

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the third edition of the new style High Lane U3A newsletter. As with the previous edition this edition will be available only by email and on the web. Hopefully members can share it with their friends who may not have access – post a copy though their door perhaps.

The aim of the publication is to keep us in touch with our fellow members in these changing times, provide news of what's going on and ideas of things we might be able to do. It is also an opportunity for members to share some of their interests or something about what they have been doing so please send ideas, suggestions and contributions to me at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

The information here is up to date as I write but things are changing quickly so please accept my apologies if the link doesn't work or any other problems. Thanks to those members who have sent me material for this edition.

I expect the next issue will be towards the end of June – I imagine it's unlikely we will be able to meet by then but there may be news as the country slowly opens for business again.

FROM THE CHAIR

Compensations of Lockdown

1. The chance to breathe clean fresh air.
2. Ringing friends and chatting too long on the phone.
3. Discovering new paths on my daily walks.
4. Catching up with my neighbours especially the cute 2yr old from next door.
- 5 Enjoying a glass of wine in the garden with a friend.

Calling our members- please share your thoughts in the next issue.

Sheila Harrop

DID YOU KNOW?

Today, 1 June is

World Reef Awareness Day
National Olive Day
National Heimlich Manoeuvre Day
National Go Barefoot Day
National Nail Polish Day
National Say Something Nice Day
National Penpal Day
National Hazelnut Cake Day



MESSAGE FROM OUR TREASURER

The last few weeks have been difficult from a personal point of view. The panic buying in the shops created a shortage of toilet rolls, pasta and tomatoes and we saw the true reflection of some of our society today. We cannot go without saying that this was counterbalanced by family, friends and neighbours doing shopping etc for the vulnerable and many shops and services including the NHS staying open to continue to feed us and look after us. I only hope people will remember when we return to normal society that the NHS operates better without targets and we as individuals continue to shop locally, it is important to the village.

Having watched 10 years episodes of Miami Vice, Silent Witness, The Antiques Roadshow and The Chase we realised this could be a long term thing but then Wickes, B&Q, and other DIY shops shut for trade just as Rosemary and I had finished the spring cleaning, purchased a new Hoover, weeded the garden and purchased a new petrol mower. All that was left was the dreaded decorating. The "TO DO" list at the beginning of the pandemic was well established but we are now struggling to keep it at the 95 items it has stood at for the last 40 years and the 6 monthly reminder has now taken a back seat as it gets into single figures. Our daily game of "Spot the weed" had got boring and the Xbox was taking a beating but alas the really bad news was in the pipeline, Wickes and a lot of the other DIY shops were open and the decorating of the lounge is now well underway.

Despite the lockdown I have not been lazy and have written to the Third Age Trust on several points in connection with the Membership Fee which we send them, being, £3.50 per head of the £6 membership we charge. I realise we only had one meeting after our AGM and in very early March, just as lockdown came into being, we received an email advising us how to send the annual fees to the Third Age Trust. I am advised by them this is normal but in the few years I have been Treasurer I have NEVER received an email asking for the fees at that time. It is normal to receive a paper return and payment can then be made by cheque or online.

As you can understand our own Committee has been unable to meet to discuss membership matters and it could be sometime till the Committee meets and a full meeting of the U3A takes place, this could also be dependent on social distancing and also the Village Hall's view on the matter of Health and Safety. Bearing this in mind I felt that it was only right to find out if the Third Age Trust was going to extend the term or refund some of the membership fees so your Committee could make an informed decision on membership when we next meet.

The great thing about lockdown is you can't go out; email is so easy and you have a great excuse to keep pressing the magic SEND button until you become such a pain in the neck that you get a reply. Eventually after several attempts I got a full response which was basically no refund, no extension of membership and not only a full charge membership for this year and future years, in fact they intend to increase the Membership fee to £4 then to £4.50 over the next 2 or 3 years. This will obviously impact on the cost of our own membership eventually but that is for the future, we will still have one of the cheapest memberships in the area if not the country.

