

Links 201: April 2021



By Roger Carroll, Art Group 2

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*.

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The light has been lit at the end of the tunnel. After almost a year of uncertainty and difficulties, with sacrifices by many, it is hopeful that parts of our lives may start to gradually get back to normal, or at least a new normal. Pupils are returning to school, outside activities are starting again including many of our Groups that meet outside. Small Groups that meet inside are planning to meet up again and, as we get into spring, larger gatherings may be possible. Of course, many Groups have continued to meet throughout the many lockdowns via Zoom. Who would have believed over a year ago, we would become so adept with technology.

Most of our members will have had their first job, with the second in the near future. Our younger members will have had their first by the end of May, so all is looking promising. Now is the time to think of joining new Groups, trying new activities and enjoying the company of new friends. I hope the Group coordinators reading this will be contacting their members in order to start up again.

Despite the Covid-19 restrictions, Sheffield U3A has been busy over the last 12 months. Not only have many of our Groups continued to meet, but we have also taken part in the National High Street project (<https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/u3a-research/high-street-project>), held weekly lectures via Zoom often attended by over 300 members, participated in University research projects and participated in 10 Shared learning projects including Joined up Heritage, 60's Protest Music, Intergenerational Architecture and in the Story Catcher project.

Some of you will have noticed the new logo  being used instead of the traditional . This is the new logo that the Third Age Trust have launched and they have dropped the wording 'University of the Third Age' as it was a confusing name and put many people off from joining. They also felt that the new logo has a fresh, more modern look and feel which better reflect the energy and contribution of U3A members across the UK. We will gradually move to the new logo as and when we need to

produce new leaflets and banners.

Covid-19 has concentrated our thoughts on the importance of family, friends, activity and life. As we come out of the pandemic, the U3A strapline of 'learn, laugh, live' is probably even more on our minds as we look to the future. I look forward to reaching the bright light at the end of the tunnel and being a part of the rejuvenated U3A.

Stay safe and my best wishes to you all.

Brian Cave



Group Accounts

During last month (February) we received new guidance from the Third Age Trust on General Accounting and Interest Groups. We are asked to consolidate the annual accounts of our Groups into the annual SU3A Accounts. The new guidance is to ensure we meet the directive from the Charity Commission.

The EC has already taken the first steps by asking each Group Coordinator a couple of questions. A member of the EC will contact each Coordinator over the next few months to agree what action, if any, is needed.

There will be many Groups who have no financial transactions and therefore do not need accounts. These Groups will be unaffected. Also, this will not affect individual members. It is anticipated that the accounts of relevant Groups will be consolidated into the SU3A Accounts from 1st January 2022.

2021 Annual General meeting
Tuesday 13 July at 10:30 am via Zoom
The agenda will appear in the next (June) edition of *Links*. If there is any item that you would like including on the agenda you must notify it to the Secretary, Anna Harvey, secretary@su3a.org.uk in writing by 19 April 2021. Decisions at the AGM can only be made on items appearing on the agenda. Decisions cannot be taken on 'any other business' items.

Vacancies and Nomination Form

A number of our Executive Committee members retire at the end of their period in office. We need new members to apply for election to join the EC at the AGM in July. If you would like to help run our U3A, then please apply for one of the vacant posts. [Nomination form](#)

Vacancy - Chair of Sheffield U3A

The Chair is an officer of SU3A who, along with the other officers of the Executive Committee, helps to support the running of our organisation. If you wish to apply for election to chair please contact Brian Cave, chair@su3a.org.uk

Vacancy – Treasurer of Sheffield U3A

The Treasurer will lead a treasury team of EC members to manage the finances, and complete the necessary returns to the Charity Commission and the Third Age Trust. If you wish to apply for election to treasurer please contact Brian Cave, chair@su3a.org.uk

Vacancies – Members of the Executive Committee of SU3A

Members of the EC help the Chair in running SU3A.

Commitment

Generally, 1 to 2 hours per week, subject to any forthcoming meetings or events. We are looking for members with common sense, who are comfortable in using the internet and emails and enjoy meeting people. If you are interested in helping to manage our great U3A which is the largest in the country with 2700 members and 200 groups, please contact any of the EC members listed at the back of the *Links* magazine or complete and send in the nomination form on the website or for those without internet, supplied with this copy of *Links*.

Commemorative Garden Shelter

The photograph shows the temporary shelter erected to show the form of the new shelter. The actual shelter will have a roof! We are very pleased to announce that sufficient money has been raised for the new shelter.





European Travel Group

Despite the Government's Road Map to the gradual lifting of restrictions, the ETG committee feel that there is still too much uncertainty for overseas travel. It is still illegal to go overseas on holiday, there has been no announcement about self isolating or quarantine requirements, there is still a ban on visiting certain countries and the European countries are a long way behind us with mass inoculations. We also have no idea on how countries would welcome overseas visitors. Would we need testing before or on arrival? Will we need vaccine passports?

There being too many uncertainties, we have decided not to arrange any tours during 2021.

All being well, we will aim to offer both 2020 cancelled trips for 2022.

