



LEARN, LAUGH, LIVE

Charity No. 1083274

Leicester Newsletter

September 2020

u3asites.org.uk/leicester



Fading Rose – From Digital Photography project ‘Macro’
Photo by Irene Ault

Message from the Chair

2020 is proving to be a very strange year indeed as a tiny organism has brought human life as we know it almost to a standstill. It is understandable that governments should have difficulties dealing with it and approaches to dealing with it have varied widely as has the degree of success.

In England the Authorities seem to have decided that the best thing to do is to scare the life out of people while simultaneously causing as much uncertainty and confusion as possible. First we were in lockdown then we were not. Then we were back in lockdown. Now we are being partly released from lockdown but have had a set of new restrictions imposed on us. It is apparently fine to go to the pub but not all right to visit your children. The long and the short of it is that, despite the optimism of a couple of weeks ago, we are now further than ever from being able to resume normal U3A activities. Nevertheless, the Committee has made provision for the safe resumption of face to face meetings once this is allowed.



You may have noticed that the Newsletter now has a new Editor. You may recall that at the AGM Steph Smith resigned on health grounds from her position both as Chair and as a member of the Committee.

Unfortunately she has decided that her remaining role as Editor of the Newsletter has proved too much for her and has stepped down. Steph is one of those people who put their heart and soul into everything they do. We all owe her a great debt of gratitude for everything she has done for Leicester U3A in her various roles over the past years. I am sure that we would all want to wish her all the best. If you want to submit a contribution to future issues of the Newsletter could you please send them to: newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk.

Well, let us be optimistic and hope that, by the time you read this newsletter, everything will be getting back to normal. If not, do keep reading the regular newsheet for up to date information.

Tony Davison (Chair Leicester U3A)

A Message from our East Midlands Trustee – Jean Hogg, from her August Newsletter.

Back in March I do not think that any of us imagined that this situation would go on for as long as this. It has not been at all easy and I know how much many of our members are longing to return to normal routines. During the last few months, many U3As across the Region have been in touch with others in their Network or neighbourhood group. Newsletters have been circulated and issues raised and discussed. Now Networks are beginning to hold virtual meetings. E Lincs. was the first group to do this and it went very well. Notts. Network held one yesterday with 37 people taking part, and were joined by national Chair, Ian McCannah, who gave an update on the Trust development plan. U3As reported on how they are coping with the current situation. It was particularly good to hear about the very proactive Groups coordinators at Beeston U3A who have encouraged and supported so many of their group convenors to use zoom for their groups. Leicestershire Network has a similar meeting planned. This has emphasised just how important Networks are in providing mutual support.



East Midlands Conference – 30th October

There is still no decision about whether or not this will be held. It is hard to know what the situation will be by then. The planning group continues to keep the situation under review. Watch this space!

The 37th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Third Age Trust will be held online only on **29th September** and all U3A members will be welcome to attend.

There will be opportunities for voting representatives to ask questions and make comments as normal during the AGM, via a textbox.

Details on access to the meeting will follow in due course. It will be accessible from a website or an app on a phone or tablet.

U3A Nationwide High Street Project -An opportunity to volunteer

Organised by the Third Age Trust Research Committee, the project is about identifying local high street shops. Volunteers are asked to walk along their high street, local parade or shopping centre, photograph each shop front, and note three things about each shop – name, address and type of shop (a list of property type codes will be sent by the Committee to each volunteer). The task can be done individually or in small groups.

Participants are asked to follow local social distancing rules. It is estimated that a pair of U3A members can survey a street of 100 shops in two hours and do the data entry at home in half a day.

Volunteers are already covering several areas in and around Leicester, but the following areas are still available for new volunteers: Leicester City centre, Granby Street, London Road from Victoria Park to Railway Station, Narborough Road. There is also an opportunity to survey Wigston and Market Harborough. You are also welcome to nominate your favourite shopping precinct.

If you are able and willing to take part, please send your name, email address and your selected area to Eks.committee@leicesteru3a.org.uk by **15th September the latest.**

I shall forward your detail to the organisers. An information pack will be sent to you in time to complete the recording by the end of September. All personal data will of course be subject to standard U3A Data Protection regulations. The Research Committee aims to produce a report for the Board by the end of December 2020 and a final report in early 2022 as part of helping to raise the U3A's profile in our 40th anniversary year.

Elisabeth Somogyi (Regional Research Ambassador)

U3A National Newsletter

Leicester in the news: The latest edition included a special mention. **‘I want to make special mention of Leicester and U3As there, to say we are thinking of you during this time.’** If you don't already receive this you can Sign up at u3a.org.uk/email

What is U3A?

