



GILWERN U3A NEWSLETTER

“UNSOCIAL TIMES”

Issue 3 on 1 May 2020



Dear Members

This newsletter was started to keep us all in touch, hopefully to be of interest and to inform. Your feedback suggests we are achieving those aims. To continue to keep it interesting and varied we still need your articles and pictures. Also please participate in our Art Competition and Photographic Challenge.

We have tried to keep the newsletter fairly upbeat at this difficult time but that doesn't mean we are not aware that each of our members, and their families, may have been touched in some way perhaps by the coronavirus or other illness or events. We send you all our best wishes and hope it won't be long until you are able to receive an actual rather than virtual hug.

Take care and keep safe.

Hilary
Chair, Gilwern U3A

Keep a record

Gwent Archives are asking us all to keep a record in these extraordinary times. Details appear on our web site on the News page and also the Family Archive page.

Puzzle for Issue no 3

- Dave H

Everyone has a story to tell ... - Linda S

Whether or not you are interested in family history, it is worth considering writing up your life story so that you can pass it down to future generations.

Many people tell me that their lives have been “ordinary” and who would be interested in reading about it anyway? Believe me there will be people who are interested. It is the everyday things that people find interesting – what was it like in school, were you a well behaved teenager? How did you meet your partner? What was family life like? Did you go to the dances or the cinema? Did you follow one career path or many? If you are a woman were you held back in your career by your gender? I can go on but I am sure you get the idea! It might seem daunting but you don't have to write it in one go. Use a pen and paper if you are not happy with technology. Write from the heart. Adding photos will also help bring your story to life. Finally, when you have finished you can get it typed up or even printed. I hope I have given you food for thought

Social Media Successes - Kay B

Over the past weeks we have seen the internet swamped with contributions from all over the world, and many of them are so clever. Obviously the lockdown in the UK has had a substantial impact on the hours people are now spending at their laptops and computers, but are they *all* really ‘working from home’?

For those of you with internet access, here is one examples on YouTube of how watching other people's efforts can bring a smile to faces. It is really a Public Information film on COVID-19 cleverly disguised as ‘Julie Andrews’ with the Von Trapp Family from ‘The Sound of Music’.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=MMBh-eo3tvE>

How are you spending Lockdown?

Please write for the *Unsocial Times*, keeping the contributions below 200 words. Please don't be slow in coming forward. It's only for our fellow members. Why not send a good photograph – relevant if possible. Send to webmaster@gilwernu3a.org.uk

Gilwern U3A Photographic Challenge. See last page. Why not have a go?

John, Paul, George and Ringo needed to maintain social distancing by keeping exactly 2 metres apart from every other member of the group. What shape would you draw so they could achieve this? Seek the answer in Issue No 4.

Linda S asks

Really you were a well behaved teenager? Let's hear about some on the darker side. Come on, what did you get up to?! Send to:

webmaster@gilwernu3a.org.uk

How did you meet your partner - David H
Linda S asks questions of our Members (Page1). Here's an answer to one.

I was a young Royal Engineers captain doing an instructor tour at Sandhurst, and our Officers' Mess held a grand *Ladies' Dinner Night* at the beginning of the term. Dressed in my red mess kit, complete with spurs and miniatures I turned up for drinks before dinner and was delighted to be introduced to the charming daughter of the Head of Modern Subjects. I took an instant liking to her, and when we all went into dinner, I was over the moon to find myself seated three away from her. For most of the dinner I disgracefully ignored those on either side of me, being all ears trying to hear what she was saying to those around her. After dinner I made straight for her and we danced and danced. Her parents left, leaving me to take her home at about midnight. Seven days later she left to work in New York. That was how I met Harriet. What a different world it was nearly 60 years ago!!

How did you meet your partner?

See your friends - Kay B

Social Media is either loved or loathed but in these strange and frightening times, the opportunity to see your loved ones and friends while talking to them is a big bonus. Zoom is new to me but unlike Skype and Facetime, it allows multiple contacts to talk to and see each other, in other words, it's a type of video conferencing.

