



Newsletter N° 68 March 2020

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 Copy should be sent to: newsletter.editor@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Welcome to our First 2021 News Letter



I do hope that by the time you read this newsletter, the end of the Lockdown will be in sight and attention can be turned to restoring physical U3A activities. It will be such a relief to return to face-to-face instead of virtually meetings. I feel very optimistic, spring is here and, with the success of the roll-out of vaccinations, the future is looking brighter.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all the new members who have joined us despite these difficult times and I am looking forward to meeting you all, when we can resume our New Members Coffee mornings. New members are the life-blood of our U3A, a wonderful organisation, a Sharing, Caring, Learning and Laughing organisation.

It has been a struggle to meet the needs of some of our members, those who have not been able to keep in contact via technology. The Newsletter Editor, Carolina Kenealy, stepped down last year and we have not been able to replace her, but I am pleased to say she has agreed to collate and edit this Spring edition of the newsletter.

The committee has continued to meet virtually in order to maintain services during the pandemic, and to be ready for a re-launch once this crisis is over. We have said goodbye to some committee members and welcomed new ones, all of whom have shown enthusiasm and commitment. We would especially like to extend a warm welcome to Howard Mordue who is joining the committee as Vice Chairman. He is well known in Buckingham and a long serving member of the U3A. Howard has had extensive involvement with various charities and on two occasions held the office of Mayor.

We have learned a lot about keeping in touch using technology, a valued skill I am sure we will not forget. A survey by the Group Liaison Officer, Steve Heywood, showed many of our groups have continued to meet virtually or via newsletters. Our monthly Open Meetings have been successfully streamed via Zoom, thanks to the diligent work of Roland Simpkins, Speakers Secretary. I would also like to say thank you to Derek Morgan, Webmaster, who has done a sterling job keeping the website updated with timely and valuable information for members during this difficult period. He has also launched a Facebook page for Group Coordinators to support and facilitate information sharing.

As we look forward to restarting groups and events we will endeavour to support as much as we can any reconfiguring and refocusing of activities. We have a thriving and successful U3A in Buckingham of which we can all be proud with over 800 members and more than 80 groups. Our members have an unlimited diversity of expertise, and a wide and varied knowledge base. We need your help to continue to maintain this valued organisation. Anyone interested in joining the committee would be especially welcome. We need someone to help the Webmaster, the Treasurer, the planning of theatre trips and holidays, supporting the Group Liaison Officer, and taking over the Newsletter. Anyone interested please contact me at Chairman@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

I'm really looking forward to relaunching the service in line with Government guidelines. Let's keep our fingers crossed that we all can meet up soon.

Best wishes Lilia Bogle Chairman

Amblers Group

The Ambling group is by nature a slow, ambling, chatty group who could be found, on pre-covid Monday mornings, wandering the paths around Buckingham. Sometimes, when transport allowed, we'd venture further afield but wherever we wandered, there was always a major focus on chatter and a coffee stop!

We stopped ambling immediately the first Lockdown was announced and have not been able to restart. Although during July/August a few members who live within easy access of Buckingham centre, did occasionally meet up as a 'group of friends' for an 'outside coffee'. I believe this sometimes included a short stroll, weather permitting.

Apart from this informal arrangement, we have kept in touch, as a Group, via the occasional email.

We are all looking forward to the time when we can meet again and amble without restrictions.



Ann Abraham



Architecture

Fortunately we were able to conduct our first three monthly meetings together last year before Lockdown. In the following months quizzes were circulated on line to hopefully alleviate boredom. By September we were keen to resume some form of a regular programme and, thanks to the technical help of Roland Simpkins in our group, we were able to deliver monthly illustrated talks from group members via Zoom. They have been viewed successfully by many members, with a chance by others to catch up via a recorded version. So far we have enjoyed talks on Baroque and Art Nouveau architecture, the architecture of pilgrimage and even a look at unusual staircases as well as the design of Thames bridges. As soon as restrictions are relaxed, we look forward to meeting together once more to plan a programme and resume some of the trips to places of architectural interest which have always been an intrinsic part of our activities.

Peter Bowtell

Art Appreciation

We've managed to keep in touch with one another by regular emails and thanks to a collaboration with the Buckingham Art Society, Group Members have also been able to enjoy monthly art lectures via Zoom.