They advise me they are still "open for business" and producing the Newsletter however more relevant to High Lane U3A is Diane's newsletter which I would all ask you to read, join in and pass on to people who you may know that are not on the internet. As I pointed out all the U3As are shut so I don't know who is using the Third Age Trust so much during lockdown unless it is to figure out how to connect up

with Zoom, Messenger, Whats App etc. Personally I have used them but I must admit the one area Rosemary and I have difficulty with is how do you switch them off?

Anyway not wishing to bore you all that is all for now and I am now returning to my social distancing and can only wish that the Government would include Paint Brushes, Brilliant White and Paint rollers in the social distancing list.

Hope you are all well and stay safe

Les

From U3A National Office

National Office continues to offer weekly quizzes and maths challenges plus many ideas for learning. All of these and more can be found on the National Office website at www.u3a.org.uk.

Sam Maugher CEO has recorded an online message to members at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNQUSV9uW0w>

Mr Motivator and U3A

This is a six day programme of eight minutes a day specifically aimed at U3A and Third Agers that works every muscle group in the body. It's so important to take regular exercise particularly during this lockdown period so this is a shout out to all third agers to please join us.

You can take part in the week long programme by going to our playlists here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheU3a/p...>

At this site you will find a collection of U3A videos including some sessions on mindfulness.



U3A with NatWest Lecture Series

You are invited to take part in a series of live streamed lectures happening every Thursday at 2:30pm. The next one is on Thursday 4 June and the topic is Impersonation Scams.

Sessions will be delivered by NatWest staff with expertise in the topic. Any U3A member is welcome to join the lecture by Facebook - you do not need to have a facebook account just head to our U3A page <https://www.facebook.com/u3auk/> for 2.30pm. These will also be screened on the NatWest Youtube channel.

U3A day

U3A Day is still scheduled for 1 October 2020 which is International Day of Older Persons. U3A Day is planned to maximise the opportunity to raise our profile nationally. Nationally, we will work towards signposting media attention to 1 October 2020, once that date is confirmed as safe and appropriate. We will continue to update resources and advice on the national website and on the U3A Day facebook page.

LOCAL INFORMATION

Maureen Christian reports that that the Gatepost coffee continues to meet up each morning. We now even get rent-a-mob requests to go and sing birthday wishes locally and appropriately distanced!

People who have come upon us while out taking their exercise will often join us for a while, so a very sociable start to the day. We all feel that we have developed a real friendship with each other. Great that something good can come out of this difficult time.

Anyone could start a similar group. A note pushed through a few doors locally with a time to meet and instructions to bring your own coffee and I'm sure you'd be surprised at the response.

What's to lose - give it a go and you won't regret it.

Maureen Christian

Emerging from lockdown

We hope to see places starting to open in the next few weeks. MacDonald's is threatening to open all its branches for drive-through this week. Wetherspoons is planning how it can open safely – there are photos (see the website or MEN) that show a very different experience from what we had before with tables a long way apart, disposable menus, card payments only and sanitising stations.

As places open. please let me know what is happening in our areas.

BRIDGE

Our Monday afternoon 1.30 pm sessions are continuing and new people are joining us week by week. We now have around 20 players; more players will be very welcome. Please contact me if you would like to join us online.

Bernard Magee is continuing with his broadcasts screened on Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays at 11.00am. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1g-0QEEjjYEZ6fiYg-VDUw/featured>. You can watch these anytime if you don't manage the live broadcast

Diane Saxon

Bridge one-liners

- The real test of a bridge player isn't in keeping out of trouble, but in escaping once he's in it.
- If you have the slightest touch of masochism, you'll love this game.
- Bridge is a great comfort in old age. It also helps you get there faster.
- Bridge is essentially a social game, but unfortunately it attracts a large number of antisocial people.
- One advantage of bad bidding is that you get practice at playing atrocious contracts.
- We had a partnership misunderstanding. I assumed my partner knew what he was doing.
- Your play was much better tonight and so were your excuses.

ART**REAL ART THOUGHTS**

There is art to watch on the tele. Check the programmes.

