



## Great Glen Newsletter

June 2020

Registered Charity No. 1099411

[www.greatglenu3a.co.uk](http://www.greatglenu3a.co.uk)

### Chair's Chat



Hello everyone

From my perspective the virtual AGM process worked very well. There was a big increase in the number of members taking part, with very few reporting difficulty in completing and returning the voting form. Most difficulties seemed to arise from a lack of familiarity with equipment and were readily solved. So my thanks to all those who took part and, in particular, to the Committee members and Group Leaders who helped us to trial and debug the process before 'going live'.

The results were overwhelmingly, and mostly unanimously, in favour of all the resolutions. Draft minutes of the AGM will be posted shortly on our website [www.greatglenu3a.co.uk](http://www.greatglenu3a.co.uk)

The AGM brought to an end the distinguished service as a Trustee of Stella Orbell. I am most grateful to Toni Smith for stepping in to present Stella with a token of our appreciation and for writing a tribute to her (see later in this edition). We shall all miss her as a wise, efficient and compassionate colleague, though of course Stella remains an active Group Leader and member. We welcome Elaine Batchelor as Business Secretary in succession to Stella.

We continue to receive advice from the Third Age Trust about coping with Covid-19 and, as many of you can read in *Third Age Matters*, lots of U3As are doing all sorts of imaginative things to keep their members interested and involved. Some Groups are managing to sustain their activities and interests using *Zoom* to set up virtual meetings; others are focusing more on just keeping in touch to keep alive the social dimension which is such an important reason for belonging. Of course, Great Glen U3A is playing an active part in all this, but we could no doubt do more. There are some new ideas in this newsletter, and I should be pleased to hear more from members. While there seems little prospect in the short term of many of our groups being able to restart traditional meetings, the latest news indicates that social distancing rules are being cautiously relaxed and the virus appears to be in retreat. It may not be too long before our actions are determined more by personal choice and personal assessment of risk, and less by government diktat.

In the meantime, your Committee is doing what it can to support and encourage the active involvement of as many members as possible. The most promising way forward appears to be to extend the use of *Zoom*. As many members already know, this an app that can be downloaded (for free in its basic form) on to a mobile phone, computer or tablet, that allows you to hold conversations with several people at once, all of whom can be seen, and to share images and text at the same time, if desired. It is simple to use and we certainly have enough members with considerable expertise to help anyone get started. **Please contact me if you are interested.**

One of the things I have most missed during the last few months has been our monthly meetings. We are going to explore whether it might be feasible to set up virtual monthly (or maybe every other month) speaker meetings. It is worth doing this only if there is significant potential interest from members in joining in, so I should be very interested to hear from everyone who is:

**(a) interested in principle and Zoom-proficient**

For email, replace /at/ with @

or

***(b) interested in principle and looking for a helping hand with Zoom.***

**Please contact me – if we hear nothing, we will have to assume there is no support for this.**

However, I hope the true U3A spirit comes into action and that we can make it happen together.

Robert Mansfield

[chairman/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk](mailto:chairman/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk)

270 8284

## Committee News



### STELLA ORBELL

During the time Stella has been on the Great Glen U3A committee, she has done a tremendous job. She has been a committee member for ten years, three of which she was chairman. More recently she has been the secretary, giving very special support to several chairmen both before and those that followed her. Her knowledge and tenacity has been invaluable in the smooth running of the Society.

It was Stella who successfully applied for money from the Lottery Fund for the purchase of lap-top computers and projectors, thus giving us the ability to teach computer skills to many of our members. This equipment is still invaluable in giving our presentations at the groups and monthly meetings.

**Stella receiving a gift of flowers on her retirement as Business Secretary for the Committee.**

Stella has set up several groups, including the Papercraft Group, and more recently the Writing for Pleasure Group which still continues.

Her skills in organisation have been rewarded by several very successful events like open days and jubilee celebrations as well as the hard work she put in to the stand we had at the Glen Wheelbarrow race fete a couple of years ago.

She will be fondly remembered by all for her performances at the Christmas meetings with her monologues and acting skills, mostly written by herself.