Samina Aslam & Brian Cave



Sheffield U3a Shared Learning & Research Projects (SLRP) 2020 Annual Summary

Members: Samina Aslam, Philip Long, Denise West, Martin Harvey

During 2020, though quieter than expected, there was more than enough to keep our team busy... so busy in fact that we had to start meeting more frequently via Zoom. New to the team is Martin who volunteered to revamp and keep our webpage up to date and more user friendly, ably supported by EC members Elaine Burtoft and Camilla Jordan. If you haven't already checked out the webpage please use the link, as your constructive comments are always welcome!

(<https://su3a.org.uk/home/noticeboard/research-projects/>)

Many projects were moved online, postponed or cancelled due to Covid-19 but despite the challenges caused by the pandemic the team maintained and/or improved SU3A presence within the arts and education sectors in Sheffield. Our work continued with both of our local universities, who for some projects, partnered with other universities

from Manchester, Sweden and Israel. The National High Street Research Project (phase I), producing a list of shops in our local High Street, was a great success, with nationally over 500 participants, amongst whom were 29 SU3A members. Phase II will be checking the list to see if/how our High Street has changed due to Covid-19.

The Story Gallery project at Weston Park Museum was also successfully completed. Members born and raised in Sheffield in the 50s and 60s documented their experiences and a booklet will be published including SU3A members' contributions. Photos can be found on our webpage. To those who participated - thank you - and we hope you had fun and enjoyment doing so. So what can we look forward to in 2021, apart from the vaccine? The team agreed in principle that we would support the South Yorkshire Heritage List proposal led by Sheffield City Council on behalf of not only SU3A but also Barnsley and Rotherham U3As. There are the Reading in the 60s and 60's Protest Music as well as continuing with the HELSI, Active Ageing Project.

Below is a summary of the 2020 SLRP projects

Shared Learning Projects:	Research Projects
Total number investigated – 16	Total - 6
Active – 10	Active – 5
Successfully Completed – 3	On Hold - 1
Unsuccessful – 3	

If you are interested in knowing more about what we do and how you can become more involved please look at our webpage or contact the team directly.

Samina Aslam, Coordinator sammamas1747@gmail.com

It has been great to receive so many contributions updating us on the activities of our Groups in these strange and difficult times. Where Groups are encouraging potential new members to make contact, details may be found either in the Centre Pages of the hard copy or online at [Group pages](#).



Great Tit, Jane Sandhu (Art Group II)



Portuguese for Fun

We have been lucky that we have been able to keep the group going over the past year, by means of Zoom. After one or two early struggles with the technology, we have been able to settle into a regular routine of 1 hour learning together (improving our grammar and also extending our reading), followed by around half an hour of chat, over coffee. Although it's not quite the same as meeting in person, it has worked well, and kept us progressing together. And an unexpected bonus is that we have not had to cancel any sessions this winter due to bad weather!

Pauline Miller



German-Intermediate

Some of our Group are Zooming with our tutor Maria, who is very good and I think they are making great strides with their conversations. One other member and I do not feel confident enough for that so, every Monday, we meet on Facetime to go through Living German and to tackle 'Coffee Break German'. We are also doing well.

Katharine Brown

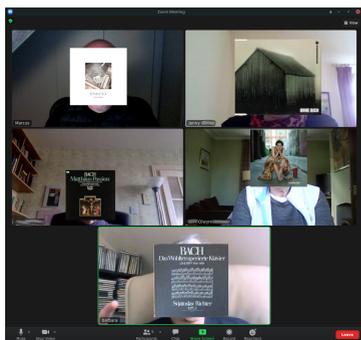


Rhubarb, Pauline Miller (Art Group II)



Advanced German

The 'Kaffeeklatsch' sub-group of the Advanced German Group now meets monthly in Zoom for virtual coffee, cake and chat instead of the Blue Moon Café. When discussing Music, our chosen topic last month, we suddenly got enthused about running a Desert Island Discs session. So, six of us picked our five favourite pieces of music which we circulated in advance with YouTube links. At the 'Kaffeeklatsch' we took it in turn to justify our choices whereby the others then responded with questions or comments. This led to animated discussion so that we only had time to discuss our first two choices! In addition to our individual musical choices, we discussed the reasons for our selection where the piece was often linked to a pivotal personal moment (happy or sad). We talked about



the importance of visuals, especially with modern works with accompanying music videos, and whether the visual element enhanced or detracted from musical enjoyment. Our opinions were as diverse as our music choices, and many of us have already begun to explore the works of new artists and styles through the wonder of YouTube. Next month we shall discuss our remaining three choices, and we already have spawned new topics for future meetings. Everyone has

discovered new pieces of music, either to further explore for enjoyment, or to avoid like the plague... In essence, this format is to be recommended – music really is good for the soul, especially in a pandemic... We are all looking forward to continuing our discussion next month.

Jenny Graaf, Marcus Brownlow



Welsh Conversation Group

Six of us have been meeting successfully on Zoom for 2 hours every week since the first lockdown began. Unfortunately two of our regular participants either do not wish to use Zoom or do not have suitable internet access. We hope they will return once we can meet again in person. Two other members have found our usual meeting time unsuitable (Tuesday 10-12), and have moved to the Welsh Intermediate Group for now. We also have recently been joined by a new member who recently moved to Sheffield. She found our group by searching the Sheffield U3A website and is now a member of U3A. We would welcome any new members who wish to join.