One or two members have sent efforts of their efforts to me asking for my comments. Some have asked for paper using for different mediums or for just ideas. If you need paper please ask me. Betty sent me the results of her change to pastel. Stunning. Beth has turned her pal John into a Garden Gnome; what colours.

I am self-meditating in my sunhouse; can't stop. Looking at skies, colours, images changing, thoughts you have, black & white, things you are told, history of what you have seen,

I started a canvas for skies 30 x 20 inches. Portrait. with just thoughts. Not images to copy or pretty pictures. I know I have always told you to make your own black; I bought some. Disgraceful.

Atmosphere, Depth and feeling is what you're looking for in the image. An impression of what you're looking at in your thoughts or mind. Have a go; don't worry about colours or subjects. skies, seas, people, still life, mountains, landscapes, buildings. Use all your senses. See what comes out; it might be abstract who knows. Talk to me if you want. I do not want pretty pictures.

The canvas I started? I was told something in the week. It stopped me carrying on and doing any more to it. My thoughts are saying it's finished. Our thoughts are very strong things; use them in your paintings.

See you soon

Brian C

Art Online

Picking up Brian's theme on Art on the tele, there is also much online. For example, you can currently catch the RA's Exhibition on Screen productions of Hockney, Manet and the recent Monet to Matisse exhibition among many others on YouTube.



Claude Monet Painting in His Garden at Argenteuil, 1873
Pierre-Auguste Renoir

Art group member, Mavis Dean, has been busy in lockdown. She says “These are pictures that I started in the group meeting, but never got time to finish - too much chatting, drinking tea, and looking at other people's work, I guess. It's good to have the time now to be able to put the finishing touches to them”.



The first two are done from photos of flowers in my garden, and the third is of Dovestones reservoir, Saddleworth, also from one of my own photographs. All three are a mixture of watercolour, gouache and pen work

Cheers!

Mavis

CURRENT AFFAIRS

The group is experimenting with email to try a discussion this month. Obviously the result cannot be the same as our usual face to face meetings. None of us is technologically proficient to use Zoom or any of the other methods. We have limited the topics to just two.

It was suggested that we all listen to Peter Whittle's interview with David Starkey. You can listen to the interview here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8S8Js-tEmlg>

After the election last year, the Conservatives must now present themselves as the party that must protect the NHS at all costs. All forms of surgery and diagnostic testing were stopped in order to concentrate on the virus. There should have been a balance between Health and the Economy as in Sweden. Instead the Government succeeded in terrifying the population by comparing the state of some London hospitals with what was happening in Italy. Was this intended to secure the lockdown and get everyone to comply? One fact which surprised Starkey was that "more money is spent on a patient in the last year of life than in the whole of the rest of it"

The Big Government nature of the NHS means everything is centralised. Other countries have done better in coping with Covid-19. Germany for example has delegated decisions to individual states.

The UK has lost most of its manufacturing industry. There used to be good engineers, Polytechnic Colleges and things were made here. There are still many scientists and engineers who are good at invention and new ways of doing things but these go abroad to be made.

This country now relies on a service industry demonstrated by dependence on the financial sector located mainly in London at Canary Wharf. It is time to rebuild the manufacturing sector, scrap HS2 and concentrate on redeveloping the north of the country.

There was little dissent in the group with these ideas.

Our second topic looked at the Dominic Cummings affair. Everyone was dismayed with his selfish decision to travel to Durham and thought that he was considering only himself and his family. In fact, one of the group was incensed with the situation with her blood pressure rising as she watched TV! Why could his sister not have travelled to London to collect the child? He apparently did not bother to investigate local help.

We cannot understand how anyone can drive sixty miles to test eyesight. Surely this is against the law? Why is this one man so indispensable to the government? Are there no other equally able people? What a sad state of affairs. Our local MP., William Wragg, stated that it is humiliating and degrading to their office to see ministers defending him.

Perhaps It will mean that many people will not confirm to the government's suggestions in future which may lead to further outbreaks of the pandemic. Several police forces are quite worried.

