



**Chair Chat**

It was very disappointing when we were told that restrictions were not to be lifted on June 21<sup>st</sup>. It has meant that we will not be able to meet in July, but will have to wait until August.

Disappointment is not terminal but it hurts and can make one miserable.

A long time ago, I was supposed to move to Philadelphia, USA to live. We had sold the house and got rid of a lot of the contents especially all the electrical goods and garden tools. We had taken the children out of school, the family canary had gone to a member of the family, the furniture was in a container at Felixstowe ready to be shipped. We had chosen a new house and new schools. Then on the day before we were due to fly out, we were told that the move and the job that had precipitated the uprooting was cancelled. We were beyond disappointed, but we moved in with family and set about choosing a brand new house and contents and managed to get the children back into school. The canary stayed with its new carers and the children were offered visiting rights!

So we got on with it, and when 3 years later we were offered another move, this time to Salt Lake City, there was a unanimous vote to say no, so we stayed in the UK.

A few years later, we put in an offer on a beautiful house, and then it didn't happen, and once again, I was beyond disappointed. But for some reason we were not supposed to live there, but when I drive past it, I still look wistfully at it and wonder why I couldn't live there.

So when I was so disappointed that normal life could not resume on June 21st, after a few hours moaning, I thought get on with it! A visit to Royal Ascot Ladies Day had been planned and then social distancing rules got in the way, so we couldn't go, but we hadn't bought a new outfit and it rained and it was cold on the day anyway!

*But there is one disappointment me and the Committee don't want to have, is having looked after Bexley u3a through all of Lockdown, for it to have to close because we can't get enough volunteers to serve on the Committee. It is hard work, I will make no bones about that, but we are a good team and it is very satisfying running an organisation that so many people enjoy. But some of us have done 4 years, which is 1 year more than is allowed normally, so we must stand down.*

U3a is a self-help movement, and as such, members are supposed to help so it can exist at all. It would be ironic if members don't want to help to keep Bexley u3a alive and we would be forced to close. So please don't disappoint the committee and me!!!

**Sandra Goulding**

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**Dear lapsed member of u3a Bexley**, it's not too late to renew for 2021.

Maybe you have forgotten, maybe you want to wait to renew till we can all get together at monthly meetings, or get back to groups.

Whatever the reason we look forward to welcoming you back.

Kind regards **u3a Bexley Committee**

Hello Everyone

I hope you are all keeping well.

I am sure like myself we are all disappointed by not getting back to our Meetings in Bexleyheath. As most of you know, our Evergreen Revellers Choir had hoped to go back Monday 28<sup>th</sup> but unfortunately we were unable to sing back in the Hall. We planned to have a get together Picnic in the Park on the same Monday, Sadly had to be postponed, this time it was the weather that stopped us from meeting, I don't like a soggy sandwich !!!

Oh well we will get there eventually. Hopefully before the end of August. **And in breaking news, our member, George Ponder is 96 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July! Happy Birthday George!**

As most of you know Three years ago I said I was planning to sell my House in Erith and Move to Devon. Well, at last it has started to happen hence I want be in our Lovely Choir before I actually "Go West".

Why, some people ask me, do you want to go 214 hundred miles away with all the Friends I have, not just in Bexley u3a but other friends in South East London and Kent. Why leave the Spa Valley Railway where I also have friends?

The Answer is simple; I have always wanted to live in the country but never been able to even think about it, until now.

Some friends moved there from Erith five years ago and during regular visits there to see them I got to know some of their friends. I also happened to know one of the Directors of The South Devon Railway. Every time I visit the railway I get, "when you get down here can you help with this job and maybe this other job plus what do you want to do on the South Devon Railway"...

I also have done some research and found a u3a in the little town of Chudleigh some four miles away. A fairly new u3a from what I can make out. At the moment They do not have a Choir !!!!!

However there is one in the Town I'm going to Join , but they have to be Fun like our Choir.

I do not do Serious !

Although being some 214 miles away, with modern communication you can easily stay in Touch. All this is not definite until I sign on the Dotted line.

I am still around for a while yet and hopefully I will get see you all before I " Go West"  
For now ,Stay Safe, well and keep smiling !

Terry

## **JULY ZOOM**

As we are unable to meet in Roberts Hall as we planned on Thursday 8th July. I have set up another Zoom talk. Most of you know and remember the series of talks Paul Robbins presented for us earlier this year. I thought I would ask him at short notice to do the Zoom talk on the 8th July. And he has just introduced a new talk, details below!