Geoffrey Turner



Spanish Speaking and Listening

Unable to meet at our usual Greenhill Library venue since the first Covid-19 lockdown, we have continued our weekly meetings all through the pandemic. These have largely been online through Zoom but, when restrictions and weather permitted, in our garden.

Our usual Tuesday afternoon format of a listening exercise (often, when on Zoom, using the “share” facility for Duolingo Podcasts Spanish episodes), presenting and listening to each other’s homework pieces and then reading and translating our current Spanish short story, has worked quite well even over the obstacle of coping with hearing loss under social distancing rules(!)



Zoom has been a boon (at least for some of us) but we all know that there is no substitute for meeting up in person and long for when we can do that again.

Bill Horner



Family History Group 1

This year our Group numbers have diminished but the monthly meetings continue via Zoom, which I think everyone has appreciated. At first it was a bit tricky, but now most people have become accustomed to screen time. Our thanks go out to Jan Crabtree, Diane Bingham and Richard Donkin who between them have searched for, booked the online speakers, set up the Zoom meetings and organised paying fees from our group finances. A very important development for us was asking Family History Groups 3 and 4 if they were interested in joining our Zoom sessions. Tim Simkins and Andrew Melville contacted their groups and their members boosted the numbers, making the meetings more enjoyable. In January, Jim Ryan, from Dublin spoke to our extended groups about Irish Genealogy. Our February online speaker was Jim Probert from Essex. His talk was Missing Links - when you can't find a birth, marriage, death or a person just vanishes. The ability to have speakers from all over the UK, even the world via Zoom, has opened up incredible possibilities in our family history endeavours.

Annie Grassick



Rhododendron, Whirlow Commemorative Gardens

Photo by David Jordan



**Blackbird, Shillito Woods
Photo by Keith Jones (Bird Watching II)**



**Female Blackbird in Shillito Woods
Photo by Keith Jones (Bird Watching II)**



Discussion I

Thanks to the initiative and continuing efforts of one member of Discussion 1, Eric Bridgeland, we scarcely missed a beat. Our first Zoom discussion was as long ago as 22 September, and we've continued our Zoom discussions every two weeks since, with a break for Christmas and New Year of course. The topic at that September meeting was Examinations, then very much in the news, and we went far and wide with that one. We've subsequently covered Woman's Hour, Countering Misinformation, Post Trump America Each topic is chosen by the member whose turn it is to introduce one. Some members have indicated their willingness to act as chair, and we've found that function to be more necessary online than when in one another's company. As a result, some of us feel we are more disciplined online, enhancing the quality of the discussion. That's not to say we're not all eager for an end to lockdown and meetings in one another's homes again of course, but maybe we'll preserve that discipline? Doubt it. Perhaps that's what makes live meetings such fun. I'm sure you'll receive many reports similar to this one, demonstrating the irrepressibility of U3A-ers.

Frank Abel



Discussion Group II

Our group finally got round to meeting on Zoom in October. We have had five meetings in all, one a month as we usually do, and after a rather stilted start we are getting the hang of it and enjoying it. We have discussed 'What makes a great leader?', 'What's in a name?', 'Biodiversity' and the quote, 'Power tends to corrupt. Absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely'. We also asked, 'Did clapping for carers do any good?' and whether our recent Covid-19 Christmas might affect the way we spend Christmas in future. Other topics were the pros and cons of social media and the shape of future employment. Next time, we will discuss the meaning of life, no less!

Mary Alexander



Classical and Historical philosophy

We have been meeting by Zoom which has been a steep learning curve for some of us.

We spent the first half of the lockdown by reading/discussing Baggini's book, "How the World Thinks", and at the moment we are going through chapter by chapter of Grayling's "The History of Philosophy". I think it's going to take us a good couple of months to finish this one.

Susan Kirkman



Practical philosophy

I am pleased to say that Practical Philosophy is now open for new members.

We are now into our 5th year and we are a diverse and enthusiastic bunch, open to learning from all philosophical traditions. Recently we have looked at the Essays of Francis Bacon; Julian Baggini's "How the World Thinks"; the rights of women (Mary Wollstonecraft), and men (Tom Paine); and Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Paul Tillich. In the new year we will be exploring Mary Daly (American feminist philosopher); Hannah Arendt; Gandhi; Jewish thought and Moses Maimonides; civilisation post Coronavirus; and global warming.

Our aim is to keep our focus on the practical implications of the philosophies/philosophers we study.

We have been pleased to be able to meet via Zoom meetings and found some benefits from these (e.g. - no travel problems in winter!)

We always benefit from new members, and have space in the new year for others to join us.

Martin Manby



Greater Spotted Woodpecker, Shillito Woods

Photo by Keith Jones (Bird Watching II)



Mindful Ageing Group

The Mindful Ageing Group continues to meet on Zoom every two weeks. Our meetings have a mixture of meditations, mindful movement and a presentation on a topic with discussion in breakout rooms. Recent topics have included mindful photography and walking in nature, savouring and humour and the Eight Pillars of Joy from the *Book of Joy* by the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Our self-directed Mindful Ageing course has been very successful with almost 200 U3A members taking 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, ageing, and lifelong learning.

A number of people from the self-directed course moved on to take our open, face-to-face, Zoom-based course on Mindfulness Based Life Enhancement. Two courses run earlier this year attracted over 40 participants including U3A members from all the UK.