Four friends and I regularly meet up to play bridge, and because two of them are widows and one sadly has her husband in a nursing home, these fortnightly get-togethers are very welcome.

However, with the current 'lockdown' rules in place, our very pleasant evenings have temporarily come to an end. But this is where Zoom comes in. By uploading the free app (apologies to those of you reading this who are not conversant with the jargon), you can then be invited to join a meeting. Look, I'm not the best of IT experts, but even I managed to do it. Once connected, you can see and hear others in the meeting. The person speaking features on the screen and the others appear as small windows down the side. When another person takes over, they become the main window. It can get a bit baffling if one or more start talking at once.

The 2020 AGM

Lynda, our Secretary has written about the AGM which was planned for this month.

' We were just on the point of sending out the notification of the AGM and nomination forms for Committee Members when the lock down happened. Under Charity Commission rules we need to hold an AGM within 15 months of the last. So – that does give us until July when hopefully we'll be meeting again! If not we will have to ask for guidance from the Third Age Trust.

As well as the usual agenda items we welcome any motions to be discussed. AND of course, we welcome any nominees or volunteers to be Committee Members. Please have a think about how you might be able to help.

One item the Committee was proposing for the AGM was a one off amendment to the Constitution to stagger the replacement of Officers. We initially deliberately chose a Constitution which prohibited the Chair, Vice Chair or Secretary holding office for more than 3 years. However, since we are 3 years old this year that would mean 3 officers changing at the same time! Not a good idea. The proposal would be that the Chair resigns but Vice Chair and Secretary continue, one for 1 year and the other for 2 years. Karen Harris, our Vice Chair has agreed to stand as Chair but all of the Committee welcome competition so please consider asking someone to nominate you either as an officer or committee member.'

Lynda

Secretary, Gilwern U3A

Oh for our weekly market! - Pat H

Supermarket daybreak pensioners time is working well for us now although we really miss the market for the fruit and veg not being kept too cold and under ripe. The cheese, which we used to get from the market, isn't on the supermarket shelves and we know that the Brie is never as runny. We've been used to granary bread that is really nutty, unlike the supermarket version. The butchers in Abergavenny had very little stock, as they had been swamped with orders, but we managed to get what we wanted. I wonder if after the disruption of the Town Hall alterations, this blow will drive the stall holders away for good. We hope not.

We rediscovered our old fondue set when spring cleaning and fried cubes of steak at the table with cheese sauce and chips. Unlike in the old days, we did supplement this with peas and spring greens to ensure our five-a-day! Old recipes are being revisited now that we've got more time to spend on cooking.

So how did it help our bridge group? Well, we can't play bridge – too complicated – but we can exchange news so each Monday evening at 6.30pm we meet in the “Zoom Bar” with a G&T in hand, and say ‘Cheers’ to each other. But be warned – the free meeting cuts off after 40minutes, so make every minute count!

An hour's exercise a day - Pat H

No longer having our rehab exercise classes, table tennis, U3A and other sociable walks, we've been walking along the canal and around the village. We've discovered lanes we didn't know existed and houses, which had probably been built years ago.

The fine dry weather has been a godsend after the wet January and February and the flowers have been spectacular. The primroses and daffodils are almost over, but what a year for celandines. The verges have been awash with bright yellow blooms to cheer us all up. We've seen daisies, stitchwort, wild strawberry flowers, forget-me-knots, muscari, violets and what we think is a spearwort along the canal.

Intensive Care – an experience - Harriet H

The current emphasis on intensive care has brought back vivid memories. On a Tuesday in May 2017 I grazed my arm quite badly. Within 24 hours it looked peculiar and an A&E triage nurse was dubious. I started throwing up and remember nothing more for some weeks. I know from nursing records and my lovely family, that by Thursday morning I had been diagnosed as infected with Necrotising Faciitis and was on full life support designated as being ‘very poorly’. From press reports, everyone will be aware of the instrumentation, lines, tubes and monitoring systems, and my family watched anxiously as antibiotics, oxygen, blood products and Noradrenaline were pumped in while other fluids were drained out. My awareness of intensive care came later when, out of danger, I was moved to the open ward so that nurses who had figured in lurid fantasies became real. They kindly heave me back up the bed every time I slipped down, re-fixed my oxygen feed when it disconnected - tiresomely beeping, and left me feeling refreshed after a thorough, loving wash. I watched their 8 o'clock breakfast increasingly jealous of the cereal and toast that my dyspeptic stomach was unable to manage. Aged 74 I was not expected to survive but the Unit and my family pulled me through.

