

Welcome to the LYME REGIS U3A – the Monthly Newsflash with the added extra APRIL“CHEERS” attachment

APRIL 2020

For **Membership** matters please contact Membership Secretary Graham Pitts:
01297 561569

For **Group** matters please contact Groups' Coordinator Penny Rose
01297 561076

For **Newsletter and Newsflash** contact Sue Wilson 01297 444606

You are used to receiving a monthly Newsflash covering the local U3A (Lyme Regis and surrounding areas) with all the group news and details of events etc.

But things have changed. We are all aware of the worldwide catastrophic event that has meant life has completely altered for every single one of us and will continue to be different for quite some time. To the part the U3A plays here in Lyme Regis - your local U3A has cancelled the monthly talks. Some groups are exploring digital connections to assist functioning in different ways. John Marriage is trialling Cisco Webex to see if this package would be useful to us (See last item below). But Central office is still working hard to the best of their ability sending out advice and guidance for us to forward to members. Your local committee are still active considering ways to help and support – increasingly difficult with the lock down affecting many of our older members.

We have to be very grateful that the younger community are stepping forward and volunteering in so many ways. On a positive note - work continues on our new website which will be launched in a wee while!

See below for a little **local group news** and links to the **U3A head office newsletter** full of advice, information and updates on the current situation and much, much more. Then to follow is an ever growing list of **projects and ideas** to occupy and interest you – e.g the **Living History in Unprecedented Times project**- some of you may like to be involved.

Open the attachment - **April "Cheers"**. This is something completely different a bit of entertaining TRIVIA. It is intended to bring some cheer to your lives- to raise a smile, perhaps even a chuckle. It is presented in PDF format so that it can contain colour! (Not available in a normal Beacon email message).

Many of these clips and quotes are circulating on the media and there are plenty more. Apologies if you have seen them already. The content this time is quite small, but I am hoping this will stimulate the membership to send me their contributions of light hearted stories, humorous comments, encouraging poems, quotes from the grandchildren etc - anything to lift spirits.

All contributions please to Sue Wilson

Click the attachment: **APRIL “CHEERS”**

GROUP NEWS AND LINKS TO OTHER INTERESTS

Archaeology: This is a new group which will be forming soon. So far I have 8 names. If you would like to be added to the list, please contact me, Penny Rose, at groups1ru3a.org or phone on 01297 561076

Creative Writing: There is a vacancy in this group which is continuing to function at this time via emails. We will be continuing with "virtual" meetings in the meantime - i.e. sending our stories and comments round the group by email. If another member would like to join us with this please contact the new leader, John McCallum 01297 561696

The only groups now functioning are a few who are or will be trying out virtual contact eg: Creative Writing and some of the French groups.

SUCCESS!! the trial of Cisco Webex by John Marriage has been successful, and the April **Sci Tech** meeting is going to take place as usual - **17th April**. Steve Coles is going to speak about '**Infections of the Respiratory Tract**'. This was a topic which had been booked for March and had to be cancelled. See last item in this Newsflash for full detail of how to connect up.

U3A CENTRAL OFFICE

The Trust is using the **National Newsletter** to keep members informed on the latest government advice concerning coronavirus Covid-19. The Newsletter is full of information, stories and advice from across the U3A movement on how to keep safe and occupied during this difficult time. Copy and paste this link here to sign up for the U3A Newsletter <https://u3a.org.uk/newsletter>

LIVING HISTORY IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES – an opportunity to be involved

U3A members are being asked to help craft a shared learning project where they create living history of this extraordinary time.

The project will look for personal thoughts, ideas and reflections on how this feels to you and what you are doing to deal with it. Members may want to keep an electronic diary or to find a little note-book which you can have close at hand to scribble down thoughts as they come.

We are asking people to write up anything they think relevant to having to be at home and your thoughts and reactions. You may wish to write something each day for example, or once a week or simply when something of note happens. You may read an article, book or see a programme which triggers some ideas or thoughts.

We are also looking for ideas and reflections on how you are keeping your interests going if you are online and if you have access on your television, radio or via the internet.

It's also pretty important to think of good things that happen so in the journal make an effort every day to list five things that gave you pleasure however small.

We will be expanding our support of this project in the coming days including suggested questions that you could ask yourself to help structure your thoughts.

We are currently recruiting volunteers to be contact points to offer support and advice.

If you want take part - please keep in touch with us. At the moment share your ideas at communications@u3a.org.uk but in the next few days we will have a dedicated email address for this living history project. So keep checking the website and national newsletter.

We look forward to hearing from you –see U3A website. <https://u3a.org.uk/learning/diary-project-2020>

OTHER THOUGHTS and interests

Telephone conferencing - Why not consider using free conference call software – such as WhyPay which facilitates three or more people speaking on the phone together at once? Find out more at <https://whypay.net/> This will be particularly important for people who don't have internet access or aren't confident using it. This was a suggestion, but the flaw is in the fact that information is found on the internet!

Rainfall Rescue project

University of Reading are inviting people to help digitise rainfall statistics - as Citizen Scientists. Details can be found on zooniverse.org Or go to universityofreading/rainfallrescue

Kew gardens - transcribing herbarium specimen labels in Digivol

You don't have to be a volunteer at Kew to do this. Find details on volunteer.ala.org.au Four digital collections team are busy loading many of our plant specimen images into virtual expeditions where you can turn the written label on the specimen sheet into a digital and searchable format. By looking at one of our digital specimen images and copying the information on the label into our online form, you will be helping to make our specimens available online.