This lady is a true example of what U3A is all about. Yes she is stepping down from the committee but will always be at hand for advice and support when needed.

**From all the members, past and present, Stella**



## VE DAY CELEBRATIONS – AND ANOTHER THANK YOU



U3A residents of Great Glen were given the opportunity to have a VE Day Afternoon Tea so they could celebrate VE Day even though in lockdown. Our thanks go to Mrs Rani Mahal, one of our District Councillors and a long-time resident of Great Glen, who provided and arranged delivery of the afternoon tea.

It was a lovely tea and I am sure enjoyed by all. It also gave us time to think about those who gave so much during the War, both away and at home, to ensure are able to live the lives we do.

### VE Day afternoon tea

### Emails Sent Through Beacon

Most members receive emails sent via the Beacon system without any issue arising. A small number of members have reported Beacon emails being found in Junk or Spam folders. If this happens to you then simply drag the email back into your inbox. You might be asked to confirm that this is not spam but from then on your email system should no longer treat them as Junk or spam.

Peter Russell

Beacon Administrator

01572 822198

### Monthly Meetings

Sadly we have nothing coming soon for our monthly meetings due to the coronavirus situation.



However we are hoping to be back in virtual action using Zoom if there is sufficient response from members – please see the request in the Chair’s Chat and let us know your views



Otherwise we will be back in action as soon we are permitted to return to some semblance of life as we knew it. We hope to see you all then, and until then look after yourselves and keep safe.

### GROUP NEWS

We have heard that some U3A members have arranged events together – not necessarily in our traditional groups. If you have arranged social events, wine tastings, cookery sessions, demonstrations of activities such as beading or flower arranging, or anything else please do let us know. Things that you are doing may inspire other members – and as an organisation we are all about learning be it from books or from each other.

For email, replace /at/ with @

Here are some ideas that other U3A's have put into practice and which may inspire you to get together, virtually of course, to try something new such as photography – any subject you like but how about birds in your garden or your garden at night as it is surprising what goes on when we are asleep; a diary project where members write about a particular day in their lockdown period and share this with other members; or star gazing.

Do you have your own ideas of how to keep in touch? Could these ideas be used for short 3 to 4 week courses? We would like to know and look forward to hearing from you.

Lynda Williams

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0116 259106

### Using Zoom for Group Meetings

Just a reminder that the Zoom app is available for all PCs, tablets and smartphones and it lets you hold virtual meetings with other members who you can see and hear.

National U3A has produced user guides for installing Zoom. These are available on the front page of our (Great Glen) web site [www.greatglenu3a.co.uk](http://www.greatglenu3a.co.uk). But if you would like help in setting it up on your device then Sue and I are happy to help on a one-to-one basis over the phone.

Peter Russell

Sue Russell

[lsn/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk](mailto:lsn/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk)

01572 822198

### Groups Learning and having fun!

#### French for Beginners – Lets Learn Together

Our group is continuing to meet every two weeks using Zoom. This will keep our group together until such time as we can meet again in person which we would, of course, much rather do.

Jan Johnson

[frenchbeginners/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk](mailto:frenchbeginners/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk)

212 2469

#### History

Meetings are being held on the first Monday each month, using Zoom. The July 5th meeting will continue our look at events and life around the time of the coronation of Edward VII.

Everyone is welcome, but if you are new to the group, please let me know you want join in so that I can include you in the Zoom invitation.

Peter Russell

[history/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk](mailto:history/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk)

01572 822198

#### Family History

We are continuing with our fortnightly Zoom meetings at 2.30pm on Wednesday afternoons. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 25 June followed by fortnightly meetings until we are back to normal and can meet in person.