A big thank you is also due to Janti Mistry, who has thoughtfully downloaded various other art-related articles and news for us.

I know that what we have all missed is the social side of the U3A but, hopefully, this will resume very shortly and we will once again be able to meet up and enjoy each other's company.

Pam Tonge



Spanish for Beginners

When Lockdown was announced at the end of March last year the group, unfortunately, had to stop meeting. Towards the end of July, however, I sent an email to all seven members asking if anyone had access to Zoom. Keith Harvey agreed to initiate the meetings and four of the members of the group decided they wanted to restart the sessions on the same afternoon as before, Monday from 2 - 4 pm via Zoom. I have now learnt how to start a meeting via Zoom myself.

We have been meeting in this way since then and a few months ago we were joined by another couple, making our numbers six, excluding me. We have had to do a lot of revision but are beginning now to cover new ground. We use *Talk Spanish* 1 and 2 by Michel Thomas.

We usually enjoy a chat in English at the beginning of each session and so have got to know each other well. We are looking forward to a time when we can meet up again and go to a pub together for a meal.

We welcome new members.

Judy Austin



New to Drawing

When the New to Drawing Group was set up the intended co-ordinator was an ex art teacher. Unfortunately after only one session she was unable to continue and to keep the basic idea of a learning to draw group going, I took over. So if there is an art teacher, or artist out there among new or old members who would consider running the New to Drawing group it would be much appreciated. I would still like to be a member of the group but would be very happy to leave the running of it to someone else.

Carolina Kenealy

Book Group 2

We have been meeting virtually using Skype for several months, due to Lockdowns, and attendance is usually around 6 members. The meeting is held on what would normally be the meeting date. We have a list of books for each month, which is sent out to the group members. We submit reviews in advance of the meeting date, so that we can discuss them in person, and the summary of our discussion is sent round afterwards.

Some of the more notable titles chosen last year were "Longitude" by Dava Sobel, which is a non-fiction historical book about the discovery of Longitude and the invention of navigational aids from the late 1700s onwards. This was enjoyed by most of our group members. We also enjoyed "Sleeping Arrangements" by Laura Shaine Cunningham, a true story of a little girl being brought up by her uncles. More recently "The Long Petal of the Sea" by Isabel Allende and "Sea of Poppies" by Amitav Ghosh both of which received favourable reviews, but most people didn't like "My Husbands Wife" by Jane Corry.

We have a list of selected books on our page on the Buckingham U3A website, and are hoping very much that by the time we get to the end of them, as restrictions are relaxed in the summer, we will be able to meet in person. Even if the "rule of 6" is in place we could potentially meet up in Julia's garden as the weather improves. We will keep our web page updated, and email the group as and when anything new happens.

Dorothy Morgan email and Technology support for Julia Morton



Jazz Appreciation

Some members of the Jazz Appreciation group took part in a "Desert Island Disc" selection, by email. I received and circulated the selections together with links to Youtube so that members could share the experience. For our usual host & hostess, who don't use email, I created CDs. The music chosen ranged from Acker Bilk, Dave Brubeck and Miles Davis (of course) to Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon. Singers included Ella Fitzgerald, Billy Holiday and Norah Jones. Books, apart from the Bible and Shakespeare, included Duke Ellington's Biography, a book by the novelist and screen play writer James Clavell and the Forsyte Saga.

Luxuries were wide ranging and varied including Digestive Biscuits and tea, a camera, moisturising cream and an unlimited supply of red wine.

Derek Morgan



Bridge Improvers

We have about half of our Monday group playing on-line bridge on a website called BBO (Bridge Base Online). We can chat to each other and play at different tables each week.

Nick Steadman

Family History

Although we haven't been able to meet as a group, members have continued researching and building their family trees on line.

We have had three Zoom meetings open to the group. The first was in October when we had an outside speaker talking about his wife's family. It was so interesting we had him back in January. In February Jenni Burke, a member of the group, gave a talk on how she used DNA to research Scottish ancestors. She has, over the past year, researched how to use DNA to the best advantage.

We have two Zoom meetings planned for March and one for April. We hope to continue to hold a meeting once a month until we are able to meet again in the library.