We are repeating the free five week course starting on Wednesday 14 April at 1800-2030 and finishing on 12 May and would welcome participants from Sheffield U3A. It will be facilitated by U3A members Dr John Darwin and Mike Pupius. The course draws from the same material as the Mindful Ageing course.

For further information on the self-directed Mindful Ageing Course, please contact John Darwin at john@mindfulness.org. For further information on the five week, Zoom-based course on Mindfulness based Life Enhancement, contact Mike Pupius at mike@mindfulness.org.

Mike Pupius



Poetry Study Group

We have looked at some of the poems of Sinead Morris, an Irish contemporary poet. The proposer, John Salway, explained that she was not at all limited by her background, but reached out to discuss and reflect upon subjects which were not what one would have expected from a Belfast background. David Buckley bravely tackled the difficulties of the renowned American poet, Wallace Stevens and Claire Pierce introduced us to the charm of Mary Oliver. Karen Buckley tackled Shelley who was an interesting choice in this fest of contemporary poetry. We look forward to hearing from Barbara Plant about Emily Dickinson. We are an informal group who adapted readily to Zooming and were determined to continue with our preoccupation with poetry despite the difficulties.

Bette Phillips



Storywriters

I can confirm that Storywriters have continued to function as a group during the pandemic. We continue to write our stories each month and submit them to be accessed amongst ourselves online.

We have met socially online using Zoom which allowed us to celebrate Christmas quite successfully. We are fortunate in that our group activity allows us to continue successfully with our particular interest. It is strange how frequently the dreaded virus has reared its head in our stories whatever subject our writers have been set. I suspect that there will be many books for many years on this same topic.

Margaret Briddon



Play Reading 1

We normally meet in each others homes so our first response to the first lockdown was to seek a public hall in which we could continue to meet at social distances. We had identified a church hall with all the correct arrangements when that too was banned.

In October we began to meet monthly by Zoom. This has kept our group functioning during a time which has been difficult for some members. Unfortunately three of our households are not on line or do not have suitable equipment. We have kept in touch with them by phone.

Although we still miss the informal exchanges which make the glue of U3A groups we have tackled and enjoyed a wide range of plays, from Arthur Miller to John Godber. There is a sense that the social distance experienced on Zoom focuses us on the text.

We have been able to access sets of plays from Sheffield and Derbyshire libraries through their click and collect reservation services, now with greatly extended loan periods.

The group's membership is very stable, pointing to the great benefit we all enjoy from our experiences of reading plays together. Mike West



Puffin - Michael Granger (Art Group II)



Sunflowers - Helen Palmer (Art Group II)



Art Group II



Jane Stewart

Art isn't an activity that transfers easily online, so we haven't been able to work together much this year, sadly. We tried to work at home during the first lockdown, and then had a few weeks in September and October when a small group, using full precautions (masks and distancing) were able to have sessions together. But then we had to stop; we then turned to working outdoors, with those interested meeting in pairs, and working in the same area. In this way we managed to visit Ecclesall Woods, Whirlowbrook Park and the Botanic Gardens (the last venue several times), but then as it got colder we had to call a halt – it became too miserable to sit and

work outdoors for any length of time. So we are back to doing what we can as individuals at home, and sharing our successes online, so that we do keep in touch and encourage each other's efforts. But we can't wait to get back together for our regular sessions.

Pauline Miller



Quilting Hive

Oh goodness, what have we been doing this Covid-19 year? As a group, we have not been meeting of course, but, when it was allowed, small numbers of us met outside in the garden and several positives came out of this new arrangement. Firstly, we could all hear the conversation! Now,

I know this sounds strange, but usually there are over fifteen ladies all talking at once in one room and you only catch some of the chatter....especially if you are busy providing a service, giving out fabric, making coffee, showing someone how to work a machine . . . Secondly, once the six people were in place, there were no interruptions because of late arrivals and second rounds of coffee, so it was much more settled and easier to assimilate what was being said and done. People were really getting to know one another, which made it a valuable time to see where members needed more support due to the virus. I found that individuals phoned one another to check if they were ok. As I changed the groups regularly, people had a chance to find that one special friendship which could last. Quilting led on to walking together, helping one another to adjust and open up, and the Hive became what I had intended for it in the first place - a support group.



When I lived in the States for a couple of years, I was 'adopted' by a quilting bee which made the time there so special. I knew nothing about quilting at first, but I learnt from the best on the east coast and, more importantly, made friendships which have stood the test of time and distance. In 2020 the Hive made masks, protective clothing and bags to carry them home for washing. We started

some quilts as thank yous for carers. We gave away Linus quilts, fabrics and any useful notions. We also continued to sew baby quilts for newborns and caught up on our own unfinished articles. So, now we are back on our own and I think I speak for everyone when I say how hard it is to motivate ourselves. Plenty to do, but less energy. As events are cancelled and quilting retreats postponed, I have tried to use the time to prepare for the future. Covid-19 will be around forever I think, so we will have to find ways of living with it. Maybe our group will survive, maybe not, but after 18 years, I am so grateful to have had the privilege of getting to know so many lovely people. I should like to take this opportunity to thank them and to wish them well.

Lynne Brown

 **Dressmaking and Sewing**



A few of the members of the Dressmaking and Sewing group made laundry bags for the staff at the Sheffield Children's hospital. Neighbours generously gave pillow cases, sheets and duvet covers for us to use.