As U3A starts to look beyond lockdown, the Third Age Trust (TAT) has created a short film entitled "What is U3A?" Voiced by Sam Mauger the Chief Executive, the film explains what this amazing movement is all about, which we hope you can use as part of your toolkit for publicity and aid you in recruitment. You can find the film by going to their YouTube channel [here](#)

We Need Your Volunteer Skills

Would you like to be part of a vibrant team of Trust Volunteers - sharing your skills and working to support the movement? We are currently looking for:

PR Advisors - With knowledge and experience in a PR or marketing capacity, you will be part of the Regional Support Team and work closely with Liz Drury, the Third Age Trust Communications Officer, as part of the Trust's strategic project of raising the profile of the U3A movement.

Shared Learning Project (SLP) Regional Coordinators – Two in each region across the UK, you will work with the Regional Trustee as part of the Regional Team to promote shared learning projects in their region and advise local U3As on setting up these projects. You will be supported by the National SLP Coordinators and the SLP committee.

National Shared Learning Project Coordinator (NSLPC) to lead a team of Regional SLP Coordinators, keeping them informed of relevant matters within the structure of the TAT and offer them support and advice on all matters regarding U3A enquiry-led learning. You will also take a national overview of how SLPs promote the concept of learning in the U3A and chair the SLP committee

Interested? *Please contact the [U3A National Office](#) for a role description and details of the application process.*

Activities...From Afar

Under the current circumstances, all our groups have been severely affected. Those groups who meet at outside venues have also clearly been disrupted, and await the individual venues' go ahead. I hope that, as soon as it is safe, everyone can meet again as they used to. However, here are some of the ways people have managed to keep in contact in our 77 groups, even though we haven't been able to meet properly. Thank you everybody for keeping in touch and telling me about things - it continues to be a great pleasure to hear from you all.



How Hard Can It Be, as the name implies, showed no fear, and embraced Zoom in the first week of the “lockdown”, meeting socially on it ever since. They are planning a weekend trip to Snowdon as soon as everything eases.

History 2 has shared a fascinating, outstanding daily blog, discussing everything from Tantallon Castle, in East Lothian, through excavations at Hallaton, to most recently the Venerable Bede.

The Natural History group emailed early on to joke “it’s like being in house arrest”, and exchange photos and observations of interest on WhatsApp. They plan to try to restart if possible, this month ... *Science and Technology* continue to keep in contact through email, and on Zoom, and of course they have their own website... *Architecture and Design*, aside from planning the Avoncroft trip, rescheduled for June 2021, has tours pencilled in for the coming months; and have exchanged websites for the group to look at researching possible future visits.

Current Affairs have started back up successfully with Zoom recently, as have *Discussion 1 and Discussion 2*.... *History 1* has kept in touch with each other, and hopes to restart physical meetings as soon as is feasibly possible... *Philosophy 1* draw inspiration from Radio 4 programmes, discuss by email, and then by Zoom, meeting twice monthly. They are currently sorting out the History of Western Philosophy - easy (!)

French Conversation Advanced 1 has been meeting each fortnight on Zoom. They have circulated a booklet with ideas on how to run a French conversation group, and emailed each other French short stories, and a French music YouTube link...*French Intermediate Conversation* email

each other regularly in French... *Welsh Improvers* have Quizzes sent around the group on Welsh History personalities and the language; and they meet on Zoom to discuss pre-arranged topics and ask each other questions in Welsh.

Digital Photography, aside from providing beautiful photos for the Newsletter, as do *Cryptic Crosswords 2* with their wonderful crosswords, has been meeting through Flickr, which is an online photo sharing app. They're also on Zoom and discovered you can continue free simply by signing in again. "Virtual meetings have kept the group active and provided social contact as well as motivation for taking pictures." They consider The Share Screen facility on Zoom is vital for participation to show what they have produced...and *Creative Writing* continue to write and share great pieces with us, plus of course organise the successful Leicester U3A Creative Writing Competition.

Needlework and Knitting, and Craft have kept in touch by email and phone calls, one of the many groups who continue in this really good way... *Bookworms* keeps going by email, each member suggesting three books to be voted on, the person chosen leading each meeting's discussion, and have tried WhatsApp...*Music for Pleasure* have a virtual group meeting using YouTube to pick two pieces of music to listen to and discuss. *Guitar* has been keeping in touch, but Zoom is difficult with live music because of delays.