We have had one new member join us and would be delighted if anyone else would like to join. If family history is something you have considered now is the perfect time to start, while we all have so much time on our hands. So if you would like some help on how and where to start, do get in touch we would love to hear from you.

Tina Brown



Singing for Fun

Unfortunately we haven't been able to meet for a whole year. We usually meet in a small room in the bell tower of the parish church and because several of our members are vulnerable, getting together for a sing-along has been impossible.

However, with nearly all of us now having had our first dose of vaccine, things could be looking up. Maybe April or May could be a good time for us to meet again or late Spring early Summer, who knows. Better start practising.

Arthur Newman



Deutsche Diskussionsgruppe (German Discussion Group)

The ten members of the German Discussion Group have continued to meet once a fortnight throughout the three lockdowns by Zoom, kindly hosted by Margaret Gateley. All sessions are conducted solely in German. One of our members is of German origin, another of Swiss, so any linguistic queries we have can be easily resolved.

Each meeting consists of i) a short, straightforward quiz which enables us to test and extend our knowledge of Germany as well as our general knowledge, ii) an Easy German video from YouTube which includes interviews with Germans not only in cities such as Berlin, Hamburg or Munich, but also with Germans living abroad, in New York or Washington or London, iii) a topic chosen by members of the group in turn, such as "What is your ambition?" or "What are you looking forward to after Lockdown?"

Some of us also like to share our experiences of the preceding fortnight, somewhat restricted though they might have been.

Roy Walker

Recorders

Recorders are still playing.....

There is still enthusiasm for making music in the Recorder Group. We have monthly Zoom meetings playing along to recorded music and, because we mute ourselves, it doesn't matter how many mistakes we make.

We are looking forward to the loosening of Lockdown restrictions and when the weather and the rules allow expect to get together in small garden groups again. Looking further into the future the group will certainly find a way of coming together again.

If you have been using your Lockdown time usefully by learning the recorder we would love to hear from you and if you are still thinking of giving it a go do get in touch.

Helen Preston



Line Dancing

I have taken over as Line Dance co-ordinator from Gina Crouch – who literally – taught me everything I know. I hadn't done any line dancing before I joined the U3A. She had built up the first beginners' group to a Monday Improvers group, a Wednesday Beginners group and a Thursday Absolute Beginners Group. It is fun to learn a type of dance that doesn't require you to step on any one's toes as they try to teach you and I really enjoyed wearing my Cowboy hat for the Christmas social.

I started leading Wednesdays when Gina was on holiday and helped organise the Christmas party 2019, so when Gina wanted to retire from organising during the first Lockdown, I stepped in to keep a group of us in touch on Zoom on Wednesdays, with the help of Pip Large, who is much more experienced, and was able to lead the Improvers on Mondays.

Teaching Line Dancing on Zoom was difficult – requiring a grasp of technology to get on to the site, moving of furniture to get some space, carpets not helping feet slip and no-one behind you to look at when you turned round! Not surprising it really only worked for a small group that knew some line dancing and had already practised at home – plus when we started, the transmission of the music was really terrible! Eventually, with the help of YouTube I learnt how some professional groups were doing it and so now I have a Bluetooth microphone and can share the computer's original sound so that my voice and the music coordinate – at least some of the time.

We working towards socially distanced, Monday (Pip) and Wednesday (Me), groups when the first Lockdown eased only to have it all cancelled again. I intend to wait until the social distancing requirements have been lifted (and the vaccination program has been completed) before starting to meet again at a venue – so not before July 2021. The details of where and when will be posted on the U3A website. I hope then we can welcome back some old faces to the groups and start some new U3A members on their dancing journey.

Stay safe

Joanne Thompson

Walking Group

2020 Annual Report and Accounts Report

The highlight of 2020 was our Group lunch in Villiers, which seems a very long time ago, but was on 16th January. The group had a record number of walks this year, three in January, three in February, and two in March. The last walk in March was the day after the WHO declared Covid-19 a world pandemic.

The Group then went into hibernation. Early on, the Group Co-ordinator advised everyone to get up early and listen to the birds, to write their autobiography, or at the very least keep a journal.

Many of us grew special Lockdown hair and cowered in our bunkers, hoarding baked beans. We cancelled flights and holidays, learned all about video-conferencing, and greeted every Tesco delivery slot with joy.