Ellie Johnson

 **Play Reading Group 3**

The last year has been problematic. As libraries closed our source of play reading sets vanished. We took flight to Zoom with mixed results. Zoom is not for everyone and the experience of lockdown has affected people differently. Some members preferred to wait until we could resume live meetings again, others have been unwell or suffered family bereavement. However, a dogged nucleus has kept going. Sometimes we have used play texts downloaded from Gutenberg. We have also watched and discussed play productions from YouTube or TV. Some sessions have worked really well resulting in lively, interesting discussion. Sometimes the technology has been less than cooperative (or, in my case, the operator inept) and the result frustrating. Nevertheless, we battle on, unbowed, towards the glorious day when we can all be together in our room at Banner Cross Methodist Church, laughing at weird accents, appreciating each other's efforts at bringing characters to life and enjoying the reading of a play together. We shall meet again!

Linda Evans



SU3A Drama

Since the first lockdown, SU3A Drama has continued to meet fortnightly on Tuesday afternoons, with none of the accustomed breaks for holidays. In the early days we linked up with each other either by phone or WhatsApp video calls, before graduating fairly rapidly to Zoom. We still have the occasional glitch, but who doesn't, and we're delighted to have attracted two enthusiastic new members.

Jacqui Bailey



Friday Recorder Group during Lockdown

Obviously, we have had to forego our usual fortnightly meetings in the Victoria Hall. However, we are fortunate in having several experienced musicians and players amongst our membership. This has resulted in Zoom playing sessions every Friday organised and led by one of our members, Liz Maxwell who also runs a recorder group of her own. On Fridays, players from both groups can come together to focus on producing music and forget, briefly, being 'cabined, cribbed and confined' by the restrictions of lockdown.

Linda Evans



Bridge Stocksbridge

Good news is hard to come by at the moment but our group is surviving quite well by playing Bridge online. We have joined up with Barnsley Bridge Club and we are playing regularly together. Our star people have been Margaret Davis, who has organised lots of online competitions and Steve Cartwright who liaises between the groups and does an excellent job as scorer. People really do enjoy playing online and it may be how we play in future.

Robert Smith



Mah Jong

Mah Jong is a Chinese game that is played all over the world. It looks complicated, but once the basic rules are understood, it is actually an easy and fun game to play.



The Mah Jong group in Sheffield U3a has been running for several years. We were playing in a pub one night a week, but with Covid-19 this had to change. Since May we have been playing online and have found that it works very well. There are a few minor differences from the in person game, but overall it has been a success, a good way of keeping in touch and something to do one evening a week. It is likely that we will continue to play this way for the foreseeable future. If anyone is interested in learning to play the game, or already knows but would

like to find out how we play online, I would be happy to show you. You do need your own Mah Jong set and a device that links you to Zoom.

Barbara Lowe



Yoga

Before lockdown and the on-going restrictions on in person meetings, the Yoga Group offered the choice of four yoga classes a week (three hatha mat based classes and a chair-based class) at Yoga at the Reach, a dedicated yoga studio at Blenheim Reach, just off Ecclesall Road.

Since lockdown we have embraced technology and moved online using Zoom for our hatha mat based classes, with two classes a week: Monday lunchtime and Thursday morning. We have a fabulous group of regulars with between 8 and 14 attending every class. Sadly at the moment our

chair classes aren't running. We all agree it's just not the same as being together "in person", but using Zoom has kept us in touch with each other as well as enabling us to maintain our practice.



Classes combine posture work for strength and flexibility, breathwork awareness and practices to help us energise, balance and relax and simple mindfulness techniques to help us live fully in the present moment. Classes end with a 10-15 minute relaxation often with

a guided visualisation or meditation.

When we are able to return to the studio we're expecting to have to limit the number of people in class, but the studio is set up so we can continue to offer a Zoom option too. If you would like to know more about the classes please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

Anne Ledbetter



Tai Chi and Qi Gong South Sheffield

Looking at our records, I see we are hitting our 13th month since we last had a full group session: together, in-person, with no electronics, as real people.



The intervening period has led us into areas we never guessed we would explore. At the beginning of the first lockdown, we started a group newsletter so that members could keep in touch and continue practice. As National Subject Advisor for tai chi and qi gong, we thought we might as well offer this to other groups. Fame at last (?), as the newsletter was eventually taken by more than 50 U3A Groups nationwide and a couple overseas. As summer arrived we

discontinued the newsletter and encouraged outdoor practice, but with the onset of autumn and then lockdown 3 we took a deep breath and plunged online through the wonders of Zoom. On a Tuesday evening starting at 5.00 we have 30 minutes of qi gong; mostly the 18 Form Shibashi, but to keep everybody alert we drop in occasional Chen Style coiling exercises and some Silk Reeling. The beauty of qi gong, in addition to the fitness, health and relaxation benefits, is that it is so easy to learn, maybe why there are usually 30 members joining us each week. We finish with some Yang Family tai chi revision and sign-off pleasantly tired and relaxed. If anybody is interested in joining in – we are just an email away.

Pat & Clare Ryan



Tailor Made Fitness

In February 2020 there were SU3A members enjoying 10 varied sessions with the Trainers at Fairplay Sport, that's over 50 folk keeping fit and being sociable. With the initial lockdown, a number of trainers from the fitness studio continued offering us Zoom fitness, something most of us had not even heard of at the time. Only a small proportion of members joined in, for a number of reasons.