Britain in the 1940s is a unique presentation as it focuses on the lives of ordinary British people during the 2nd World War. Talks about this decade often focus on the military campaigns and events that determined the outcome of the war.

This talk examines the lives of ordinary people in Britain and their daily struggle for survival during the 1940s. Paul's presentation examines how people reacted to the blitz, the evacuation of mothers and children from their homes, years of rationing and the dark years of uncertainty.

Paul Robbins explains how even entertainment, popular culture and the news we read or heard, were shaped by the desperate fight for survival. Take a glimpse back to the era of Anderson shelters, sweet rations and the bombing of our Towns and Cities. At the same time enjoy some of the wonderful movies of the era and how there was a hidden and subtle message in many of them.

Moving, informative and entertaining was how this talk was recently described. Britain in the 1940s is one of a series of talks presented by Paul Robbins in his "Step Back in Time" programme of talks.

Details of next Zoom talk on 8<sup>th</sup> July,

Topic: Paul Robbins' Bexley u3a Zoom Meeting

Time: Jul 8, 2021 15.15 PM London

The website version of this newsletter does not contain the meeting details for obvious reasons; they are contained in the printed version which has been sent to members. Please contact Terry if necessary. Please make sure all TVs, radios, mobiles etc are turned off before joining as this will be picked up and stops others from speaking.

Please note this Zoom Talk will start a little later at 15.15 not at 14.00 our usual time. You only need the ID code to get on no password.

Look forward to seeing you on Zoom on the 8th July.

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**Thoughts on Covid, Lockdowns and the Past Year**

Life Story Group 2. Contributions from Pam Wilson, Vicky Wheatley, Janet Poaros, Val George, Wendy Scott. Lesley Beasley, Maureen Wright.

March 2020, my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday imminent and my friend Lesley flying over from Australia to celebrate the occasion. Yes, there was this nasty virus in China and yes, we were told to wash our hands regularly and yes, some people who had flown into London from China or been on a cruise ship were taken by coach to some hotel to quarantine for 10 days. On March 15<sup>th</sup> Trish, Lesley and I left for Wales and later checked into the Premier Inn in Tenby. We were joined next day by my other relatives and friends although two other friends from my childhood contacted me to say they would not be coming to the birthday meal because of the virus situation. This call was echoed by my cousin and his wife a little later. I felt disappointed but quite understood their concern. So it was that on the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup>, nine of us, instead of the intended 13, arrived at the restaurant for my birthday meal. The next day we toured around Pembrokeshire but there were ominous signs and news reports were not good. The hotel staff were holding meetings and a gloom set in. Their doors were about to be closed. My 81<sup>st</sup> birthday has now been and gone and I haven't seen my family since my 80<sup>th</sup> in Tenby. I so look forward to seeing them again and also my close friends.

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Would we have ever thought that we would be spending our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in the garden especially on such a cold day? Not a chance. We would have booked to go on a special holiday to somewhere warm. However, it is the morning of 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2021. The first stage of lockdown restrictions had been eased. Six people were allowed in the garden according to Boris. Therefore, despite it being a freezing cold day, a table and chairs were set up on the patio and a lunchtime buffet was prepared. Our close friends braved the weather and kindly joined us, as well as our daughter. We lasted about an hour and a half then we scampered into our separate homes in order to warm up and dream of the blue seas of the Mediterranean.

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During the first 5 months of lockdown I saved loads of money, there was nothing to spend it on- I don't do online shopping - apart from food. The other thing I realised was, I ate a lot of peanut butter in the first lockdown. I also bought no new clothes or shoes, until 2021 when I spent a grand total of £9 on two M&S tops in the clearance sale. I have so many clothes that I haven't worn over the past 15 months as there's nowhere to go dressed up, and who knows when I'll ever go dancing again. Will it be this year? I do hope so. Last year was a year of cancelled theatre trips and holidays. It has also been a year of big changes. I have a gorgeous kitten, a new art studio and a new, to me car. Being on my own with my, sometimes naughty, kitten is not a problem, she gives structure to my day and I live in hope for a better future.

