aged 80+ (like one of us).

Kate Bingham, Head of the UK Vaccine Taskforce says, 'Different studies very often need different groups of people to take part and we expect to need to include good representation of those people most likely to benefit first from a vaccine – for example the elderly, people with underlying health

conditions, and people from different ethnic backgrounds. This is how the researchers can be sure that potential vaccines will work for as many people as possible, and especially for those who are most vulnerable! You can find out more at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/research/coronavirus-vaccine-research.

Coronavirus vaccine studies
volunteers dashboard



For example, the September Newsletter told us that the Novavax vaccine study starts soon: 'Novavax, an innovative biotechnology company who have agreed to supply 60 million doses of their vaccine to the UK, will start to recruit participants for their Covid-19 vaccine trial in September, working with the NHS across the UK. This is a larger trial focusing on looking at effectiveness and further checks on safety in a larger population (called a phase 3 trial). People from across the UK will be invited, focusing on those individuals who meet certain criteria of the study. 10,000 adults will take part in the

trial in the UK which is being led by Professor Paul Health (yes, that is his name!), from the University of London and St George's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust' Your country needs you!

Michael & Pauline Miller, September 2020

U3A Lecture Reviews

Recordings of these online lectures can be found at <https://su3a.org.uk/online-lectures/>. You need to log in with your Wild Apricot ID (that is membership ID) and password to access these lectures. This is the same as you use to access membership renewal and events, etc.

Councillor Abtisam Mohamed - My experience in Education: Past, Present and Future

Once upon a time there was a little girl who was born in Yemen and came to the UK at the age of 2. She went to Whiteways school and she won a

prize for her drawing of a farm animal. Her teacher, Mrs Kitchener, was thrilled as this promising 9-year-old went to Whirlow Hall Farm to receive her award (a set of 12 cups and 12 mugs decorated with that image). And a younger girl asked for her autograph! The prize-winner gifted one of the winning cups to Mrs Kitchener. And now, all these years later, Mrs Kitchener showed off this cup to those of us watching the lecture. However, this little girl went to a secondary school that was not well organised and had teachers that failed to turn up to class and so the school failed to motivate any of the children to do much studying and she left school with too few of the 'core subjects' under her belt.

A few years later, her mindset changed, and she went to Sheffield Hallam University and became a qualified teacher. But her aspirations didn't stop there. A change of direction soon saw her as a qualified lawyer, and she has recently set up her own law firm specialising in human rights. Why not become a local politician too? Now that promising 9-year-old girl is Sheffield City Council's Cabinet member for Education and Skills with responsibility for the city's primary, secondary and special schools. She hasn't been twiddling thumbs either. She has set up a Sheffield Race Equality Commission (see <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/your-city-council/race-equality-commission.html>) and they want members of the public to be involved. In fact the website says: 'If you would like to contribute to the work of the Race Equality Commission we encourage you and/or your organisation to submit evidence where you feel you can add professional or personal insight into this Inquiry.' Is this something that Sheffield U3A members could contribute to?

Well, you may be wondering who this amazing person is. She is Councillor Abtisam Mohamed and you'll find her name in so many places if you search for her on the internet. Nobody seems to have created a Wikipedia article about her. What are we waiting for?

E C Birks

Liam Foster - Using a Comprehensive Active Ageing Approach in Social Policy

Promoting and providing opportunities for 'active ageing' is very much at the heart of what U3A does. But how may the concept of active ageing be interpreted? Are there risks of society stigmatising people who are deemed to be 'inactive'? What are the implications of encouraging active ageing for policy makers, the economy, health and social care and for us, the public?

This was the subject of an online talk by Dr Liam Foster, a Senior Lecturer in Social Policy and Social Work at the University of Sheffield.

In his presentation, a recording of which may be found on our website, Liam addressed demographic changes in the UK; the policy challenges associated with an ageing population; social attitudes towards ageing and how 'active ageing', 'successful ageing' and the 'life course' might be conceived. Liam argued that society needs to change thinking about ageing as being primarily about managing 'burdens' and 'deficits'. What is needed is a greater recognition of the gains and potential of ageing. We need to promote meaningful pursuits that contribute to individual well-being. A whole-life course approach that encompasses all groups in society, respecting diversity would also acknowledge the need for equity between generations and across communities and promote solidarity with those less well off than ourselves.

