



## Edenbridge U3A

### May 2020 Newsletter from your Chairman

Apologies for the late arrival of this newsletter. I hope you are all staying well and have managed to keep away from this awful virus. U3A is still alive – maybe not ‘kicking’ but the ingenuity of some of our group leaders has kept you going through the use of *Facetime*, *WhatsApp* and *Zoom* sessions.

Wine group one for example use *Zoom* every Tuesday to ‘meet’ together, share our wine choice of the day and, more recently, have a quiz. The world of communication technology and social messaging is amazing and is helping us all keep in touch.

2020 - A good year for lupins



Thinking back (to the 1960s and 70s) when we used to go away on holidays we sent postcards sharing our holiday experiences to our friends and families – only to find that we got home before the recipients had received them! Compare that with today where we have instant communication and can see news as it is happening. We use our smartphones to be ‘outside broadcasters’ sending back images and messages instantly from around the world wherever that happens to be – today I hear that Durham is the place to be!

Sadly, the coronavirus situation and the uncertainty that it is causing is allowing some criminals to spot opportunities to scam you out of your hard-earned savings and, in some cases, empty your bank accounts. Try **not** to be taken in by an email or an unsolicited phone call that arrives out of the blue. If you receive an email that looks like it is on Government headed notepaper offering you a Covid19 tax refund, don’t open it – delete it straight away. No government

department would write to you in this way asking for your bank details. If any offer appears to be *'too good to be true'* then it is probably is a scam – this applies to some of the emails offering you Covid19 test kits. These are being sent out by criminal scammers who are just after your money – you won't get a test kit if you have paid for it, but the scammer will get your cash! At such a time of uncertainty that we are in at the moment it is so easy to be caught out by these official looking and cleverly worded emails that are just scams.

I know from the some of the conversations that I have had with you that many of you use social media. I am delighted to inform you that one of our members, Sandra Gentry, has set up an Edenbridge Facebook group for our U3A. This is only open to Edenbridge members and is a private group. When we are spending so much time in virtual lockdown it will be nice to have photos of your gardens, news of local activities and other things that you think other members would like to see. Thank you Sandra for setting that up. If you would like to join through Facebook, type in the link [Edenbridge U3A](#) and you will be directed to the group and offered the opportunity to join. If you are concerned about privacy issues relating to Facebook then please feel free to use this tutorial from BT which clearly explains the settings:

[11 ways you can keep your Facebook profile from revealing too much.](#)

Sandra has kindly agreed to sharing her phone number should you have any questions about this – you can contact her on 01342 832334.

Personally, I see this as yet another positive way forward for our Edenbridge group.

Next month is when we plan for the Annual General Meeting. Obviously this will not take place this year as it will be impossible to implement safe distancing for such a large group in the hall at Crockham Hill. Your U3A committee is currently discussing how we can address this issue – I will update you on this next month.

So how are you doing through this most horrible of times? Today sees the start of the 9<sup>th</sup> week of what still amounts to a lockdown for many of us. Being labelled as the most vulnerable group it really is very scary to think of mixing with other people and risking contracting the virus. I can understand the reluctance of many of you to venture away from the safe environment of your home. Let us know how you are coping with all this time on your hands. Bingo via the internet with friends and family, jigsaws of all shapes and sizes, and quizzes are just three of the most frequently mentioned pastimes. We may have been labelled as the most vulnerable group for the coronavirus but being retired means that we are at least used to organising our days.



Thank goodness the beauty of flowering plants has not been affected by the virus.

So let's try and end on a positive note – last week Captain (now Sir) Thomas Moore, having raised over £30 million for NHS Charities, said “*there will be an end to this horror story.*” It may be some time away but we must have hope and eventually, instead of relying on technology to keep in touch with our families, we will be able to meet together again soon and turn ‘virtual hugs’ into real ones!

Stay safe, stay alert and try to think positive. Feel free to use the email address below to make contact with me about your successes.

Best wishes

*Mike Collins*

Chairman

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