Bridge 1 and *Bridge 2* have been meeting virtually to play using a Bridge website, supplemented by WhatsApp. By the time you read this they will have joined with Discussion 1 and Discussion 2 to meet on Zoom.

And finally, one thing we can do is read, and *Reading for Pleasure* has continued seamlessly. They have contributed to the Newsletter their list of books to read, among others, a fine choice, and they always plan a few months in advance. At time of writing they have a number on their list left to read and discuss. They continue to read a chosen book each meeting, then email with comments, sharing opinions as usual. All members are participating - an important factor in order not to leave anyone out in the speed of things.

It is totally understandable if you have not been able to do your activity, and I hope that everyone has managed to stay in touch, and at least chat socially.

Take Care, Neil

(Neil Taylor - Groups Coordinator)

Meet the Convenor

This month's Convenor is Jill Reville, Convenor of the Reading For Pleasure and Music Appreciation (Wednesday) groups

Q: Are you originally from Leicester?

No I'm from Maidstone in Kent. Born and Bred.

Q: What brought you to Leicester U3A?

A job at what is now DMU.

Q: What did you do before you retired?

I was a teacher in law for architecture students. I became Course Leader of the professional stage of the architecture training and Head of Academic Quality for the Faculty of Art & Design

Q: What made you join Leicester U3A?

When I retired I thought that belonging to some groups would add structure to my life after work.

Q: How long have you been a member of Leicester U3A?

Since August 2011

Q: What groups did you join to start with?

I started off joining the Poetry, French and possibly walking groups. Since then I have joined Architecture & Design and I now convene Reading for Pleasure and the Wednesday Music Appreciation Groups.

Q: What's your TV guilty pleasure?

I watch very little TV to be honest but I do enjoy Lucy Worsley's historical documentaries. Also Michael Portillo's Great Railway Journeys. It was a revelation to find him so likeable after my opinion of him as a Minister.

Q: What was the last book you read?

I have just finished 'The Silence of The Girls' by Pat Barker and am starting on 'Burr' by Gore Vidal.

My grateful thanks to Jill for her time. (Editor)

Reports from the Groups and Individual Members

Digital Photography

The Digital Photography Group has been meeting through the medium of Zoom and are learning to overcome various hitches. The theme for August was Water, here captured in flight by the camera's flash.

Matt Matthew (Member of Digital Photography Group)



←*Photo by Matt Matthew*

Photo by Irene Ault →



The theme for July was "Macro Shots". "Macro" means super close-up and involves taking pictures at distances of 1" or less if the camera can manage it. Several had pictures of flowers, water droplets on foliage and insects. Mine were of the designs embedded in several glass paperweights

Cliff Ault (Member of Digital Photography Group)



Photo by Cliff Ault



Photo by Cliff Ault



Photo by Irene Ault

Music Appreciation (Wednesday)

The current restrictions have not stopped this group's activities - we just do things differently. Those members who are on email are invited to suggest a couple of pieces of music which we can find on YouTube, following the theme chosen for the month. We then exchange our thoughts on the music after listening to it, again by email. So far, we have enjoyed a varied selection of orchestral, choral and instrumental music. The theme of 'Music with a Special Meaning to Me' provided us not only with music to listen to, but also interesting stories about why it was chosen. It is very pleasing that group members participate with such enthusiasm - we all miss the experience of listening together and the social side of conventional meetings, but something is better than nothing! One big advantage of this new method of 'meeting' is that it has no geographical limitations, and we are delighted that our former convenor, Charles Norman, has joined our 'virtual' group from his new home in Wales.

Jill Reville, (Convenor)

What Did You Do During Lockdown?

Sunday 15th March 2020. I went into voluntary quarantine because of my age and various medical conditions. The huge lockdown came the week after. It's not going to last long, is it? Why are people stockpiling loo paper, flour, sugar and pasta? Why aren't there any fresh vegetables to be found? Even tinned and frozen ones have gone. None of my family is local but luckily I have some very good friends. How about my shopping? Kind offers came and I gratefully accepted them. So, what have I been doing during the lockdown? I've always loved cooking and baking, so I've done loads. Old favourites and new discoveries. My son is also very interested and baked bread and passed on the recipes. I am now an artisan bread maker, not in a machine. Naturally, everything I've been making I have been eating and so I am quite a bit heavier than I was on March 15th. I've done lots of reading. Fortunately the weather has been good and so I've spent many a happy hour reading in my lovely garden. I've pottered in the garden but can't do much because I have a spine condition. I've kept in touch with family and friends over the phone and via Zoom etc.

