



Gipping Path between Badley Mill and Hawks Mill
Roger Crouch, Walk and Talk in lockdown

NEWSLETTER

No. 59

SUMMER 2020

Dear Members

In our nation's current situation, it has been quite a challenge to our group leaders to stay in touch with their members. Some, who have felt confident enough, have continued to run their groups through video conferencing; others have used email or phone and recently some groups have met in gardens or an outdoor area. However, I imagine, not many of us thought that 5 months on we would still be waiting to meet in homes with more than one other household.

So, what have you been doing to keep yourself occupied? Have you been able to use the phone or computer to stay in touch with a variety of people? Have you learnt a new skill or revived an old hobby? Have you discovered the pleasure of observing nature on a daily walk? Or is your home and garden now fit for a magazine? You can read what some of our members and groups have been getting up to later in the Newsletter.

Whatever you did, I hope you are now able to take the opportunity to meet family or friends in the lovely weather we have been having and begin to venture out again. I know some of you are pleased that this time has come but I know some of you are anxious too. Do be assured though, that as soon as we are able, we will restart groups following what ever is the current advice to keep members safe.

In the meantime, if you can access 'YouTube' there are many interesting videos on all sorts of topics - details and some reviews can be seen starting p 7. I have had a look at several them; ranging between 5 - 60 mins, all are presented in an interesting way using animations, demonstrations or diagrams. Many of them certainly sparked my interest.

AGM. Due to the current situation and the likelihood we will still be following social distancing guidance in September, the committee has agreed to postpone the AGM till a time when it is safe to do so (our constitution allows for 15 months since the last AGM, with Covid measures allowing further delay if necessary. We discussed how many we could have at an AGM under current social distancing rules for community facilities and that would seriously restrict how many could or would want to attend. We also discussed holding a virtual AGM but the regulations surrounding such a meeting and the practical issues were far from easily dealt with. Hence our decision to postpone. We hope this will happen before the end of the year.

The committee are pleased to say we have a few new volunteers for our committee who will be co-opted for the time being and voted in when the AGM is held.

2019/2020 Membership will now be extended until the end of the month following the month the AGM is held when the 2020/2021 subscriptions will become due; this extension ensures that already paid up members will be able to vote. Hence, if you pay by Standing Order you may wish to suspend this for the time being.

Fortunately, financially we can cover our bills for a few months but we still have to pay our membership to the Third Age Trust, for the TAM magazine, printing our newsletter for members who don't have email, and Beacon - our system for storing all our members information in our world of data protection.

If you have any questions or concerns about any of this, please contact me or any other member of the committee. Hopefully, by the time of our next newsletter we will be meeting fully together again.

Till then, take care!

Glynis Hunt, Vice Chair

Lock Down Group News

Like other U3As and indeed as with the rest of the country, all our social activities were stopped in the middle of March.

This didn't deter several of our group leaders from finding ways to keep going one way or another. Here are a few examples.....

Geology

I am very pleased to say that the group has been able to continue its twice monthly meetings during the COVID-19 crisis. Thank goodness for video conferencing, and **Zoom** in particular. We adapted most of our regular items to fit into the new medium and have thoroughly enjoyed our regular meet-ups.

Therefore, rock identification, geology history and local geology have continued to be discussed and fascinating facts, geology in real life and a quiz have been introduced. Presentation material and photos have been emailed beforehand to each member of the group to aid discussion.

One notable first, after negotiating some technical glitches, was using a PowerPoint presentation!

The exterior of Harleston Church (see photo) stands out from the other flint churches in the area, and is very interesting geologically. It was restored in the 1860s and contains different coloured flints, box stone, mudstone and

possibly jasper. The land here is called boulder clay. It was left behind during the last glaciation and contains rocks which were dragged along with the ice. I do recommend a walk out to the village to investigate the church and its rocks.

Finally, I'd like to finish with a quiz question.

How old is the Earth? Is it

- a) 6.4 million years ?
- b) 46 million years ?
- c) 4.6 billion years ?

Answer in the next newsletter!

David Loades



Walk and Talk

Our last group walk was back in early March just before the lockdown. However, the group has remained undaunted and as individuals and couples many members have continued with the tradition of daily, weekly and Friday walks.