Dorset Digital champions are ready to help

From Monday 30 March a [new helpline will be available for people who need help with home IT](#). It offers support for things like eConsult for online GP appointments, Skype to keep in contact with the family, or help in accessing online resources to help your children learn. Our digital champions – a group of volunteers mostly made up of retired IT professionals – are ready to help.

Anyone can call the Dorset Digital Hotline with an IT question on 01305 221048. A team member will take outline details of the help you need and then direct your call to the best advisor available

And more to keep you interested whilst self- isolating:

Futurelearn.org

Free on-line courses from top universities - these run for four weeks free of charge. A wide range of subjects from languages to specific courses on Shakespeare's world and creative writing. Particularly recommended is a course on the British Empire using original archive material.

Zooniverse.org

Get involved in research projects ranging from mapping historic skies to identifying botanical specimens. Training is given and projects include the Arts, biology, climate, history, language, literature and nature. A recent project used volunteers to check astronomical photographs for anomalies and identified a previously unknown feature.

Many museums and art galleries are also providing virtual tours.

National Theatre performances FREE!

Every Thursday on YouTube there's an NT performance.

<https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/at-home>

Similarly see **MET opera** website for free opera streams <https://www.metopera.org/>

BIRD WATCHING

Chris Packham launches online birdwatching community - **Self-Isolating Bird Club**

Find links through Google – it's on either Twitter or Facebook

Google Earth offers virtual tours of incredible sights around the world – explore their website to while away the hours. Time consuming and difficult to find the correct links!

And for the not so serious try: im-a-puzzle.com

Create a jigsaw and then make it!

And if all else fails: <https://www.travelzoo.com/uk/blog/the-best-things-to-do-when-you-cant-leave-home/>

Most of them are FREE

TIME FOR COMMON SENSE – relating to scammers and pranksters.

At this extraordinary time more and more people are relying on digital devices to connect them with the outside world. We are lucky to have this option!

However, just a **note of caution to a apply common sense.**

There are some scammers and pranksters out their in the digital world who are taking full advantage of people's current vulnerability.

But there is no need to panic - just a need to be calm and sensible.

If you get a text message, telephone call or e-mail from someone you either don't know or pretending they are one of your contacts (i.e. your bank or a friend) treat the communication with caution especially if they ask you any of the following:

- click on a link
- forward the message to friends
- give personal details
- transfer money into an unknown account

The best action you can do if you are worried is :

- to ring/e-mail/text the contact (i.e. friend or bank for example) but always on a contact you have got NOT one they mention in the communication and confirm with them that the communication is genuinely from them
- simply delete the message sent to you
- if it is a call on your mobile go into call history and block the caller and then delete

So, in these turbulent times my message to you is: make the most of the technology that is available to you to communicate with family, friends and service providers from the comfort of your home but above all

**APPLY COMMON SENSE AND STAY HEALTHY
AND FOLLOW GOVERNMENT ADVICE.**

KLAUS WAGNER

computer group leader

This is the last item this month and relates totally to the:

Online version of the SciTec meeting – forwarded by John Marriage

We can't have our usual meetings for now, and I'm sure you are, like me, pining for some mental stimulation. So at about our usual time we shall be having a live meeting over the Internet next month. That's Friday April 17th, probably at 10:15am. Clearly it is experimental, if it works well we can repeat it in future months as long as we are cooped up.

I'm delighted to say that Steve Coles has agreed to give his talk on Infections of the Respiratory Tract on this occasion. We always look forward to Steve's talks, and there could hardly be a more topical subject.

This message is coming out earlier than usual so we can prepare. For the audience all you need is a computer or tablet and an internet browser, and if you want to comment and participate a bit more, your kit should have a microphone and forward-facing camera - which most do these days. If you don't have any of those extras, so long as you have a computer, a tablet, or even a phone connected to the Internet, you can still sit in and watch.

You would all participate from the safety of your own homes.

We plan to use software called Cisco Webex, which if you are interested you can check out here: <https://www.webex.com/video-conferencing>

The Webex promotional material all looks rather flash, it is aimed at companies mainly - but the free version will take up to 100 people in a conference and we have a "room" reserved for us.

You don't need to download any software or pay any money, not even our usual 50p, but you do need to register for the meeting.

So if you think you might like to try it, e-mail please to webmaster@lru3a.org, just a few words so I can add your e-mail address to the list when the invitations go out.

This is not a commitment to attend, but it will reserve you a place if you are able to come, on the day. Also, if it isn't working for you once it starts, you can drop out without upsetting anyone. A few days before the meeting those who have registered will get an e-mail from Webex with a "Join the Meeting" button. Shortly before starting time (up to 15 minutes before) you go to the e-mail and click this button. A window should pop up where you can check the video you are sending (if you have a camera) and check your audio settings, then confirm and you will be with us.

I hope plenty of you will be willing to give this a try. It seems to be right that the SciTec Group should try to use some SciTec to keep our lovely U3A going!

Any U3A member is welcome, they need to pre-register by e-mailing me (webmaster@lru3a.org) which will ensure they get an e-mail before the event which will contain a button to click to join the meeting. We have capacity for 100 people, 32 are registered so far, so we have room for plenty more.