I adore art but have never been able to produce anything, however my grandson told me about this guy he'd seen on TV who had this great technique. I watched and felt quite enthusiastic. My daughter went on line and ordered all the equipment I needed. It arrived and I was very excited. I have now produced a few rather nice pieces. Seeing I haven't been out I was unable to buy anniversary and birthday cards for my family. I decided to paint some. They were thrilled and said how special they were to them. I have to say my daily routine has been non-existent, but I've kept myself busy, happy and am still quite sane. I've watched the days get longer and now they're getting shorter, oh dear.

So there you are! These are some things I've done during lockdown. I DO HOPE IT ENDS SOON.

(Phyllis Nyman member of Craft group)



Creative Writing – Mr Attlee’s Visit

1945 was the year of our school centenary. To mark the event our headmaster, Dr Morton, had made a big effort to get someone well known as guest of honour at the annual speech day; one of our old boys was called Major Milner and he was himself a Big Name, being the Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons. But somehow he would not quite do because he always came to the Speech Days anyway and sat on the platform. The Head did get him to twist an arm, though, and the result was a very big fish indeed; no less a person than the Deputy Prime Minister in Winston Churchill’s wartime coalition government, one Clement Attlee. The war in Europe had ended six weeks previously and Attlee had made himself unpopular with Churchill as soon as the peace treaty was signed; at that point the emergency powers which the political parties had agreed to for the last five years came to an end and Attlee had insisted that the Prime Minister dissolve the sitting parliament and call a general election, something which had not happened for almost a decade. Election Day was only a week or two after Speech Day and I imagine our venerable Headmaster was in no doubt which was the most important event of the two. I sat on the front row a few feet away from the distinguished visitor when he delivered us his wisdom and presented the prizes. I wish I could say what the content of his speech was, but I have entirely forgotten it. His chances of becoming our next Prime Minister were at that moment considered remote indeed: who could imagine that the Colossus of Wartime England, the Bulldog Hero, could be overturned by this slight and unassuming little man?

For sixty years I have marvelled at the fact that he did win, that he won by a landslide, that within weeks he would be shaking hands with Stalin at Potsdam as he and Truman reset the geography and history of the world for good and bad for ever; and that within two years he would inaugurate the National Health Service and radically put into public ownership so much of our national industry.

Most of all I marvelled at the fact that, with the future history of the world at that epochal moment so close to his grasp, he could find the time to make a six-hour railway journey to give out the baubles in a piddling school in the middle of a suburban provincial nowhere. Sixty years later, I resolved to visit Leeds Reference Library and look up what his words of wisdom actually were. I never found them; if they are still extant

somewhere I would be interested to know. The school has ceased to exist, together with its records, and The Yorkshire Post never, as far as I could find, reported on the event. What it did report though was the political speeches he made on the same day in other parts of Leeds. I guess his priorities were, after all, somewhat different from those of our Headmaster.

Mike Westmoreland (member of Creative Writing group)

Ukulele Group

The Ukulele Group, now down to three, is ticking over using Zoom. We meet every two weeks.

Zoom proved quite challenging at the start. It became quite apparent almost immediately that we would be unable to play and sing together as a group. We were all out of sync with one another both with our playing and singing. It was impossible to sing in harmony (difficult at the best of times) This was mostly down to the limitations of the Zoom software but also without us able to physically play & sing face to face we were unable to maintain common timing/ rhythm.

We get by with one person playing and singing on their own. Not perfect but it works for now.

Zoom is definitely not a replacement for face to face activities such as the Ukulele Group.

We are looking forward to the time when we can all meet and perform together as pre-Covid.

We need new members to join us if this group is to survive long term. If there is any member who would like to join us and learn to play the ukulele do contact me. (ukulele@leicesteru3a.org.uk)

Both absolute beginners and ideally anyone who can play already would be very welcome.

Beginners would be given some initial free lessons to get started and then it would be up to them to practise regularly to improve their skills. Singing is not mandatory; to be able to play the chords well is fine if that's what the member prefers. Obviously this is all dependent on how we are able to proceed after COVID -19 lockdown restrictions are lifted and following health regulations etc.

(Ian Knox – Convenor)

Architecture and Design Group

In August the Architecture and Design Group met on Zoom for the first time since lockdown began in March. Our planned meetings in the spring and early summer were all trips that, of course, had to be postponed until 2021. Pat Kirkham led the discussion of how we have changed the ways we use our houses and gardens during Covid-19. We were all feeling very aggrieved by the latest government decree for Leicester, that we could not have visitors in our houses and not even in our gardens. Several of our members were shielding so had not been out of their houses since lockdown began.