We have pounded the paths around our towns and villages and discovered places we had not known existed.

The use of **Facebook** has been a great help allowing us to keep in touch and to share our walks with others in the group to enjoy. It has even allowed one couple who have moved to Hampshire to share their walks from afar.

In addition Facebook has also allowed us to share photographs of churches, tracks and especially wildlife, in a virtual tour of Stowmarket and district

Some of our photographs:-



Phil Webb

Discussion Group

The Discussion group has seen many changes over the last 3 months as you might imagine, no longer being able to meet face-to-face in the Smith's homely environment.

We had to move quickly to set up online using a Video Conferencing app for our April meeting and this provided a few challenges for most of us. After trying various VC apps we chose to go with Zoom which has provided a good connection with little delay between speech and visuals, and most people have found it quite easy to use. Unfortunately with the free version of Zoom we are only allowed 40 minutes in a session so we have to reconnect again after each 40 minute period. This only takes a couple of minutes and gives us a chance for a quick break whilst doing so. These breaks have proved useful because staring at a computer screen continuously for 2 hours can be quite tiring.

We have now held three 2-hour meetings successfully on-line and have found the joining and re-joining process goes quite smoothly. Unfortunately some of our members are not that used

to the technology so this has reduced our numbers attending.

We don't get treated by our hosts to a cup of tea or coffee and biscuits on arrival and have to make our own which is not too big a hardship, we can even make an extra cuppa during the break when we re-join if we feel like it. We have started these recent meetings differently by firstly sharing our experiences of lockdown, how life had suddenly changed for us, and the new challenges that we are facing. Half of our attendees during this period live alone and are therefore living in isolation and cut off from the world. It was important to address this issue which was foremost in everyone's mind, and discussing our concerns has proved helpful to us all.

Continuing with our published programme, our topic in **April** was "**Care Services**" which seemed very appropriate considering the situation. We were just 3 weeks into the lockdown, the impact on everyone was considerable and members showed a lot of concern about how the Care Services were going to manage. Our **May** topic was "**Fairness of the legal system and the compensa-**

tion culture" and was followed in **June** with "**Has political correctness gone too far?**"

We have had 6 people attend each of our meetings during the lockdown period which still ensured a wide variety of views. This has given our quieter members more opportunity to speak as we sometimes have between 8 and 11 members present at meetings. We also took time in our June meeting to gather ideas for next year's topics. There was no shortage of ideas including quite a lot of interest in how our world might be changing for the better as a result of the pandemic.

Firming up on this, at a garden meeting (with social distancing) in July, we agreed our 2020/21 programme which you can see by clicking [here](#).

We hope that we will be able to meet again face-to-face in September but if not then we are set up quite well and prepared to continue online.

Our membership is full but if you are interested in going on our waiting list please get in touch.

David Warner

01449 612730

Table Tennis

Many group activities can be replicated using video conferencing, but unfortunately Table Tennis isn't one of them!

Indoor sports are amongst the last activities to be allowed to restart under social distancing rules. The restrictions, however, on the manner and numbers allowed to play at any one time mean that we will have to wait a little longer before we can re-start our U3A group.

Officially, play is now allowed following guidelines issued by 'English Table Tennis', the governing body.

We work closely with Stowmarket Table Tennis Club who are planning some test

sessions at St Peter's Hall. I'll attend then report back to the group, hopefully with some ideas as to how we can organise our own sessions

Peter Dakeyne

Singing Group

The Singing Group have found it challenging to keep in touch during 'lockdown'. Not all of us have managed to make use of modern technology, however a few of us managed to join each other using 'Zoom' and on our first meeting we attempted to sing to the accompaniment of the piano accordion. It was highly entertaining as we were all 'out of sync', and of course decidedly unsuccessful! We have not repeated that experience!

Since then, I've been sending out emails and invitations to use Zoom to chat for half an hour with other members of the group. For those of us who manage to join, it's been amusing, reassuring and interesting - a valuable point of contact. We're a jolly group and I think many of us have really missed the fortnightly singing and companionship.

Hilary Foster

Book Club

Since the sad passing of Mary Bradley, **Sylvia Downs** has taken over as convenor. The group has kept in touch by email and regular phone calls and recently some have taken part in a garden meeting.