Dingbats - Nicky C

Answers to last issue:Literary Dingbats (the first set in the previous issue)

- Lolita
- Midnight's Children
- 50 Shades of Grey
- A Tale of Two Cities
- War and Peace
- Little Miss Naughty
- Frankenstein
- Watership Down
- The Colour Purple
- Fahrenheit 451

Photo by Kay B



Take a tour of the Courthauld - Phillie H
With Bill Nighy: <https://youtu.be/MFrNueRZqU>

Dingbat for *Unsocial Times* issue 3 - Nicky C
Common Phrase Dingbat. In North America, Australia and New Zealand it is a stupid or eccentric person. People ask if it is a real animal, or is it a quiz?

ART CHALLENGE – APRIL SHOWERS

Have you entered yet? Details on News page of our web site. Why not have a go?

Birds in different disguises - Kay B

1. Fuel for car
2. Lifting device for heavy loads
3. Covered frame to fly in the wind
4. Pointed stick for fastening meat
5. Out of breath

The joys and frustrations of IT - Pat & Keith H
 I'd been invited to take part in a webinar about the Scout Leader Appointment system. This was partly successful in that I could hear what was being said, but didn't realise that I could press keys to participate further until it was too late. On another occasion I was asked to join a small video conference using the laptop, which I've had for 2 years. AVG blocked that and all I got was a picture of Dave's nose! One thing we didn't bother with was trying to get deliveries from supermarkets and I'm glad that we didn't. Friends have had to wait for a week or more to get a slot and then had weird substitutions instead of what they ordered. However we'll be skyping or whatsapping the grandchildren soon, which will be a treat. Strangely, I'll be watching a livestream of an old university friend's funeral from Bristol as none of us will be allowed to attend in person.

U3A Mice for today - Mike J



Once there was
ANONAMOUSE who in
 the presence of;



MAGNANIMOUSE is quite pusillanimouse

Pictures of Gilwern old and new - Tony G

An industrial biochemist by trade, Tony has been a realist painter all his life. He has a deep interest in recording things that are likely to vanish, and painted seven sets of Gilwern pictures from photographs old and new that he has collected or taken. From these he produced paintings, using some licence to make a colour version of the black and whites.

Tony has provided seven sets of Gilwern old and new, and it is intended to show a pair in this and each of the next six issues of *Unsocial Times*.

Common phrases

10¢ 12	
GALE BREEZE HURRICANE	THROUGH THROUGH
ci ii	
DETTAILS DETHAILS DETEAILS DETDAILS DETEAILS DETVAALS DETIAILS DETLAILS	
	TORNADO 100%
	10

Answers on last page.

8 May 1945 VE DAY - urgent!

In view of the inevitable muting of VE Day commemorations on this 65th Anniversary of VE Day, do you have an experience you remember and which we can all share through the next edition of *Unsocial Times*? Please submit as soon as possible to: webmaster@gilwernu3a.org.uk



Four Stage Strategy - Phillie H

<https://youtu.be/nSXletP5iak>

Gilwern past & present - Tony G
Gilwern Main Road

Circa 1910 Dirt road, horsedrawn vehicles, milk in churns. On the right the small building with the hanging sign also has the only telegraph pole. This was the Post and Telegraph Office and was to convey much sad news in the years to come. The Beaufort Arms is there. The Dell Store was a smithy.



PHOTOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE – TREES

The theme is Trees. This can be of a group of trees, parts of a tree, a single tree, trees in flower, trees in bud, leaves etc.

The deadline for electronic submission to gilu3a@gmail.com is 31 May. Details of the competition are found through the News page on the web site, or by requesting a copy by email from webmaster@gilwernu3a.org.uk.