Pat Gorie, Mavis Dean, Trevor Kinvig, Marlene Brookes, Pam Curley, Margaret McDermott

READING

A member of the Reading group, Ian Pearson, has shared some of what he has been reading during lockdown.

The Code of the Woosters by P G Wodehouse.

Written in 1938, in my totally biased opinion, this is the funniest book by possibly the funniest writer in the English language. Bertram Wilberforce Wooster heroically, in his view, battles with the thorny problems of a battleaxe aunt, a valuable antique, a policeman's helmet, a lovelorn chum, a French chef and, to top it all, Roderick Spode the leader of the infamous Black Shorts and would be Fascist dictator. His only support is his faithful manservant, Reginald Jeeves. Best read in instalments in order to properly take in Wodehouse's rich prose. What Ho.

The Traveller's Guide to Elizabethan England by Ian Mortimer

This combines my love of history with my membership of the Shakespeare group. An extensive and surprisingly readable unvarnished guide to everyday life in the second half of the 16th century, the difficulties of which, such as the bubonic plague combined with crop failures, may just help to put lockdown into perspective.

A Legacy of Spies by John Le Carre.

A sort of very belated sequel to *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold* and *Tinker, Tailor, Peter Guillam*, aged former sidekick of George Smiley. is living a peaceful retirement in rural France when he is dragged back to British Intelligence's Circus to answer an enquiry into the conduct of the operations in the earlier Smiley books. If you are at all familiar with the previous stories this is well worth a read even if it is not quite in the same class.

Ian Pearson

Sea Change by Robert Goddard

I am just re-reading a novel I first read about 20 years ago: *SEA CHANGE* by Robert Goddard, one of my favourite authors of fast paced, page-turning, mystery novels. This book is particularly appropriate at this time when we are said to be approaching the biggest financial crisis for 300 years because it actually deals with that 18th century crisis – The South Sea Bubble and its consequences, but in a thoroughly entertaining way – a chase across Europe in search of the Green Ledger which lists the transactions of the South Sea Company and names the guilty parties. It's one of those stories which you just don't want to stop reading and you are unhappy when you come to the end.

Robert Goddard is such an entertaining, versatile and prolific writer and I would really recommend his books to anyone who wants to be entertained, thrilled and mystified. After reading *SEA CHANGE* I bought 10 more of his novels for £9.99 from The Book People and read them all in a very short time. Others I would recommend are: *PLAY TO THE END*, set in the theatre world of Brighton, *CAUGHT IN THE LIGHT*, concerned with early photography, *INTO THE BLUE* which was televised some years ago with John Thaw as the leading character and its sequel *OUT OF THE SUN* which has characters in it from Wilmslow!

Perfect reading to take your mind off lockdown.

Marlene Brookes

The Machine Stops by E. M. Forster

I recall this from a Radio dramatisation some years ago. It is a short story by EM Forster written in 1909 that has resonance with our lockdown situation. The story is set in a future where individuals are isolated in small cells underground. Original thought is discouraged. Direct contact with others is considered impolite and unnecessary. People can only communicate through audio and visual devices connected to The Machine which provides all their needs at the click of a button.

It doesn't end well.

There is a recording of the 2016 dramatisation at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJk9gk9Ow4I>

You can also find the book as an audio book at various online sites.

Diane Saxon

MUSIC

First a quiz - Choir member, Hazel Jones, says "As I was totally bored and fed up today I have produced this quiz. Do you know the Musicals that these songs are from?" Answers in next edition.

If I Loved You
The Lady is a Tramp
I Talk to the Trees
Where is Love
People will say we're in Love
On the Street where you live
Secret Love
Hard Headed Woman
Who wants to be a Millionaire
You're the One that I Want
Luck be a Lady
Let Me Entertain You
The Time Warp
It Might As Well Be Spring
Some Enchanted Evening
Bless Your Beautiful Hide
Make 'Em Laugh
Somewhere
Bare necessities
Almost like being in love

Want to watch a musical?