One of our topics was how to exercise in the house. Pilates was a popular option, one member had cleared a space indoors for pilates, another had bought a disco light for dancing. Another had visits from a physiotherapist in full protective gear to help with exercises after a serious fracture.

Doorways and the pavement outside houses had become important places for social interaction. Early in the lockdown neighbours were meeting outside their houses for the clapping on Thursday evenings to show support for the NHS. Now people still call on friends while standing on the pavement.

Those with gardens were grateful to have the outdoor space and had spent more time nurturing their plants and visiting garden centres where shopping was allowed relatively early in the lockdown. Several had pursued their interest in crafts and one showed us a lovely shawl she had made. We were very pleased that all the group had remained Covid-free. We have a couple of socially - distanced walking tours pencilled in for September and October (if regulations allow) and also plan to have more Zoom meetings in the winter.

Veronica Matthew (convenor)

Mah-jong

Sadly the Mah-Jong Group has not been able to meet during lockdown, but we did manage one get together in my garden before all that was not allowed. Even then only six of the seven who were keen to join me were able to attend due to the restrictions. (They came as much for a social meeting as anything.) Here is a photo of that day.

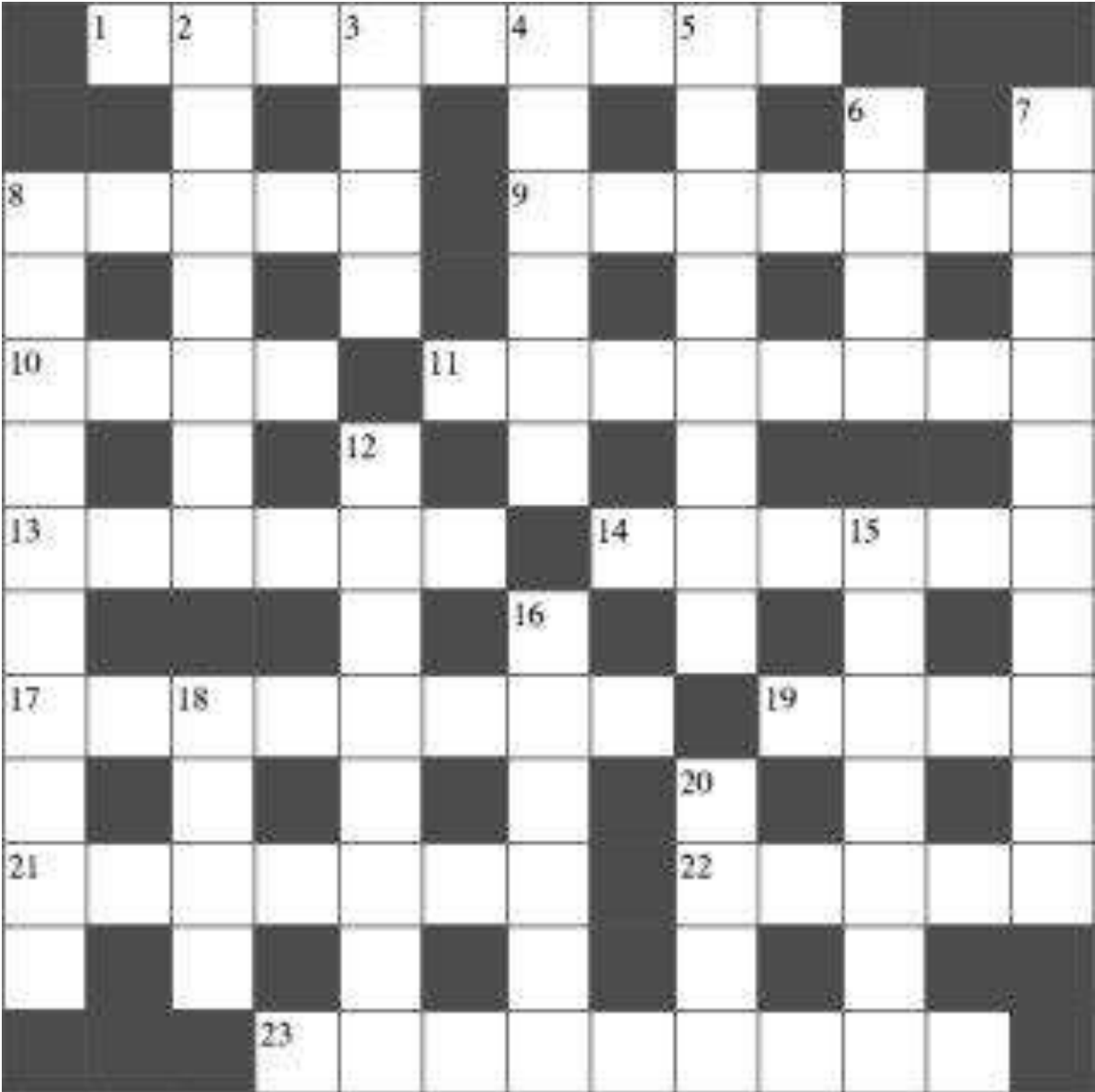
Board games such as mah-jong are rather difficult at a distance with sanitizer. (*What a lovely garden – Editor*)