ART CHALLENGE – APRIL SHOWERS

Have you entered yet? Details on News page of our web site. Why not have a go?

Lynda S asks:

How did you meet your partner? Let's hear about it. Send your memories to: webmaster@gilwernu3a.org.uk

Tulips in Holland - Phillie H

<https://youtu.be/HSEGPaRCFIA>

Gilwern U3A Photographic Challenge – See last page.

Politicians - Maurice G

A "Member of Parliament" is tragically hit by a truck and dies. 'Welcome to heaven,' says St. Peter. 'Before you settle in, we're not sure what to do with you.' 'No problem, just let me in,' says the man. 'Well, I'd like to, but I have orders from higher up. You spend one day in hell and one in heaven and then choose.

St. Peter escorts him to the elevator and he goes down to hell finding himself on a green golf course with many friends, other politicians and the devil. They greet him and reminisce about the good times they had while getting rich at the expense others. They play a friendly game of golf and then dine on lobster, caviar and champagne. All give him a hearty farewell and waves while the elevator rises....

'Now it's time to visit heaven.' St Peter tells the MP who joins a group of contented souls moving from cloud to cloud, and St. Peter returns to say: 'You've spent a day in hell and another in heaven. Now choose your eternity.'

'Well, heaven has been delightful, but I would prefer hell.' So St. Peter sends him to hell. Now the doors of the elevator open and he's in the middle of a barren land covered with waste and garbage. With all his friends, dressed in rags, picking up the trash and putting it in black bags.

'I don't understand,' stammers the MP to the devil. 'Yesterday I was here and there was a golf course and clubhouse, and we ate and drank well, and danced, having a great time. Now there's just a wasteland full of garbage and my friends look miserable. What happened?' The devil looks at him, smiles and says, 'Yesterday we were campaigning..... Today you voted.

Answers – birds Page 3

Petrel, 2. Crane, 3. Kite, 4. Skua, 5. Puffin.

'Spring the sweet Spring' (Thomas Nashe, 1600).

- Hilary L
Before Spring was called Spring it was called Lent in

Holidays and other jollies

- Pat H

Well the River Cruise in Germany, the hotel break in Pembrokeshire planned for June, the cottage, a holiday with all the family in Amroth, and the University Reunion in Summer are all cancelled. We're still hoping that we **might** get to Greece in September, but who knows.

There's no sport to watch on TV, Olympics aren't going to happen, but we've found a few old favourites back on some of the more obscure channels.

So we do what we Brits do best... Keep clam and Carry on.

Answers: Dingbat: - Nicky C

Common Phrases Dingbats answers:

A dime a dozen,
The right weather?',
Second wind,
Through thick and thin,
See eye to eye,
To beat a dead horse,
The devil's in the details,
A piece of cake,
Every cloud has a silver lining,
A perfect storm.

Old English. The origins appear to be from 'lencten' meaning lengthening, referring to the lengthening days. By the 14th century this season was called the 'springing-time' as the plants sprung from the ground, in the 15th century shortened to 'spring-time' and then further reduced in the 16th century to just 'spring'.

Lent of course became to mean something other than a season within the Christian Church.

But when is Spring? In the simplest terms it depends if you are considering the astronomical or meteorological calendar.

The astronomical calendar, and therefore its seasons, is based on the timings of the equinoxes (equal night) and solstices (sun stands still) and has ancient origins. As the timings of each vary, every year the length of the astronomical seasons are different within and between years. This is because the Earth is tilted and therefore its orbit in relation to the sun alters. For the Northern Hemisphere as we tilt more towards the sun our days begin to get longer and our nights shorter. The Spring Equinox, when the sun is exactly above the equator and day and night are of equal length for 24 hours, heralds the arrival of Spring in the Northern hemisphere.

It always falls on one of three days towards the end of March (19th, 20th or 21st March). This year it was at 3.49a.m. GMT on Friday 20th March and earlier than it has been for a century. It ends at the Summer Solstice, this year on June 20th.

In the next edition 'the meteorological calendar'.