As we moved into the second lockdown, the Director, herself one of the trainers, made the very sad decision to sell her studio. It was just not possible at that time to see a way forward - no income but still bills to pay. Having worked closely for over eight years, I have to say we were gutted.

At this time, two of the trainers (who are so proud of what they have achieved with the over 55's, over 65's, over 75's ...) continue to offer Zoomed sessions to those who wish to join in, both are most successful. We have even had a new member join us. Where we go from here hangs in the balance, just like so many other things in our lives.

Will we ever find a Fitness Studio which would open their arms to us, accommodate small groups with an understanding trainer, design sessions suitable for our needs? Zoom sessions are good in the short

term, but the trainers need to have experience and knowledge of each individual's capabilities, limitations, etc. and that cannot happen so easily on a screen.

I do feel there would be interest in future in re-establishing face to face sessions, but until we know when that could possibly be, there is little point in trying to find premises that would be suitable. Ann Evans



Bird Watching II



Blue Tit, Shillito Woods - Keith Jones



Blue Tit in Shillito Woods - Keith Jones



Female Chaffinch, Shillito Woods - Keith Jones

Malcolm Swift

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In my God is my Hope: The Diaries of Anne Lister 1791-1840,
Anna Hawthorne, 27th November 2020
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Born into a middle-class family with several siblings, Anne was thought by her mother to be an unmanageable tomboy and was consequently, sent off to boarding school age 7. There began her first affair with a young girl called Eliza, but more importantly also began the first of her diaries.

Alone in her school attic room, she developed the simple coding system she needed to disguise her very personal feelings and sentiments from the world. Finally expelled from her private boarding school in York after three love affairs, she went to live with relatives in Shibden Hall near Halifax, where she educated herself reading, writing, studying mathematics, translating Greek and Latin. She did the accounts and managed the Hall's finances. She was interested in engineering, languages, agriculture and medicine, particularly anatomy.

Anne loved solitary walks and poetry, she visited church regularly and travelled widely across the world as far afield as Georgia in Eastern

Europe. Her politics were Conservative (a true Tory) but, remarkably, she did not wish for women to have the vote.

As the coding system became more sophisticated over her lifetime she firmly believed that no one would decipher it, let alone find it. These diaries documented her numerous affairs with women, her sexuality and her business dealings with the men of Halifax, among whom she became known notoriously as 'Gentleman Jack'. She was perceived by them to be very eccentric but also very astute. She had interests in mining, quarries, and the politics of local business.

Anne dressed almost entirely in black as she strode across the countryside. She said her garb was an indication of the grief she felt at the end of her long love affair with a woman called Mariana. Anne's vulnerability became apparent in her desire to be liked. She always made a note in her diaries if someone favoured her. She was motivated to seduce women as she was lonely and bored in 'Shibden' and wanted a long-term female lover and companion.

This is a very brief synopsis of what was an extremely interesting talk by Anna. In 1890 the code was deciphered, revealing the word 'Hope' as recurring regularly. There are 24 bound copies of her diaries obtained by Halifax Borough Council in 1933 which are now held in the Calderdale Archives.

Anne Lister died in Georgia, Russia, aged 49.

Sue Knighton

[How Sheffield became a Cosmopolitan City, David Price, 18 December 2020](#)

Does it come as a surprise to you to hear Sheffield described as a Cosmopolitan City? Is it just a matter of numbers? If you wanted to meet people with a wide range of nationalities, where would you go to meet them? Well one place to start might be Firth Park Academy, which had 47 different nationalities at this school in 2017. David spoke about so many different groups of people coming to Sheffield over the last few centuries. He spoke of migrants like the Jews, and the Ugandan Asians, as well as people from Chile, Vietnam, Somali, Bosnia, the Yemen, and

Kosovo, who came last century. He includes himself among these as he too is a migrant - from the South of England. He was one of the wave of incomers moving to Sheffield in the 1980s when both the Manpower Services Commission and the Midland Bank established headquarters in Sheffield. He also mentioned Professor Hans Krebs, who came to the UK as a refugee, worked at Sheffield University and who was awarded a Nobel Prize.

In relation to this century, David didn't just speak as a historian but also as an activist, having been instrumental in the setting up of South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group (SYMAAG) and he showed us an image of SYMAAG's march to Lindholme Detention Centre in 2007, with wording on banners: 'Asylum Seekers Right to Work', 'Dignity not Detention' and 'Stop the Snatch Squads.' The march was protesting about the arbitrary detention of people coming to this country to seek sanctuary. When I was at school we learned about the right of 'habeas corpus', and I thought it applied to everyone in the country, but it's not applied to those seeking sanctuary. He spoke of those making their way independently to ask for sanctuary here and others coming via the United Nations' Gateway Protection Programme, set up when David Blunkett was Home Secretary, offering a legal route for selected people living in refugee camps in poor countries, to be resettled in Britain.