Continuing the Musicals theme, free musicals are being streamed by Film On Stage at <http://www.filmedonstage.com/news/76-free-musicals-and-plays-you-can-now-stream-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak-updating-daily> This week's musical is Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn screened on Broadway.

Virtual choirs – just search for Virtual choir on YouTube. All sorts of genres and styles. Check this one out - Carol King's You need a friend sung by 'London Voices'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7U7iYxHw2Q>

MEMORABLE OPERAS (and a few best forgotten!)

I am one who loves opera, but I am no expert. I know what I like, and my view is not always shared by others.

I spend about six weeks in the year leading walking holidays at various beautiful locations around the country, and HF holidays have a base at the head of Dovedale in the beautiful village of Thorpe. One of the holidays I help to run is linked to the Buxton Festival, held in July each year (but sadly not this.) and my main input is to take those guests who wish to join me for a daily walk of up to 5 miles, to show them something of the beautiful countryside in which they are spending their holiday.

The Buxton Festival lasts for nearly three weeks, and as well as world class opera, there is a full programme of recitals and concerts, and talks from all sorts of interesting people. A bonus is that I get to go to three operas during the week of the holiday, and as I have been doing this for eleven years, I must have seen thirty three operas in the wonderful Buxton Opera House, a true gem of a grand opera house in miniature.

Buxton prides itself on producing a wide-ranging programme each year, often with operas which have not been performed for hundreds of years. However, although I have seen some wonderful productions which stick in the memory for the right reasons, there are several which should have been left in the cupboard.

I am quite fond of Handel's operas. However, some of them require a bit of stamina on the part of the audience. They can be quite long. One of the most fantastic productions that I have seen was Handel's "Samson" which tells of the struggle between the Israelites and the Philistines, and Samson's betrayal by his wife Dalila, who cuts off his hair, which was the source of his strength. The performance at Buxton was set on the west bank of Gaza, in current times, and brought out the struggle between the Philistines and the Israelites, hinting that there are similarities between this story, and the modern conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. It worked very well. At the other end of the scale, Handel's "Saul" had the King dressed in a white suit in the Oval Office as President of the USA, whilst David, the shepherd boy who would become king, was the returning hero who had dropped the atomic bomb which ended the war in Japan. Visually, it was so awful that I spent the second half with my eyes closed listening to the sublime music.

There was Ralph Vaughan Williams' one act opera "Riders to the Sea", the story of a family on a small island off the West Coast of Ireland. The mother had lost all but one of her sons and brothers to the sea. The remaining son wanted to go across the water to Galway horse fair to sell a horse. She wouldn't give her blessing. He went – he drowned! Mother, a very dramatic contralto, spent ten minutes in a mournful lament because he had died without her blessing. It was a good job that the hotel bar was open when we got back!

Perhaps the worst I have seen was a German comic opera called "The Barber of Baghdad" by Peter Cornelius. He is best known for a wonderful piece of Christmas music, "Three Kings from Persian lands afar". The opera was neither funny, nor memorable for its music. There was a mix up over tickets, and I had to get a seat in the gods. I was sitting next to an opera buff, who said that the male lead was what his music teacher would call "a tight knickered tenor." 'Nuff said. Hopefully it will be another hundred years at least before it raises its head again.

One of my favourite composers is Donizetti, who was a prolific composer, and his works include many takes on history. I like his work, because there are many wonderful soprano arias. However, it does seem odd to hear Queen Elizabeth 1 or Mary Queen of Scots singing in Italian. One of the best was “Lucrezia Borgia”, where, to cut a long story short, the famous poisoner poisons her own estranged son, and in great distress takes her own poison. It ends dramatically, with Lucrezia taking a very long time to die, sinking slowly to the floor, and singing beautifully all the way.

Now don't get me wrong. Despite the few anomalies, the ones above included, I have enjoyed many wonderful productions at Buxton, where the standard of performance from both singers and orchestra has been superb, especially for a provincial, but famous, opera festival like Buxton.