Liam also spoke about World Health Organisation 'Age-friendly Cities' or Communities as a place where 'the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable older people to "age actively" – that is, to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society'. Sheffield U3A is contributing already to this agenda. Can we do more to support our city in achieving this objective?

Philip Long

Shared learning and research partnership

SU3A has established a shared learning and research partnership with the University of Sheffield's Healthy Lifespan Institute (HELSI). For further information contact Philip Long at pelong54@gmail.com.

Friday Lecture Group Seeking Speakers

Are you knowledgeable about a topic that you could speak about for 40-45 minutes? Do you know somebody who is an expert on a subject or who has had a distinguished career or contributed prominently to culture and society in some way? Will your suggested topic or speaker be of interest to our members? The weekly talks that have been given via Zoom during much of spring and summer have proved to be very popular. However, securing good quality speakers with interesting topics, who are prepared to

use Zoom and preferably, well-designed visual aids such as Powerpoint, do not charge a fee and who are prepared to take questions and discuss their topic is challenging. Shelagh Wooliscroft, Denise West and Dave Caborn did a wonderful job over many years organising the monthly Showroom lecture programme. On their recent retirement from this role, they handed over to the new team a very well planned, interesting and wide-ranging list of speakers subject to confirmation for much of 2021. However, it is always helpful to have more names and topics 'up our sleeves' so, if you have suggestions please contact Philip Long at pelong54@gmail.com.

U3A Submitting articles for *Links*– guidance

- With the change to an e-version of *Links*, it is timely to review the criteria to help contributors. A *Links* production team now exists, sharing tasks.
- The *Links* team positively welcomes your articles and photographs, especially milestones, highlights, successes or things with wider resonance to the whole membership.
- The same criteria apply as before, please: accurate, early, literate and concise, emailed to the Editors at links@su3a.org.uk.
- The same criteria also apply to articles as to the published SU3A membership terms: non-political; non-sectarian; respectful inclusive language.
- Articles and photographs for submission should be emailed to the Editors at links@su3a.org.uk. There is no preferred format for articles though pdf is not encouraged. You should ideally be sure that anyone in a submitted photograph is happy to have their image on the SU3A webpage.
- The Editors will refer any controversial decision to the whole team for opinion.
- The Editors reserve the right to
 - cut or alter any words or phrases as they see fit;
 - prioritise inclusion of articles if necessary; and
 - retain photographs for possible use in later issues.

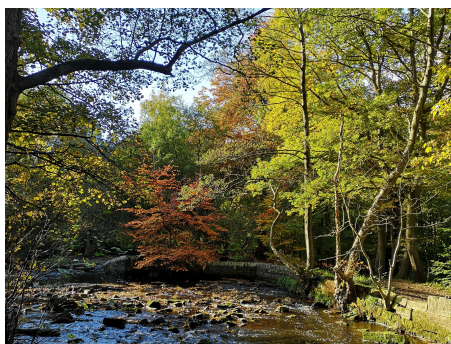
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For queries about membership, joining SU3A, information on Groups, etc., see the contacts list inside the front cover.

U3A Calendar 2020/2021

Dec	4	Charlie Reeder	Yorkshire Air Ambulance
Dec	18	David Price	How Sheffield became a Cosmopolitan City
Jan	15	Jo Towler	Horns Usually Hunt in Pairs
Feb	19	Prof. Pat Heslop-Harrington	The Future of Bananas
Mar	19	Veolia	Recycling Electronic Waste (to be confirmed)
Apr	16	Barbara Beard	The Sinking of the Empress of Ireland
May	21		to be confirmed
June	25		to be confirmed
July	16	Dr Andrew Aldoori-Moore	What is a Documentary? Blurred Boundaries and the Art of Non-Fiction Film
Aug	20	Dan Jarvis MP, Mayor, Sheffield City Region	The 'Northern Powerhouse'
Sept	17		to be confirmed
Oct	15	David Barber	Artificial Intelligence



Rivelin Valley, October 2020

Links 201: April 2021
Copy Deadline: 26 February 2021

Regd. Charity No 703147