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In August 2019, I went to an 80th birthday party lunch of a friend I had known for about 50 years. Across the table from me sat the birthday boy next to his friend David who he had worked with and both families had holidayed together. We started chatting and found a huge amount in common. We took photographs across the table and talked about cine film, slides etc. A few weeks later, I emailed him to find out how he had his cine films digitised. This started biweekly emails for the next year, mostly about what we were doing and about our lives in general. Just after Easter my granddaughter who is living with me whilst she goes to sixth form, went home to her mum for a week, so David came to stay here for a few days. We went to my Church for a midweek communion service and afterwards went to lunch with the u3a walkers. They were walking as friends in groups of six. David has joined Bexley u3a to make it all legal. I have been to his village and met many of the locals. It's quite odd being vetted by his friends to see if I'm suitable. We are now in a really stable relationship and have discussed the future, what we have of it and decided that marriage is far too complicated. Children always get concerned about their inheritance (I know, my mum remarried in her seventies). *Who said we are passed it and that love is just for the young?*

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Life changed on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 when Boris Johnson made a broadcast that would mean our way of life over the coming months (and little did we realise then that this would be still happening in 2021) would change beyond all belief. No one could have imagined the repercussions that would spread round the world from COVID-19. We learnt how to do Zoom meetings with friends and family when we could get connected. Thank goodness for technology. We did exercises for the elderly with Joe Wicks on YouTube Also ordered facemasks, as it appeared that we would need to possibly wear these sometimes - again not realising that within a few months it would become compulsory. One of the U3A members started a Facebook page and every day she put word puzzles, jigsaw puzzles and many other bits on there. Earlier this year (2021), we started to have Zoom U3A meetings with some interesting speakers. I had a fall in November and following this, a month later, my left knee gave way and on X-ray it was confirmed I had broken the patella (knee cap) so I had to be admitted to Queen Elizabeth's hospital on 7<sup>th</sup> December and had an emergency operation on 8<sup>th</sup>. Because of restrictions, I had to wait in A&E alone and visitors were not allowed on the ward. When I was discharged from Hospital, four days later, I had been given all the equipment an "old lady" requires and then I realised that was me at the moment – I had a commode, wheelchair, zimmer and an upright chair. When I attended for my eye operation follow-up and fracture clinic appointments I had to have ambulance transport – the first time I have been in an ambulance

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My house was on a busy road and at the beginning of lockdown it was very strange that the roads were eerily quiet when I went out to walk with my dog. It was a strange sensation to not see anyone out but as the weeks went on I began to enjoy the peace. When strangers passed us on the street, some would smile politely and some, actually said Hello! As face to face contact was officially banned, I missed people. I had always been a busy person, my social calendar was always full. All of it suddenly cancelled. Very upsetting. There is only so much I could do indoors, on my own. I did the usual gardening which gave me some pleasure but hearing neighbours in their gardens surrounding me, the children laughing and playing only made me feel more alone and sorry for myself until I gave myself a good talking to, that at least I was healthy while others were seriously ill or dying.

As the summer of 2020 went on I became very discontented with the area that I have lived in for a long time and even my house seemed too big for me. I started to think about my future, to sell up and move somewhere else. I wanted to move out to somewhere quieter and found a lovely house in a riverside village, so by the Christmas lockdown 2020, I had moved into my new home. Since then I have been very happy. Despite the isolating of the country again, I have been content. The neighbours have been very welcoming and friendly and I can take some lovely walks along the river path or just around the village with Sid, my dog.

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At first, back in March 2020, being shut in at home was a bit of a novelty. There were cupboards to be cleared out, household jobs to catch up on and loads of emails, phone messages and WhatsApp COVID jokes to keep up with. And, the whole state of affairs seemed unreal and unbelievable. There was a general feeling that the whole episode would soon be over. That is until the hospitals started overfilling with very ill patients with the disease and TV news showed so many horror stories of COVID related deaths. In response to the dire news, supermarkets were besieged by customers worrying that there would be no food to buy and toilet rolls, rice, flour and many food stuffs quickly disappeared from the shelves. Panic buying had set in. On a visit to my local Morrison's I was horrified to find many of the shelves empty. It was as if a swarm of locusts had gone through the store. I could have cried at peoples' selfishness. Home deliveries from the supermarkets was difficult too. I managed to get only two delivery slots during those first months of the virus. It was a case of braving it to the shops or starving. As there was no advice from the government then to wear a face mask I always wrapped a scarf, sprayed with TCP, around my nose and mouth and glared at anyone who dared to come near me. One wonderful event has been the birth of our new grandson in March 2021, a light in the darkness of this awful pandemic. And I am truly grateful that all our family members and friends have kept safe and well too. P.S. I am still keeping a stock of toilet rolls – just in case!