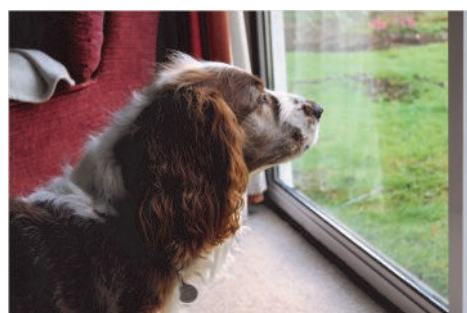
Photography

Our last 'normal' meeting was on February 18th, but we haven't missed any since! After a few trials we quickly settled on 8x8.vc as our video conferencing platform; it's completely free, there's no need to 'sign up' and unlike Zoom, there's no time limit on the meetings (ours usually last about 2 hours).

We all submit our photos as normal via Drop Box and Roy is able to share his Photoshop screen so we can admire (or constructively criticise) the pictures as normal. It's all a lot of fun!

So far, our topics have been: 'Red', 'Minimalism', 'At Home' (under lock-down), 'Table Top' and in July 'Six of the Best'. As it's the most appropriate, Roy has selected here one of each of our 'At Home' pictures'

Peter Dakeyne



Computing and Technology

Our last real meeting was on 13th March, immediately before the lock down. Since then we have had some activity on our web forum and some individual help has been given to members along the way.

In June, 7 of us got together on an 8x8 virtual meeting where we were able

to exchange ideas and discuss mutual problems. More than anything, however, it was an opportunity to chat with friends we hadn't seen in 3 months.

We are looking forward to the time in the future when we can meet normally again.

Peter Dakeyne

New Groups Reminder

In the last Newsletter (see full details there) we reported that Bonny Miller is offering to start up three new groups, Current Affairs Discussion, Arty-Crafts and Applied Psychology.

If any of these are of interest, Please contact **Bonnie** on 01449 603 855

French Conversation (1)

Thankfully we have been able to continue keeping in touch via the internet. We started with Zoom but then we found Cisco Webex was much more conducive to what we wanted to do.

Many thanks to Peter and Christine Gay who have steered our language practise by finding articles in French that we can all hear and read over the airwaves while taking turns at interpreting them.

We have even increased our meetings to once a week - but in real life we will probably revert to twice a month. I believe we have all found the routine of spending a couple of hours together on

a Tuesday morning (virtually) a great help in keeping us sane/normal! Sharing our news and challenges (in French) can be supportive and amusing!

Andrea Burton

Play Reading

Play Reading Group (1) finished reading "The Confidential Clerk" at the last meeting before lock down. Unfortunately, Play Reading Group (2) did not have the opportunity to commence "Bell Book and Candle" as lock down had been announced and we cancelled the meeting. Hopefully they will have the opportunity to read that at a later time.

During this period of absence, some members have taken the opportunity to view the **National Theatre's** free screenings of plays via their You Tube channel; these included 'One Man two Guvnors', 'Jane Eyre', 'Treasure Island', 'Twelfth Night', 'Antony & Cleopatra', 'A Street car named Desire'. Unfortunately, this free run of full shows finished with Amadeus on 16th July.

We are now looking at the possibility of virtual meetings if we can obtain play scripts in a suitable format. Members will be kept informed of these developments.

Maureen Wingham-Eaton

Lorraine Shelton

Imagine people have been doing all sorts of things to keep busy during lockdown.



One thing I found enjoyable and which helped to keep me moving was a free online yoga course. It is called **The Thirty Day Yoga Challenge** and can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/ls9legp>. It consists of short video clips about 20 to 30 minutes per session which you can use to suit your own level of skill. I did start off following the videos in order but now I do not use the clips every day or in chronological order. I just dip in and out of the videos, sometimes repeating sessions that I particularly enjoy

or where I feel I would benefit from more practice. I particularly like using this programme because I prefer an instructor to take me through the positions rather than working on my own. I also found that I could work to my own level and with repetition I have actually improved!

A lot of us love our gardens and with the fine weather and lockdown what better place to be. As part of our **G & T group** (Garden and Things) we often visited **The National Garden Scheme** open days and were inspired by some beautiful local gardens.