David lamented the closure of the Northern Refugee Centre (NRC) which was set up in the 1980s in Sheffield to help Vietnamese refugees. He spoke of the work done by Sheffield English Language Support (SAVTE) and he showed a photo of Myra Davis, founder of Sheffield Conversation Club and of ASSIST. He spoke of the establishment of the City of Sanctuary movement, established in Sheffield by Inderjit Bhogal and Craig Barnett and now extending to many parts of the UK and Ireland. At the end, Sheffield U3A members asked many questions and one member asked for advice on how to include more people from non-white backgrounds in the membership of Sheffield U3A. David offered to facilitate establishing contacts to help with that.

Of course, many people come from abroad to study at the two universities here, spending money in the city on fees, accommodation, necessities and entertainment. Others have come from European Union

countries and have also brought their skills and expertise. These two groups of people are probably major contributors to the economy of Sheffield. Many of them would not have been around to be counted in the 2011 national census. It will be interesting to see the extent to which they and other groups are visible in the 2021 Census.

Do you feel that you live in a Cosmopolitan City? Do you celebrate the diverse cultures, languages, and backgrounds of Sheffield's citizens? For more information, read the book: *Welcome to Sheffield – A Migration History* by David Price - available at Waterstones, Rhyme and Reason, or from David himself at davidprice2@googlemail.com, Website: <https://welcometosheffieldbook.co.uk>

Elizabeth Birks

Sally Goldsmith and Rony Robinson, 29th January 2021

When you ask two entertainers to come and give a lecture, what do you expect? Well with Rony Robinson and Sally Goldsmith we got entertainment. They surprised each other and surprised the audience with readings and songs and snippets of novels and plays (complete with hats that acted as props - even when they weren't always put in place at the right time). We heard that The Yorkshire Post proclaimed Rony to be 'Yorkshire's Dylan Thomas' when he was launching his novel called *The Beano* (set in Scarborough on the eve of the First World War) - and as a result of this, he and Sally were invited to be part of the festival to celebrate Dylan Thomas' centenary in 2014 in Cardiff and they slept in Mrs Thomas' house.

Sally and Rony read a scene from a walking play written by Sally. It was set in Topley where they live now and where Edward Carpenter once lived. The snippet sees Bert Ward (the 'King of the Ramblers') and his wife, Fanny, meeting up with Edward Carpenter who's accompanied by E.M. Forster and Siegfried Sassoon. Rony played Bert Ward, and Sally played Carpenter (posh man's hat) and Fanny (woman's hat).

Rony told us that he has late onset epilepsy and this creates a problem when writing due to memory lapses. So, it's possible that each of the 2 novels about Charlie Peace, the murderer, that he's writing now, will be a

collection of pieces that can be put together in any order, following the example of the experimental novelist B.S. Johnson. Rony read us an amusing little scene from one of these novels in which the hangman chats to Charlie on the eve of his execution.

We heard Sally singing and accompanying herself on a squeeze box of some kind. We were given a glimpse of an autoharp which Rony decided not to play for lack of time, and we nearly got glimpses of artwork that Rony and Sally have done while attending online art courses during lockdown. They recommend art as a way of improving mental health.

Sally and Rony managed to fit in so much fun and gentle humour and so many stories into 40 minutes! Many thanks and best wishes to Rony and Sally for a very entertaining event!

Elizabeth Birks

**Surviving Warsaw 1939-1945,
Marek Szablewski, 12th February 2021**

“We must be listened to above and beyond our personal experience, we have collectively witnessed a fundamental unexpected event, fundamental precisely because unexpected, not foreseen by anyone. It happened. Therefore it can happen again, this is the core of what we have to say. It can happen, and it can happen everywhere.”

Opening his lecture with the above quote from Primo Levi, an Auschwitz survivor, Marek Szablewski delivered a heartrending and courageous story of love, terror and survival in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Nazi occupation of Poland from 1939-1945. Marek stressed that he was not a historian but wanted to explore his family's complex history from his father Witold's side.

Inside the ghetto walls of 1.3 square miles, built in 1939 by the Nazis, were herded over 400,000 of the Polish Jews of Warsaw. In 1939 Witold Szablewski, Marek's father, lived inside the walls and worked as a toolmaker in a factory within the ghetto. He was however, able to swap houses with a Jewish Polish doctor who had been forced into the ghetto and whose house was outside. Witold lived there with his father Stefan and together they managed to keep his Jewish stepmother and

half-sister hidden outside until the end of the war. His work allowed him to have an entry and exit pass from the Germans which gave him the opportunities he needed to assist the Jews and actively join in resistance to the Nazis.

Life inside the ghetto was terrifying, intolerable and cruel. The bestiality and harshness of the German SS and soldiers was beyond belief. He told of a scene his father witnessed of a Jew being whipped to death with a bullwhip for the small offence of scratching the car of a passing Nazi officer. Schools were shut, culture was banned. There was no music, particularly Chopin, little or no food, families crammed together in single rooms, little water, drainage problems, illness and fear. All Jewish bank accounts were blocked. Yellow Star of David armbands were mandatory. Jews had to walk in the gutters with their heads bowed when passing any Germans who shot them at random. Jewish society was so terrorised that the Jews became simply expendable slave labour.