We roused briefly from our daily experience of not-much-happening to enjoy Peter's varied and amusing blog, to study and try out Bill's Compendium of Local Walks, and to attempt the local history quiz.

We were allowed to go out for exercise, and many of us have been walking every day, so if the group ever starts up again our legs should remember what to do.

It was as much a Talking Group as a Walking Group, so we look back with fondness to the shared cars, the natters, and the convivial lunches - a golden age. "Bliss it was in that dawn to be alive, but to be young was very heaven." (William Wordsworth because we don't want to be sued.)

Outlook

I look forward to next year. Well, you can't look **back** to next year can you, so it's a rather silly expression. Perhaps the halcyon days will return.

Accounts

	2020	2019
Group income	nil	nil
Group expenditure	nil	nil
Retained earnings	nil	nil

These accounts have been audited by Messrs Dubb, Lentree. There was a small caveat regarding "going concern", and no dividend has been declared, obviously. To bring in the same figures as the prior year is a stunning achievement by your management team (me and the missus). Though fully entitled to massive rewards, your GC has waived all rights to expenses, to a U3A company car, and to conferences abroad, etc. The fame and adulation are sufficient recompense.



Stan Surzyn

Music Ensemble

Since the new regulations have been put in place, the Music Ensemble has been meeting, via Zoom, on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month. We only have an allowance of 40 minutes, so it has to be short and snappy. We have taken to playing games, with a musical theme, which have been surprisingly successful. So far, we have had a version of Kim's game, a quiz with audio clues, and a game where players have a grid to fill according to given letters and categories. As this is a good way of keeping up momentum and staying in touch we intend to continue until we are allowed to return to Padbury Village Hall,

Sandra Truscott



Science & Technology

The Science & Technology group have been unable to meet since last March, due to Covid and the school closures that resulted. However, a private Facebook group has been set up which 18 members have joined, but is fairly quiet. If anyone would like to join this group I can send an email invitation on request. Otherwise I update members from time to time via email.

Realistically we are unlikely to re-start proper meetings before the autumn due to restrictions on large groups meeting. We will aim to re-start in September or October. We are, of course, dependent on the RLS being open and to their continuing to let room in the Science labs. If we do have to find another venue we can provide our own laptop and projector, for the speaker's use, from the Technical Support department.

Finally, I am considering stepping down as Science and Technology GC later this year. This is mainly due to taking on more duties as branch Secretary. I would love to hear from anyone interested in taking over the group. An expression of interest is all that's required at this stage!

Dorothy Morgan

Strollers

Some years ago – about twelve or thirteen, Valerie Bradley who walked with the Walking Group suggested that we needed another group for people who were slowing up and did not want to do a day's walking. She arranged a walk down the Railway Walk and we then had coffee at the University. At that time, she announced that she did not intend to 'run' the group but to help to get it started. As I was one of the people wanting to slow down a bit, I offered to run the group and quite a few of the people on that initial walk are still with the Strollers. I don't know when the name of 'Strollers' started but probably from that meeting – it indicated that we just wanted to have a gentle walk. We walked around the town and gradually added village walks to our itinerary. We did not have 'booked' coffee venues, but at the end of each walk, we split up and had coffee with a few friends.

About five years later, I took over the position of Membership Secretary from George Walker and felt that I could not do both jobs. Sheila Dalzell who was a member of the Group was giving up being the Editor of the Newsletter and took over from me. This was brilliant for the Group as Sheila and her husband Geoff love walking and soon introduced walks covering a wider area. Our rule was always, 'the walk must be longer than the journey to get there'. Sheila also started to book our coffee venues, which, after slightly longer walks than we were doing around the town and local villages, was much appreciated.

However, all good things have to stop and Sheila has passed the baton back to me. Last summer, when it was possible, Sheila started the walks again. It was difficult with all the rules and regulations, but the group, albeit in smaller numbers, walked around the town again – not travelling as sharing of cars was not allowed. Obviously even this had to stop and so we are now in the position of the group not walking at all. We plan to start again sometime in June, once all the rules and regulations are over. Once again, we will be walking very locally and will see how things progress.

We are a very loyal group and I expect all our members will be clamouring to start again, once I can give them the green light.