Lockdown has made it impossible to visit the gardens. However The National Garden Scheme has developed over **200 virtual tours online**. The short video clips allow you to see how some gardens have been developed and glimpse some of the beautiful grounds and settings that surround them.

One clip I found interesting was the virtual tour of the garden at **The Priory at Stoke by Nayland**, <https://tinyurl.com/ybbsj9sm>. It certainly inspired me to arrange a visit next year, once life returns to a more normal

existence. The **National Garden Scheme** site also has sections on hints and tips, tutorials, recipes and much more.

With the lifting of some lockdown re-



strictions it is now possible to actually visit some gardens by booking a time slot online and observing social distancing rules. At the end of June I visited **Church Cottage garden** in Braiseworth, Eye. The numbers were limited and it was very easy to keep 2 metres apart. I was allowed to wander around the garden for one hour. It was well worth the visit and I would recommend that anyone feeling the need to get out but feeling cautious consider visiting a garden in The National Garden Scheme. To find all this information visit <https://ngs.org.uk> or Google **The National Garden Scheme**.

'Angela's Pin' by Carolyn Belcher.

I started writing when I was teaching drama at Knowsley Community College. In 1986, a friend encouraged me to take a group of students to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. I wrote the piece they performed from improvisations we'd explored on male/female stereotypes. It was a performance arts piece, i.e., drama, music and dance, called 'PRIVATE LIFE'. We achieved Pick Of The Day in The Scotsman.

Encouraged, we took a show up to the festival every year until 1994, when I took early retirement as my husband and I decided we needed a change. Colin had been made redundant. I had made the mistake of accepting the position of course coordinator and had become more of an administrator than a teacher, not something I wanted to be, nor was good at. We bought a house in Le Maine et Loire in France. Colin wanted to garden organically, I wanted to concentrate on writing.

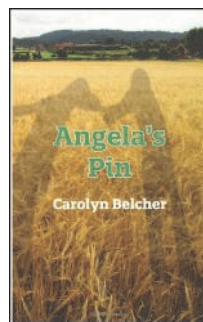
We stayed in France for seven years. For me, these were the years of multiple rejections. But I had the writing bug! In the Autumn of 2001, we returned to the UK to look after my mother, and in 2003 I signed up for an evening writing course. It was there that my first novel was born. Our tutor asked us to write a short story based on an item in our home. I have earrings hanging on pins on a cork board so I chose that artefact for my story. When the tutor handed it back to me she said, 'Carolyn, it's not a short story it's the start of a novel.

In 2014, after numerous rewrites and just before my 70th

birthday, I was offered a publishing contract by GWL Publishing, a small firm in Winchester. 'Crocodiles and Angels', the first book of a quartet under the umbrella title, 'The Mirror In The Cathedral' was issued in 2015.

The years in between hadn't been just about this novel. I joined Write Now, The Bury St Edmunds writers' group,

I had several short stories and poems published and a monologue won a competition and was performed at a new writing festival in Newbury.



My second novel, 'The Pavements We Walk On' was published in 2016 and the third, 'Angela's Pin' is out now on Amazon. The final one of the quartet, 'The Lies We Don't Hear' should be published in 2021.

The books tell the stories of four women who are close friends. Einna, Maggie, Angela and Debbie share laughter, escapades, problems; indeed all that life has to offer.

Because of Covid19, I'm unable to give talks, do signings etc. But perhaps by the Autumn, a more normal life will have returned. In the meantime I've learnt a new skill. I can't say that I'm very proficient at it, however, but I have two channels on YouTube: 'Scatter Brained Saunters round a Spring Garden', <https://tinyurl.com/yddamo86>, because I was so sad that my friends and family couldn't see it, and 'Storytime with NanaC', <https://tinyurl.com/yaq2cz3p>.

Carolyn Belcher

Keith Shelton

During lockdown, I enrolled on the free, online **Mindfulness For Later Life Course**, promoted by the Gatehouse Charity and funded by Suffolk Community Foundation. Details of the course was sent to the U3A and was circulated to members in April.

Starting in the middle of May, there were 6 weekly, 2 hour sessions, delivered via Zoom, an online video platform. There were 16 participants (4 from Stowmarket U3A) and the course finished on 25th June.