To enjoy opera you have to suspend belief. People don't sing their way through everyday life, and often in Italian to boot. There are many strange themes – Greek gods and myths, water nymphs and even life in the underworld as recounted by Orpheus. But if you have never been, give it a go. When the lockdown ends, there will be productions from the Royal Opera House and the New York Met in the cinemas. Perhaps choose something light and amusing like the Marriage of Figaro or Cosi Fan Tutti, or a well-known tragedy like La Boheme or La Traviata. You can find operas on YouTube (make sure they have sub-titles.) Opera North come to the Lowry in Manchester, English Touring Opera come to Buxton, and there will be the Buxton Festival in 2021.

Stewart Bradley

BALLROOM DANCING

Dancers were given two steps to refresh this month. First a Charleston Line Dance, and second a Quickstep Fishtail Variation linked with the V6 step. Also here is a photo reminder of how we looked five years ago.



Walter Mason

CHURCHES AND PUBS

Churches and Pubs Quiz, just for fun. If you don't know the answer, just have a guess.

- 1 What year did Churches and Pubs start.
- 2 Who started the group.
- 3 How many different people have run the group.
- 4 Name the people who have run the group.
- 5 How many churches have we visited.
- 6 How many different pubs have we visited. Not the same answer.
- 7 How many trips have we had to cancel. Not including this year.
- 8 How many different counties have we visited.
- 9 Can you name them.
- 10 Can you name the largest church we visited.
- 11 Can you name the smallest church we visited.
- 12 Which county have we visited the most.
- 13 Which church provided the best refreshments.
- 14 Which church gave us the best/amusing talk.
- 15 Which pub did we have the best lunch in.
- 16 Name the church we travelled the furthest distance to.
- 17 Name the church we travelled the shortest distance to.
- 18 Which church was the oldest one we visited.
- 19 Which pub was the oldest one we visited.
- 20 Which was the most interesting church we visited.

Don't forget if you don't know the answer have a guess.

If you want to email me the answers please send to paulk2000@lineone.net

Enjoy and stay safe.

Paul Kenneth

CANASTA

Well its sometime since I had my pre canasta pie, chips, peas and pint, never mind the splendid service we have missed in the Royal Oak given by Dot and Nick, I hope they are surviving and am looking forward to playing Canasta with everyone as soon as possible. Two metres whilst playing cards may not be a problem as long as you get the flick of the wrist right to get the card onto the discard pack, and this is an area we can all try to improve although some of our players manage it at shorter distances.

For those of us with computers and Google play there are plenty of free Canasta games on the internet and for those on iPads etc I am sure alternatives exist. Like all card games rules vary but you soon get used to the differences the only thing you don't get is the social chat with friends and Dot's Cheese and onion pie and a pint of Wainwrights.....other beers and cheese and onion pies are available.

Hope you stay well and safe

Les Birks

GARDENING

Gardening group members have continued to contribute pictures for a weekly report. Attached are a selected pictures from Chris, Deirdre, Irene, Lynda, Lynn and Ruth. Can you identify the plant in the bottom right hand corner?



PHOTOGRAPHY

The May email photo competition was a close run affair. It wasn't clear who would win 'till the last votes came in. The winner was Jeff with "Avocet", second was Bob "Kingfisher", and third equals were Bryan "Seagull" and Jeff "Robin". The choice had been difficult, and picture sharpness was a factor - easy with slow moving ducks and large birds - not so easy with fast moving and small birds.



Next month the competition title is "A Flower".

Walter Mason

QUIZ

There are already two quizzes in this edition, so I won't add another. We decided that we were too busy to continue with weekly quizzes – where does the time go - so have switched to fortnightly quizzes. The recent one was set by Irene and we had a page of ditloids which not only did we have to work out what they were but we then had to use the numbers in some calculations as well! All good for the brain I'm sure.

Prior to that Margaret set a quiz which was fiendishly difficult – for me anyway! We had faces of politicians and waterfalls of the world to identify.

The weekly quizzes on the U3A National Office web site created by the subject advisor for Quizzes are still available.