Thank you Sheila and Geoff for all your hard work and we look forward to you being in the group, once we are all back together again.

Lesley Suggate



Wildlife

The last time we got together was unbelievably the 28th January 2020 when we met at the Floodplain Forest in Milton Keynes. We haven't decided when we will meet this year but hopefully it could be October and a trip to Batsford Arboretum near Moreton-in-the-Marsh.

Mike and Pat Cox won our online Christmas quiz. There were 12 questions on various wildlife topics and they scored a grand of 8½.

This picture of a group of Avocets was taken at Slimbridge nature reserve.



Tony Dines



Theatre

I expect by now you have all realised that there is no actual theatre news as all venues have been closed, some for a year. In December, a few theatres started to put on shows, but it was only a few days before they had to shut down again. There are signs now of positive thinking and theatres are looking at how they can reopen safely. There is also talk of Sunday shows. One problem is the amount of time it takes to put on a show, especially a musical. Andrew Lloyd Webber hopes to open his new show *Cinderella* in July.

Over the last year I have been sending emails, to those I had addresses for, with information on shows being streamed on line. There has been quite a variety, some of which have been free and some requiring payment.

A TV channel, **Sky Arts** on **Freeview Channel 11** has opened up. It has been showing a wide variety but some you need to search for because they are being shown very early, at 6.00am, or as late as 11.00pm. (ie recording necessary, unless you are a night owl.)

Also on **BBC i-player** there are several treats to be found.

During this unfortunate time I managed to sell my house and have moved down to the south coast, literally just around the corner from where my daughter lives. So, if you would like theatre trips to continue, when theatres reopen, then someone needs to volunteer to take over.

If you think you might be interested do give me a call (01425 273143) or contact the Chairman Lilia Bogle. I found it very rewarding and made many new friends.

Di Procter

Treasurer Shadow

Paddy Collins has been Treasurer for some years now but under the constitution will have to step down at some stage. He would like someone to shadow him with a view to taking over in a year or two.

Here is what is involved:-

- *You don't need any accounting experience. Our accounts are really simple.
- *There is no VAT to worry about, nor depreciation nor accruals and no employees.
- *Our accounts are done on a "Cash Accounting" basis which means we are simply noting how much money comes in and how much goes out - nothing more.
- *We use a cloud-based accounting package from Sage so there is no software on your PC - all you need is an internet browser.
- *Because we are using an accounting package, things always balance and the end of year balance sheet and profit and loss accounts and any reports are produced at the push of a button.
- *The membership secretary deals with all membership subscriptions, not the treasurer.
- *The treasurer pays for all venue hire and receives venue contributions from groups. That is the bulk of the job.
- *We have internet access for all banking and the vast majority of transactions in and out are electronic. We don't take cash and receive very few cheques. Any cheques received can be paid in whenever convenient for you.
- *Mostly it is a case of paying invoices from venue providers and entering non-membership-related transactions from our bank accounts to the accounting package once a month.
- *Another part of the job is updating our bank mandates when trustee roles change but this is at most once a year, if things change at the AGM.

The treasurer is a trustee of the registered charity "Buckingham and District U3A" which is a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) which means there is no personal liability on you.

The trustees also attend a monthly management committee meeting lasting about 1 hour.



Local History Group 1

Our last face to face meeting was on 5th March when we enjoyed a really fascinating talk by Ken Harris about two Swanbourne residents, from different ends of the social “classes” but both called Thomas.

Unfortunately that talk was LAST March!

Meanwhile, as a group, we have tried to keep interest alive, with help from the Buckinghamshire Military Museum Trust and the Imperial War Museum but due to poor internet connections around the area, these have been “self guided”, rather than Zoom or Skype, but have proved to very worthwhile.

Professor Ian Beckett, who was due to visit us in November, recorded his talk and placed it on the Military Museum’s website. This meant that many of us learnt a lot about the incredible amateur military tradition, in Buckinghamshire, over the years.

Also on their website were three video’s showing differing aspects of wartime life in Buckinghamshire. These were poignant, and included VE and VJ days celebrations, which had their 75th Anniversaries in 2020. They brought back childhood memories for many of us.

For Christmas we tackled an interesting quiz “name the place”. This was based on visits our group had made or associated talks.