A Jewish Council was set up ostensibly to liaise with the Germans on matters within the ghetto. Marek told us that one day in July 1942 Witold found himself delivering a message hidden in a bread roll to the chairman of the Jewish Council in the Warsaw Ghetto, Adam Czerniaków. Suddenly the Gestapo arrived, surrounded the building and forced Czerniaków to begin organizing the gathering of Jews at the Umschlagplatz for deportation to the East (in reality death in the concentration camps). Someone gave his father a Star of David armband. He picked up a broom and pretended to clean the toilets while the Gestapo shouted and beat people in the offices upstairs. He always maintained this was the most frightening experience of his life. If he had been discovered, he would have been killed on the spot. Three days later Czerniaków committed suicide when it became obvious that he would win no concessions from the Nazis.

The deportations to the East had begun. All resistance now seemed futile. However, on 19 April 1943 the remarkably brave Warsaw Ghetto Uprising by Jewish Resistance groups within broke out. Armed with limited weapons, the insurgents held out until 16 May. They were brutally crushed by Nazi SS units led by SS-Gruppenführer Jürgen Stroop. His final act was the destruction of Warsaw's great synagogue, followed by

the obliteration of the entire Warsaw Ghetto. He was executed for his war crimes in 1953.

There was also a resistance movement from the Polish Home Army. They fought bravely, sabotaging factories, blowing up vital transport links and thwarting the Germans at every possible turn across Poland. On 1st August 1944 the Polish population rose up, launched the Warsaw Uprising and reclaimed large swathes of the city. Despite limited assistance from Western allies, and no assistance from the Soviet Army on the other bank of the Vistula River, less than a mile away, they held out for 63 days rather than the few days they had originally planned.

Witold fought in the 9th Company of the Home Army (AK) 'Kiliński' Battalion, taking part in the seizing of the Telephone Exchange, and helping protect the front line near the Saski Park. Over 250,000 people were killed, many of whom were civilians. When they ran out of food, water and weapons they surrendered on Oct 2nd. All the insurgents were taken prisoner of war and a few days later the entire civilian population of the city was forcibly removed. It was at this point that the pre-meditated and systematic looting and destruction of Warsaw and its cultural heritage began, leaving behind a mass of ruins, where once a thriving capital city stood. Around 85% of the city centre was razed to the ground. This destruction continued right up until Jan 17th 1945 when Polish Communist and Soviet forces finally entered the city.

After the Warsaw Uprising Witold was transported to a POW Camp in Silesia and was later moved to his final POW camp, Burg Ludwigstein, where he and nine other POWs maintained engineering workshops and carried out labouring work in a school for the sons of high-ranking Nazi officers in the castle. At night, they were incarcerated in the round castle tower. Witold and Marek visited it together in 1996 as to Witold it had been a place of sanctuary. After the horrendous conditions of the disease-ridden Stalags, and the war zone that was Warsaw, Ludwigstein was a huge relief. "This place and these people saved my life," my father would often say. "They treated us like human beings." This was the place he was living when the Second World War ended.

Witold finally ended up in Italy and from there went on to England in the Polish Resettlement Corps in Hardwick Hall near Chesterfield. While in

Italy, he managed to contact his father and family via the Red Cross. His relief at knowing they were alive was tinged with sadness at the memory of the bitter argument he had with his father the last time he saw him. His father had wanted him to pretend to be a civilian in order to avoid being taken prisoner of war. Witold had insisted on revealing himself as an insurgent along with all his comrades and on becoming a POW. He never saw his father and stepmother again. His sister visited Witold in Britain twice. His first visit back to Poland was for his sister's funeral in 1989.

Witold had a very successful career in England rising to the role of Technical director at Tyzack's Engineering works in Sheffield. According to Marek he was a kind and good man and worked tirelessly among the Polish community in Sheffield. Despite his success in Britain he suffered from depression. He tried to put it to positive use by taking part in research into mental health issues with Polish war veterans and co-writing a book. He also attended the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the Warsaw Uprising. When he died he was buried in the Powązki cemetery in Warsaw, amongst his comrades from the Uprising, with a full military funeral. Among his papers Marek found an obituary for his grandfather published in a Warsaw newspaper. It named those who were saddened by Stefan's passing, his wife, daughter, son-in-law and grandson, and Witold, referred to not by name, but as his 'absent son'.

It should be noted that this article represents a very brief snapshot of just one man's memory, the brutality of which Marek described in detail in his lecture and which cannot be overestimated. A fuller more complete article can be found

<https://www.wcmt.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrated-reports/9481.pdf>. Sue Knighton

Local lockdown celebrities



Crosspool Owl



Endcliffe Park Kingfisher
Photos by David Jordan and Jonathan Jordan

- 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.

u3a Sheffield **SU3A Executive Committee**

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During this time of physical distancing we are arranging for lectures to be delivered online. The ones we have lined up, so far, are shown below. Zoom has a limit on attendance so you need to register on the Wild Apricot site for each lecture. As always, this programme is subject to change.

Apr	9	Tim Renshaw BEM Cathedral Archer Project	Causes and responses to homelessness in Sheffield
Apr	16	Barbara Beard	The Sinking of the Empress of Ireland
Apr	23	Anya Chapman	Celebrating British seaside piers
Apr	30	Brian Christopher Jones University of Sheffield	The British Constitution
May	14	Chris Sedgley, Veolia	Recycling Electronic Waste
June	18		To be confirmed
July	16	Dr Andrew Aldoori-Moore	What is a Documentary? Blurred Boundaries and the Art of Non-Fiction Film

Links 202: June 2021
Copy Deadline: 30 April 2021

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