I really enjoyed the course, which mainly consisted on practical exercises, which I guess were similar to relaxation exercises, self-awareness exercises and meditation. The aim of mindfulness is to

'be in the present', accept where you are now, in terms of thoughts and feelings, and to suspend judgement for a time.

During the course I have been encouraged to use and be aware of all my senses, to experience what is in the here and now, freeing my mind, thoughts and feelings of the past and of the future, and the 'what if'.

Now the course is finished I will attempt to increase my 'mindful' activity in life in general.

Research suggests that if we increase our mindfulness activity then our increased ability to focus will improve our concentration, our increased ability to relax will reduce our stress levels, and our increased calmness will reduce our

blood pressure, help us to manage pain better and promote better quality sleep. Overall, we will experience better physical and mental health.

So hopefully, by being more mindful, it will have a direct result on my overall well being – not bad for a six week course!!!

There are countless mindfulness videos on the internet which you can play and practice mindful exercises. The site **Insight Timer**, <https://insighttimer.com/> was recommended to us by the course leader. However just to give you a snippet of a mindful exercise, which lasts less than 2 minutes, you might wish to click on the following link as a taster.

<https://tinyurl.com/y88h3215>

Whilst we have all missed our monthly meeting talks, you can while away many an hour on YouTube and educate or just amuse yourself at the same time at home (be careful, though, it can become addictive!) Make sure to 'Subscribe' to the channel so that you can return for more of the same. And don't forget that if you are fortunate to have a 'smart' TV all YouTube videos may be 'cast' to the big screen - indeed your TV may support YouTube itself.

Just follow the underlined links to view the content. Annoyingly, several videos start with adverts but these can be skipped after about 4 seconds.

Science and Nature

'Vsauce' :

For a "black hole" host of scientific learning and explanations. For example ['How the Earth Moves'](#)

'Kurzgesagt – In a Nutshell' :

Describes it self as, 'Videos explaining things with 'optimistic nihilism' (look it up!). Science Animation videos such as ['Why do beautiful things make us happy?'](#) Check it out ...

'Computerphile' :

In depth information for computer fanatics (not every day learning) but some gems such as [How to choose a password?](#)

'Braincraft' :

Self improvement tips based on psychology and neuroscience. Trouble sleeping? Try ['5 ways to get better sleep'](#)

'BBC Earth Unplugged' :

Investigating the conundrums, quirks and beautiful science of our amazing planet.

'BBC Earth' :

More of the same - the official channel of the well know David Attenborough series.

'Just Have a Think' :

Examines the issues that face our civilisation in the 21st Century and their potential solutions. (Peter's review, page 9)

Art and Culture:

'PhotoExposed' :

Photography tips, techniques and tutorials to help you control your camera, take better photos..and more.

'The Art Assignment' :

Explore art and art history through the lens of things happening today.

'Film Riot' :

Explores the art of film making in ways you've never seen.

'The Royal Opera House' :

Many free full length operas and ballets for lock down viewing - tagline - 'From our House to Your House'

'Theatre Weekly' :

Updated list of the best 12 free full length plays and shows available on YouTube from a variety of theatres.

'Royal Albert Hall' :

Exclusive sessions for the lock down, e.g. watch [Mezzo Soprano Katherine Jenkins](#) deliver a historic set from an empty Royal Albert Hall auditorium to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day.

'The Shows Must Go On' :

Clips from all your favourite Andrew Lloyd Webber shows. Special full performances start again mid August.

'BBC - Culture in Quarantine' :

Shorts prepared especially for lockdown. Must see biopic of [Ray Harryhausen](#), who is credited with elevating stop motion animation into an art form - remember the fencing skeletons? Also check out the [Swan Lake Bath Ballet](#)...

Learning/Educational/General

'OpenLearn from the OU' :

Bite-sized learning videos on a wide range of subjects including Philosophy, Economics, History, Astronomy and Religion. (See Keith's review, page 8)

'Royal Society of Arts' :

Want world-changing ideas, world leaders, talks, debates, interviews, animations and loads more?! This is the place ! Watching the RSA Animate, ['Economics is for Everyone'](#) really makes you think.

'TED Talks' :

Look for talks on Technology, Entertainment and Design -- plus science, business, global issues, the arts and more. Several associated channels such as

'TED -ED' :

Within TED-Ed's library animations, you will find carefully curated educational videos representing collaborations between talented educators and animators..