More recently the Imperial War Museum posted an online article showing the work of women photographers during WW1. This was released as part of International Woman’s Day.

Of local interest was the work and experiences of Florence Farmborough (1887-1978) on the Eastern Front, it demonstrated the transforming influence of close proximity to the front line. She had had a comfortable middle-class upbringing in Buckinghamshire but left home, aged 21, to indulge a thirst for travel and adventure. Little seems to be known of her locally, so that’s a project for the future.

Our next talk will be by Professor John Ferris entitled ‘Bletchley Park: British Intelligence and the Second World War’. This is the first of three such events sponsored by the Buckinghamshire Military Museum Trust who have been very help throughout this difficult time.

Our thanks go to our members who have continued to support the Group. Now the vaccine is being rolled out, we are all closely following the planned “road map” and trust that we will soon be really meeting.

Rodney Glew



Badminton

Based on current government guidelines I am hoping to recommence weekly Badminton sessions at Buckingham Youth Centre on Fridays 1.30-3.00pm and Table Tennis on Mondays 10.00-11.30am, from 15th May. I will contact all current members before then and any new players for either session can contact me on 07738-091392

Jim Whatmore

Membership Secretary

As your new Membership Secretary, I offer my thanks to my predecessor Lorna Joy, who has been, and continues to be, an enormous help as I settle into the role.

We have over 820 current members, and email is our main means of contact. This has been particularly so throughout this Covid-19 pandemic.

We are conscious that members do not want an overload of U3A email in their Inbox so we try to keep them to a minimum. Our policy is to email all current members their personal copy of:

Details of the monthly Open Meeting
The Buckingham U3A newsletter.

Members of the Committee may also need to circulate information to all Group Coordinators, some of which need to be passed on to their group members. GCs should do this by forwarding the email or by passing on the information in person, as appropriate. This might be the National Newsletter, for instance, as well as any other relevant information.

Many thanks to all members who have kept me informed of any change of address, email details, etc. If you have a change of contact details but have not yet informed me, please email:

membership.secretary@buckinghamu3a.org.uk.

Ann Abraham



Buckingham U3A Facebook

Here are the links for the three Facebook groups set up by BuckinghamU3A. They are all private, that is closed, groups so members have to apply to join, or have to ask for an invitation to be sent by email.

There is a GCs Forum: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2542285956061415>

A Science & Technology Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/636693290484677>

A National U3A group called Keeping in Touch:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/U3AKeepingInTouch>

The two local groups each have 19 members and Derek Morgan and myself are Administrators. The National Group has 5,300 members so far, a diverse range of people from all over the country.

Let me know if you need any further details.

**Secretary
Dorothy Morgan**

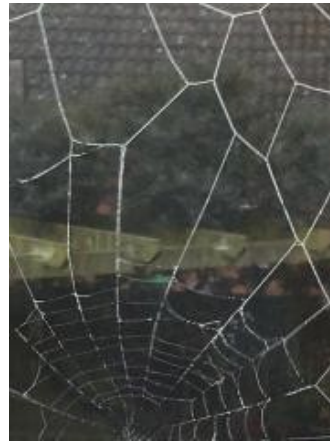
Art on Line

The PANDEMIC!

Our art sessions ended over a year ago and I really miss the social contact of painting in a group. One of my friend asked if we could do some painting together. She lives in the Aylesbury area and I am in Buckingham. Not easy really. As we have a regular monthly Zoom meeting, we decided to try our hand at some water-colouring while we chat. We are not artist by any means, but we have fun. We choose a picture and we both try to reproduce it. Zoom is not an ideal way to see how the paintings are progressing, but we try. Below is some of the work my friend has done during our Zoom meetings. A good way to turn the pandemic to a positive.

Arlette Romaine





Style During Lockdown

Today's glam girl sauntered casually down the garden path catwalk
 Swinging an Aldi designer bag overflowing with fresh laundry,
 The drips dropping seductively on to her regal crimson velvet gown.
 Scope charity receives award of the day for this desirable couture.
 Ruched at the waist, the fabric glimmers darkly under the sun
 As she bends and stretches, pegging and folding.
 Daily exercise done at last.

Freda Davis Poetry Writing Group



With thanks from the Editor for all of these evocative photographs. Let us hope by the time the next newsletter comes out, these strange times will be over.