Eric Orbell

[familyhistory/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk](mailto:familyhistory/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk)

259 2095

#### Writing for Pleasure

Our membership has increased in the last month, and we should like to see more members join. Our current project is to produce a book of Memories from the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s in order to preserve some of the distinctive character of life and growing up in those days. So far we have assembled 16 contributions, each of about 1,000 words, from Group members and others. A few more are in progress, and **we should welcome more contributors**. Everyone has memories of their youth. If you would like to join in, whether or not as a formal member of our Group, just let me know. We aim to self-publish later this year, so if you would like to be published, now is your chance! We shall be considering plans for our next project at our Zoom meeting on Tuesday 23 June at 2.30 p.m. If you are interested in writing a piece or attending the meeting, just let me know.

Robert Mansfield

[writingforpleasure/at/greatglen.co.uk](mailto:writingforpleasure/at/greatglen.co.uk)

270 8284

For email, replace /at/ with @

### Groups that Exercise and have fun!

#### New Age Kurling

We are holding short Zoom meetings for group members on our scheduled days, second and fourth Fridays each month with chat and any mindless games we can manage on Zoom.

*Peter Russell*

[kurling/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk](mailto:kurling/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk)

01572 822198

### Groups that challenge our brains and still have fun!

#### Quiz Group

The Quiz group is continuing to hold its meetings on the fourth Monday each month using a Zoom meeting. The next meeting will be on Monday 22 June, so please keep an eye on your email inbox for the starting time and access information.

All members are welcome to join in via Zoom and if you need any assistance getting going with Zoom then please let me know.

*Rachael Snashall*

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259 2830

#### Table Top Games

Both our weekly challenges and our telephone tree continue with our members enjoying both.

*Helen Edwards*

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212 7547

#### Book Group (Mondays)

Our reviews by email arrangement seem to be working well. This month's book is The Children Act by Ian McEwan. The book for July is Take Nothing with You by Patrick Gale.

*Liz Adams*

[books/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk](mailto:books/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk)

271 6281

#### Book Group (Thursdays)

We are all continuing to read each month's chosen book, writing a review, sending it to me so that I collate and send a composite to all members. Our June book is 'The Keeper of Lost Things' by Ruth Hogan. In July we shall be reading 'A Gentleman in Moscow' by Amor Towles.

I am delighted that we have recruited a new member during lockdown. More would be most welcome.

*Patricia Mansfield*

[books2/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk](mailto:books2/at/greatglenu3a.co.uk)

270 8284

### FOR SOMETHING TO DO AND PASS THE TIME...

Why not look at some of the virtual tours available –

e.g. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lists/virtual-tours-of-our-places](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lists/virtual-tours-of-our-places)

where there are several tours of properties and gardens owned by the National Trust

or [www.explore.org/livecams](http://www.explore.org/livecams)

where there are 90+ live webcam feeds on animals and birds – from elephants, tigers, dogs, cats, to owls and spoonbills, and even bees

or [www.edinburghzoo.org.uk](http://www.edinburghzoo.org.uk)

to see how the animals and keepers are coping during lockdown

Or why not try the u3aYouTube channel for mindfulness sessions, or exercise with Mr Motivator

- go to [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) and click on the YouTube icon in the top right hand corner to see what is available

## And finally....

Thank you to Kate Boulter for this – it made me smile,  
I hope you will too!

### Are you going crazy in lockdown?

You need to be careful; people are going crazy about being in lockdown.

I've actually just been talking about this with the **microwave and toaster** while drinking coffee and all of us agreed things are getting worse.

I didn't mention anything to the **washing machine** as she puts a different spin on things and certainly not to the **fridge** as he is acting cold and distant. I did discuss it with the **hoover** and he said the whole thing sucks.

Meanwhile, the **blender** has mixed feelings and the **taps** kept running hot and cold about the idea. The **whisk** refused to talk about it because she didn't want to whip things into a frenzy and the **eggs** kept quiet because they didn't want to get a beating.

I didn't check with the **oven** because she's far too hot headed. The **bin** just spouted a whole load of rubbish about the situation and the **freezer** just gave me a frosty reception.

In the end, the **iron** calmed me down: she said everything will be fine - no situation is too pressing.

The **tin** at the back of the cupboard with no label on thinks it's a total mystery. The **knife** made some very cutting remarks.

The **squash** was very cordial about it all. Unlike the **lemon** who was very bitter about it.