'The Royal Institution' :

Home of the Christmas Lectures. Explosive short films, full length talks from the world's leading scientists and writers, and videos to challenge the way you look at the world. (See in depth review by Evelyn, p8)

'British Pathe' :

British Pathe is a treasure trove of 85,000 films unrivalled in their historical and cultural significance.

'Ken Hub-Anatomy' :

Where learning human anatomy is fun! Mostly animated videos targeted at Students and medical professionals - but fascinating for all.

'BBC Bite Size' :

Expanded considerably during lock down, lessons for children of all ages - including us!

Research by **Keith Shelton and Peter Dakeyne**

Future Learn - A Review by Keith Shelton

In the last Newsletter there were a lot of links to sites where we could educate or amuse ourselves during lockdown. This prompted me to look around further until I found FutureLearn.....

So, during lockdown I completed a free online course about parliamentary reform from 1819 until 1918. The course was really well planned and the resources are excellent, mainly comprising 5 minute videos. After an introduction, the course really started with the Peterloo Massacre of 1819 – called a massacre because the Yeomanry charged into a peaceful crowd, killing men, women and children and injuring over 600 people.

For some time, Peterloo was commemorated only by a blue plaque, criticised as being inadequate, referring only to the "dispersal by the military" of an assembly. In 2007, the City Council replaced the blue plaque with a red plaque, explicitly referring to "a peaceful rally" being "attacked by armed cav-

alry" and mentioning "15 deaths and over 600 injuries". In 2019, on the 200th anniversary of the massacre, Manchester City Council inaugurated a new memorial, featuring eleven concentric circles of local stone engraved with the names of the dead and the places from which the victims came.

To give you a glimpse of the quality of the resources on the course, you can listen to two videos, The first is a 4 minute video, putting the Peterloo Massacre in context at <https://tinyurl.com/y9vuf7cn>, and the second, a 5 minute video, covers the massacre itself at <https://tinyurl.com/y9eoqrk8>.

I really enjoyed the course. If you are interested in following one (or more) of the free FutureLearn courses, then you can get further information here, <https://tinyurl.com/y9ook9oz>, with subject categories found in a list on the left, as you scroll down.

Enjoy!

Keith

Recorded Talks – An alternative in lockdown - Review by Evelyn Russell

I had a look at **The Royal Institution**, <https://tinyurl.com/lmtl5sh> which exists to inspire everyone to think more deeply about science and its place in our lives..

The talks are on a range of disciplines e.g. Chemistry, Physics, Plant and Human Biology, Psychology and Neuroscience, Medicine, Linguistics, Climate Change, Structural Engineering and Mathematics.

If you select a talk via You Tube click on the title below the video and it generally brings up some more detail about the talk content, speaker and where appropriate, format of the lecture.

I listened to a talk from The Met Office and dipped into a few others. Here are some very brief notes to maybe whet your appetite for this medium.

How to Build a Climate Laboratory, <https://tinyurl.com/y8p98uxg>:

This 1 hour talk was given by The Met. Office Chief Scientist Dame Julia Slingo in July 2016. She examines the processes which control the climate system and how they are encapsulated in models. She also raises the importance of climate change modelling to inform policy makers around the world.

Dame Slingo starts her talk with a historical perspective into the development of a science of Dynamic Meteorology and introduces a range of factors that have concerned people

interested in the weather and the climate since the early 18th Century:

- What influences the direction of the Trade winds
- What is the effect of the velocity of the Earth's rotation
- How does the fact that the earth is rotating influence motion
- What is the impact of air waves created by that air being hotter at the equator and cooler at the poles
- How important is the ability of atmospheric gases to both absorb and emit infrared radiation
- And as recently as the 1960s - Are atmospheric and ocean climates a coupled system?

The development of meteorological theory plus the collection of observed and historic data of both weather events and the activity of the sun underpin both statistical and computer models which have allowed more accurate prediction of the weather and of the likely future impact of climate change. Information that is essential for policy makers around the world.

If you are not interested in the historical aspects then take a look at the talk at around 29 minutes in. You may also get a flavour by just listening to the Question and Answer session which is a separate video on You Tube.