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## Book Reviews

From Jenny: [Into the Water by Paula Hawkins](#)

Just days before her sister plunged to her death, Jules ignored her call. Now Nel is dead. They say she jumped, and Jules must return to her sister's house to care for her daughter and to face the mystery of Nel's death.

But Jules is afraid. Of her long-buried memories, of the old Mill House, of this small town that is drowning in secrecy.

And of knowing that Nel would never have jumped.

Hawkins is also the author of *The Girl on the Train*.

From Cynthia: [Dog's Best Friend by Simon Garfield](#)

This is the fascinating story of people's relationship with dogs over thousands of years; or as the author describes it, *A brief history of an unbreakable bond*.

Kate Humble, the television presenter who specialises in wildlife programmes, says it is a book that will make your tail wag. I totally agree.

From Hilary: [Hidden Depths by Ann Cleeves](#)

A woman comes home from a night out to find her son dead in the bath. The water is covered with flowers. It turns out to be murder not suicide. Then another body is found in a rock pool also covered in flowers and also murder. Vera has to find how the two people are linked and of course identify the murderer.

From Norma: [The Long Call by Ann Cleeves](#)

This is the first book in a new series by Ann Cleeves, set in North Devon and featuring Detective Matthew Venn.

He was brought up in a strict evangelical community called The Brethren, and when he decided to leave, he lost touch with his family. The book opens with him watching his father's funeral from a distance because he was not welcome to attend. When a body is found on the beach, the investigation centres on the community / arts centre run by his husband and involves members of the Brethren.

Well written, of course, and I didn't guess the ending, so I would definitely recommend it.

The second in the series, *The Heron's Cry*, is due out in September and according to Amazon there is to be a major TV series too.

From Carole: Night Over Water by Ken Follett

Follett is the master of the dramatic thriller, I think. The book reminded me very much of those disaster movies of the 1970s such as *Airport*. It is a fictional account of a final journey made by the Pan American Clipper passenger service airplane during the first few days after WW2 was declared. The airplane was real, although the characters are fictional. The seaplane was capable of crossing the Atlantic to New York in little more than 24 hours with several stops on the way for refuelling and picking up the odd passenger.

Follett builds the intrigue at each stop as he reveals the characters and the reasons for their journeys. The journey, the fastest mode of transatlantic travel at the time, was especially appealing to those wanting to escape from Britain before the bombing started. The passengers include a fascist aristocrat escaping arrest with his family and a fortune in priceless jewels, a German scientist escaping from the Nazis, and a devious conman and thief. As the passengers board the plane, their back stories are told along with those of several of the crew. As the sinister plot and violence unfold the initial selfish interests of those on board change in most cases and they become a team.

This is a gripping but easy read with a twist in the ending. I recommend it.

From Irene: Tall Bones by Anna Bailey

When a teenage girl disappears from an insular small town, all of the community's most devastating secrets come to light in this stunningly atmospheric and slow-burning suspense novel.

This debut novel is set in Whistling Ridge, a small, sad American town full of prejudiced characters and secrets and where the church rules the town.

A place where Abigail Blake walked to the woods to meet with someone and vanished into thin air. There are multiple characters described in detail. Personally, I felt that we were given too much information on the characters and it left me feeling a little tired and depressed. It lost direction in some parts of the story. In saying that, it was a high-tension thriller and little snippets of information from each character made me want to keep reading until the end.

I would read further novels by Anne Bailey.

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**Executive Committee 2019- 2020**

|                            |                   |  |                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|-------------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair                      | Sandra Goulding   |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Vice Chair                 | <b>VACANCY</b>    |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Secretary                  | Maureen Wright    |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Treasurer                  | Ron Clayton       |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Membership                 | Douglas West      |  |                                                                                                                                  |
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| Group Liaison              | Cynthia Allen     |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| E-mail & IT                | Nino Parascandolo |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Social Secretary           | Thelma Wilkes     |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Catering                   | Vi King           |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Hall Manager /Database     | Nino Parascandolo |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>NON-COMMITTEE ROLES</b> |                   |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Meet & Greet               | Edna Sutton       |  | Please let Edna know of personal events e.g. significant birthdays, anniversaries, condolences, etc. so that she can send cards. |
| Newsletter Editor          | Mary Jupp         |  |                                                                                                                                  |

All contributions for **August** newsletter to be submitted by Midday **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021**. Please ensure you contribute before the cut-off and have an email acknowledgment from me that I have received your contribution!  
Thank You