If you are missing your local pub quiz the Evening Standard has an article with links to pubs and other places running virtual quizzes. Check it out here <https://www.standard.co.uk/go/london/bars/virtual-pub-quiz-coronavirus-lockdown-a4396276.html>

Diane Saxon

TODAY'S RECIPE

Microwave shortbread – this really works!

Recipe from a 1970s Sharp microwave book.

110g butter

50g caster sugar or soft brown sugar

150g plain flour

25g semolina or rice flour

Cream butter and sugar; work in flour with a fork.

Knead well

Press out to a circle. Place on microwaveable plate

Crimp edges and prick with a fork.

Heat on HIGH for 3 ½ to 4 mins. Leave to cool.

Can also be cooked in the oven. Extra tasty with dark chocolate chips added!

We're all doing more cooking these days; there isn't a lot of choice!

Why not share one of your favourite recipes for the next edition?

VE DAY – pictures from Dave and Ruth, Walter and Pat.



NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE ONLINE

This week's National Theatre play was *This House* by James Graham. The play is based on the politics of the time between the defeat of Edward Heath and the election of a Labour government led by Harold Wilson in 1974 and the 1979 vote of no confidence in the government of James Callaghan which led to Margaret Thatcher being elected as Prime Minister. The action



takes place in the Palace of Westminster in the whip's offices of the two parties. The plot is based on real events such as the removal of pairing arrangements that led to Labour whips having to bring in sick and terminally ill MPs to vote. The play was very well received at the National in 2012/13 and has since been on tour. For me, there was a large cast and it was sometimes difficult to remember which were the Labour whips and which the Conservatives!

This broadcast is available until 7pm UK time on Thursday 4 June. It is subtitled and the running time is 2 ½ hours <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vsSHyJEMrg>. This week's play is *Coriolanus* starring Tom Hiddleston showing at 7pm on 4 June.

Diane Saxon

SKYPE

There are many apps now for video calling: Zoom, Hangouts, WhatsApp, Facebook etc but many of us are already familiar with Skype. Skype has been around a long time but still offers good functionality for online meetings and conversations. It is possible to connect up to 50 people in a video conference. Groups could use this for online meetings and get together.

Skype is now part of the Microsoft suite of software and you will need to install it on your computer or tablet. Check first; it may already be installed.

You then need to sign up and get a Skype user name.

Once you have done that you need to check your audio and video – on a tablet you will have these built in. If you are using a PC you will need a webcam and headset. Instead of the headset you could use a desktop microphone and earphones or desk speakers. Skype provides a test service for you to check your audio.

One person starts the call and invites the others to join – using their user names. People who you talk to frequently can be added to your contacts list to make it easier to contact them.

Once everyone is connected you can all see and hear each other. You can even share your screen to show what you have on your computer.

There are some guides for getting started on YouTube

A tip for any video app you are using on a PC is not to have the webcam too low. Make sure you are level with the screen.

SNIPPETS

I'm giving up drinking for a month.
Sorry. Bad punctuation.
I'm giving up. Drinking for a month

*That moment when you're worried
about the elderly and realise that you
are the elderly.*

Neil Diamond has a Covid-19 version of Sweet Caroline. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1-VWpXlwXk>

Staying inside – the Bee Gees

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmUXntGlgFI>

They said a mask and gloves were enough to go to the
supermarket ... they lied ... everybody else had clothes on!

Virtual Garden visits – plus garden tips and tutorials

<https://ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits/>

Viking TV – huge range of programmes on travel, museums, arts and music with a weekly guest speaker.

<https://viking.tv/>

Collected links to Virtual visits to museums and more attractions

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/travel/a31784720/best-virtual-tours/>

Virtual visit to the Hermitage museum in St Petersburg.

https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/panorama/virtual_visit/panoramas-m-1/.

I would have been there in the middle of June (ed)

*This virus whose name is Corona,
Could never be known as a loner,
It's desperate to share,
as it flies through the air,
With its super contagious persona.*

Anyone good at limericks?

Not just about Corona. Please send them to the Editor for the next edition.