How Plants Recognise Seasons Using Molecular Memory

<https://tinyurl.com/y9xfao6x>

Dame Caroline Dean, Plant Scientist at the John Innes Centre in Norwich gives a 48 minute talk with a particular focus on vernalisation – the acceleration of flowering in plants by periods of prolonged cold. There is also a separate Q&A video.

The Science of Sleep/Melatonin to Neural Pathways,

<https://tinyurl.com/y8rnm6g9>:

The science behind sleeplessness can help us understand

why we need sleep and the physiological processes driving our circadian clock. Three speakers from The Universities of Bristol, Surrey and Oxford, respectively, each give a 15 minute talk on their area of expertise.

Very interesting talks and although the introduction suggests there will be a Q&A session, this does not appear to have been made available which I found disappointing.

Chemistry – various talks by Andrew Szydlo are on my list for a future watch.

Evelyn

Video talk review - Peter Dakeyne

Whilst researching the list of potential video channels to review (p7) it became difficult to decide as there is a great variety and all seem to offer so much. During this lock down, many are offering quality content which under normal conditions wouldn't be available online, certainly not for free. Examples include The Royal Opera House, The Andrew Lloyd Webber shows and the Royal Albert Hall - I can certainly recommend the Katherine Jenkins performance mentioned in the list.

In the end, I decided on, '**Just Have a Think**', described as '*The Climate and Sustainable Energy Channel*'

<https://tinyurl.com/ycns9nhw>

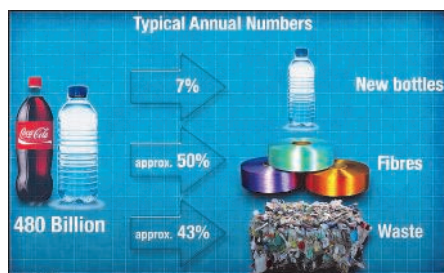
which seeks to understand the issues that face our civilisation in the 21st Century and focusses on the potential solutions that will save as many lives as possible and hopefully bring about a greater level of equality in the world.

All talks are given by Dave Borlace Bsc Hons and his style is to address the topic issues using copious illustrations and examples but keeping it light and humorous along the way. From what I've viewed he manages this admirably.

The first one I looked at is a 12 minute video called '**Nature has learnt how to eat our plastic!**'

<https://tinyurl.com/ycq45ods>

In Japan in 2016 a group of scientists working in a recycling plant noticed that a pile of PET plastic bottles (which are generally thought to be indestructible in



nature) were gradually being dissolved into a black mess. This material was found to contain bacterium which was able to digest the plastic into its constituent parts.

Dave compares this observation to the accidental discovery of penicillin by Alexander Fleming and goes on to describe the chemical processes taking place in this transformation. PET (polyethylene terephthalate) was invented by chemical company Dupont in the 1950s under the trade name Mylar

and is still known as such to this day.....This leads onto, of course, the present problems with waste plastic and it's polluting effects particularly in the oceans.

Further examination of the bacterium revealed that it used a specific enzyme, PETase, which breaks down the PET into its main components, dimethyl terephthalate (DMT) and ethylene glycol which are both harmless and potentially quite useful. They were then able to reproduce the enzyme without the need for the bacterium - Eureka!

But wait, whilst the enzyme did indeed digest the plastic far faster than when it naturally degrades, it still wasn't enough to cope with the vast quantities the world produces every year; this is where Portsmouth University comes into the story. In 2018 under the direction of Professor John McGeehan, they set up a 'Centre for Enzyme Innovation' and knowing that there was a natural polyester, Cutin, which protects plants, they investigated the similarities between Cutinase (the natural one created by bacteria over millennia) which destroys Cutin and PETase (the one seen to break down PET).

Examining the genetic code of each they found that they were near identical. The video then goes on to show some very high tech procedures leading to another happy accident. Whilst trying some reverse engineering between PETase and Cutinase they accidentally created an enhanced PETase, giving a much greater rate of digestion of the PET - and in the process produced ethylene glycol (as in antifreeze) which is normally produced from fossil fuel oil, for free!

Professor McGeehan, produced a road map which if followed worldwide gives the distinct possibility that the enhanced PETase could be produced in large quantities to help mitigate the damage that PET bottles and other plastics are doing to our environment.