Ann Allsop (Convenor)



Puzzle Corner

Cryptic Crossword (created by Cryptic Crossword 2 Group)



CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Addition to the library from inheritance (9)
- 8 Are these notes of lesser importance? (5)
- 9 What locks are not getting during the lockdown? (7)
- 10 In legends only every other one has this requirement (4)
- 11 School the right trainee to receive a job guarantee (8)
- 13 Rest is disturbed by relative (6)
- 14 Vinegar plant will provide the expert stomach (6)
- 17 Waste, very red and sere, is distant (8)
- 19 Sign clownfish is found reversing (4)
- 21 Playwright about right: he makes an impression (7)
- 22 Implements second plunder from the East (5)
- 23 Jumble sales - ten I find vital (9)

CLUES DOWN

- 2 The cheat needs to own up to admit the crime (7)
- 3 The dear lady embraces the Countess's husband (4)
- 4 Should soldier in cult keep this? (6)
- 5 Rich goal - perverted aim of tycoon? (8)
- 6 Some hope nothing is disclosed (4)
- 7 Send matron out for festoons (10)
- 8 Handwritten copy for football team player's lines(10)
- 12 Edit rust dispersed in rubbish (8)
- 15 Throw a highball back to cat for a lucky dip (7)
- 16 Measure some lemonade greedy (6)
- 18 Pass over to the captain (4)
- 20 Exam with third raised to first - no leave it as it is (4)

Crossword Solution

	¹ A	² C	C	³ E	S	⁴ S	I	⁵ O	N			
		O		A		E		L		⁶ O	⁷ A	
⁸ M	I	N	O	R		⁹ C	L	I	P	P	E	D
A		F		L		R		G		E		O
¹⁰ N	E	E	D		¹¹ R	E	T	A	I	N	E	R
U		S		¹² D		T		R				N
¹³ S	I	S	T	E	R		¹⁴ A	C	E	¹⁵ T	U	M
C				T		¹⁶ D		H		O		E
¹⁷ R	E	¹⁸ S	E	R	V	E	D		¹⁹ O	M	E	N
I		K		I		G		²⁰ S		B		T
²¹ P	R	I	N	T	E	R		²² T	O	O	L	S
T		P		U		E		E		L		
			²³ E	S	S	E	N	T	I	A	L	

About the Newsletter

A Plea from your temporary Editor

The position of Editor is currently vacant. Although we will try and continue to produce an edition each month whilst we look for a new editor, if no one comes forward the newsletter in its present form may cease to exist. CAN YOU HELP? If you think you can please ring the membership secretary who can tell you a little about the commitment and send you the job description. Her contact details are in your contact list which was circulated recently.

Delivery

The Newsletter is currently only being delivered to members by email as a pdf file with one page per side.

Contributions

The deadline for items to be included in the October 2020 Newsletter is Sunday 29th September. Contributions (from convenors and members) should be sent to the editor at: newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk

If you want to submit your entry as hard copy, please contact the Editor, or the Membership Secretary for the postal address.

We are always pleased to receive **brief** reports from groups about their recent activities and extend our thanks to all the authors who have done so. Please keep them coming. The occasional picture would be welcome as well. Please keep all articles to a maximum of 400 words. If you have a story or a report that is considerably longer than that, we can edit it into 2 (or more if it's very long!) shorter articles to be published in subsequent Newsletters.

When the current restrictions are lifted LEICESTER U3A will resume its meetings on the second Tuesday of each month (except August and December) at Christchurch, Clarendon Park Road, LE2 3AH, and many special interest groups will then continue to meet regularly in members' homes and elsewhere.