Overall, a fascinating insight into just one of the efforts being made to reverse the damage done to the environment by plastic pollution.

There are many engrossing videos on '**Just Have a Think**' which are well worth your time exploring.

Peter Dakeyne

Latest Scams...

In the Spring e- Newsletter we gave details about the aborted March talk by NatWest entitled, 'Friends Against Scams' <https://tinyurl.com/jhmf87y>. NatWest have since streamed a talk for the U3A on Investment Scams and there is a video copy at <https://tinyurl.com/y357j6nh> (content starts at 2 minutes into the video).

There are now several new Covid-19 related scams in circulation. A new telephone scam is coming to light callers contact residents saying they are from NHS Track & Trace, telling the resident that they have been in contact with someone suffering from Covid 19 and need to have a test sent out to them. AgeUK (Barnet) have comprehensive advice on how to avoid this and many other current scams

<https://tinyurl.com/y54gxl7r>

See also the government official site Track and Trace: How it works <https://tinyurl.com/y92ws32k>

You can report any fraud attempts to Action Fraud UK, <https://tinyurl.com/y5hl6ga5> 0300 123 2040

ACTIVITY & INTEREST GROUPS – July 2020. Please contact the Leader/Convenor for the latest regarding your group's activities.

ART APPRECIATION (SAAG)	LUNCH CLUB (Sunday)	PHOTOGRAPHY
Tony Taylor	Contact Andrea Burton 01449 258 865	Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562
BOOK CLUB	MUSIC – Classical	PLAY READING (1) & (2)
Sylvia Downs 01449 612 661	Ian Hooper 01449 770 179	Maureen Wingham-Eaton 01449 771 200
BRIDGE INTERMEDIATE/IMPROVERS	MYTHS, STORIES AND LEGENDS	POETRY
Carol Gibson 07918 743 154	Philip Weir 01449 676 528	Jenifer Adams 01449 615 581
CANASTA (1)	PAINTING FOR PLEASURE	QUIZ
Hazel Burl 01449 615 581	Nina Rouse 01449 612 042	Melanie Westenra-Hartley 01449 767 757
CANASTA (2)	PATCHWORK	SCRABBLE PLAYING
Carol Gibson 07918 743 154	Kate Riddleston 01449 612 871	Contact Andrea Burton 01449 258 865
COMPUTING & TECHNOLOGY	GEOLOGY	WALK and TALK
Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562	Linda Reynolds 07880 516 926	Phil Webb 01449 614 616
	David Loades 07761 282 630	Keith Shelton 01449 768 744
DISCUSSION	HISTORY	TABLE TENNIS
David Warner 01449 612 730	Melanie Westenra-Hartley 01449 767 757	Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562
FRENCH CONVERSATION (1)	LUNCH CLUB (1)	THEATRE OUTINGS
Andrea Burton 01449 258 865	Angela Bentley 01449 780 274	Sharon Jeeves 07904 026 864
FRENCH CONVERSATION (2)	LUNCH CLUB (2)	SINGING
Zuleika Dobson 01449 615 811	Bryan Hilton 01449 258 152	Hilary Foster 01359 241 773
GARDENS & THINGS	LUNCH CLUB (3)	
Stewart Dorward 01449 774 213	Pat Griffiths 01449 721 137	

Obituaries

We are sorry to announce the deaths of three of our most popular and loyal members.

MARY BRADLEY: A member since 2010 - shortly after joining, Mary became joint convenor of the new Book Club and continued to lead it until ill health over took her. A bright and intelligent lady with a good sense of humour, she will be greatly missed.

JOYCE KAY: Joyce joined Stowmarket U3A in 2008. Keen on technology (she was an avid iPad fan) she was an active member of the Computer Group (now C&T) for many years and Committee member 2012-2017. Well liked and very sociable, Joyce will always be remembered.

PAT SMITH: A member of many years standing, Pat was always the gentleman, well liked and respected by all. He was co-opted onto the Committee in 2002 as Vice Chair then served as Chairman, 2003-2006. He started a Memoirs group and self published part of his own, plus over the years he helped other group convenors by hosting meetings at his home.

Our Condolences go to all the families.

Editor / Webmaster Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562 newseditor@u3astowmarket.org.uk

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