

## Keeping you in touch with BArts and the local Arts scene

Edited by Lee Rayner, leerayner\_arts@hotmail.com 01992 465383

No.1 July 2020



### Closure of The Spotlight

*First* we'll get the really *bad* news out of the way. The Leader of Broxbourne Borough Council, Lewis Cocking, has announced that the Spotlight will be closed until Autumn 2021, in order to save money. Current staff will be made redundant.

The venue is one of the largest north of the Thames, hosting all kinds of professional entertainment, including films and relayed NT and RSC productions, as well as regular community activities, amateur theatre and meetings and its closure will have a substantial impact on local life in general and many of BArts' groups in particular.

**U3As** Both Broxbourne and Lea Valley U3As hold their main monthly meetings at the Spotlight, with average attendances hovering around 150-200, and there just isn't anywhere else with a similar capacity.



The Arts Society, East Herts' monthly lecture meetings are also affected.

Three of BArts' popular, long established events, **Let's Do Lunch, My Kind of Music** and **Behind the Scenes**, which help to provide a modest income and attract supporters, are also in jeopardy. We considered trying to offer 'virtual' presentations of the lunch themes via Zoom, during the current pandemic, but are aware that it's the informal, social atmosphere, interaction with the audience and small details that contribute so much to the success and couldn't be replicated effectively on screen. We will continue to investigate the possibility of a suitable alternative venue.

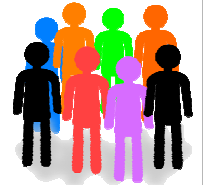


Of course, the Spotlight exhibition space was already lost last September, after the refurbishment of the bar, and finding a similar alternative has, so far, proved impossible.

**There are fears that the Spotlight may *never* re-open and an on-line petition already has nearly 5,000 signatures. Please add yours!**

<https://www.change.org/p/broxbourne-council-reopen-the-spotlight-theatre-asap/signatures/confirm?token=a260e4ec-b5f7-4bc1-a542-7746e43c85d1>

### Around the Groups

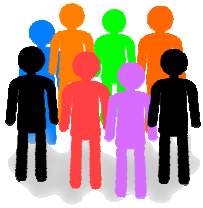


**BArts' Watercolour Classes** have continued, with successful on-line sessions keeping everyone active and happy, thanks to tutor, Alison Showell, and BArts' organiser, Alison Gordon.

**Theatre and Dance schools** have the additional stress of trying to maintain an adequate *income* to ensure the survival of their businesses.

**Jason Theatre School, Mayhem Theatre Arts** and the **Vallé Academy** have all come up with creative ideas for performance activities on – line, or in open spaces, with master classes, additional weekly challenges, quizzes and fund-raising opportunities to keep students and their families involved.

**Broxbourne, Cheshunt and Lea Valley U3As** have all provided more frequent, lively newsletters, with quizzes, cartoons and irreverent verses on our shared predicament. Some of their interest groups, such as **Astronomy, Family History, Reading For Pleasure** have met on line and several of the outdoor activities—**Croquet, Cycling, Walking Football, and Short Walks**, have been able to resume, recently, while carefully maintaining appropriate social distances. The major problem for such groups is lack of public loos!



## Around Other Groups

While artist members of **Burford, Hazelwood, Lea Valley, Lowewood and Mannamead Art Groups** may have been busy

painting their time away at *home* over the weeks of lockdown, and photographer members of **Hoddesdon Camera Club** may have been happily ‘snapping’, we’re not aware of any *special* ways that these groups have been able to adapt and cater for their members. We would welcome some *picture* contributions to the August edition of our newsletter!

Some of the **Arts Society, East Herts’** lecture meetings have been transferred to on-line and several tutors employed by our affiliated **Hoddesdon and Broxbourne branch of the WEA** have been offering short courses on various subjects.

## In the meantime... Hurrah for Technology!

Even if you’re not a computer whizz or fan of social media, it’s clear that *Facetime, Twitter etc* and various websites and programmes like *Zoom*, have been invaluable to keep us in touch with family and friends, and *see* their faces, hold meetings and *Catch Up* with favourite TV series.



**Lockdown fatigue!**

## Hurrah for On-line shopping!

While local ‘super’ markets have often been *less* than super, on-line shopping has been Amaz..ing! Books, CDs, DVDs, storage, office supplies, garden tools, plants, perfume— most have arrived within 24 hours. Flattening and getting rid of the boxes can be a bit of a problem for isolated oldies, though!

One local supermarket *has* been really good, allowing NHS employees wearing their ID lanyards to jump queues and giving them 5% discount on their purchases.



**Editor’s Note** *With family members in the NHS, my shopping has benefited, but I’ve had the odd, slightly critical remark from the family about my choice of ‘comfort’ food during lockdown—full fat milk and crusty white bread!*



**Hoddesdon**

## Love Hoddesdon, Working To Revive the Town and Trade

This organisation, under the leadership of Tony Cox, has been super efficient in maintaining *daily* contact with local businesses, reminding them of new regulations and means of complying and sustaining a very buoyant, positive attitude amidst all the doom and gloom. If you’re nervous about venturing out to shop in Hoddesdon, the poster below may help to allay your fears.

In common with so many organisations, Tony has also offered a daily quiz and staff from **Hoddesdon Library and Golden Boy** coaches have often come first with the answers.



## Hurrah for Community Spirit!

See the **Love Hoddesdon** website for more details of initiatives and events



In spite of everything, the **Hertfordshire Year of Culture** has managed to present *adapted* forms of their planned creative programme with digital, visual, audio and written contributions in place of live events and performances. You can view Art and Sculpture exhibitions on-line, take part in Clay, Sketching, Coasters, Drama or Yoga workshops, join a Q and A session about Shakespeare, a socially distanced Treasure Trail Walk, or Fun Fitness for the over 55s. In short, you’ll be spoiled for choice.



## Verse or Worse?!

For the incarcerated, vulnerable, over 70s scribbling little rhymes seems to have been an entertaining form of therapy and quite a few examples have reached group newsletters, or even the national press! With so many ‘arts’ groups, BArts has, perhaps, been particularly favoured and although most of the writers would describe their efforts as mere ‘doggerel’, they do, nevertheless, fulfil one of Alexander Pope’s criteria that poems should be ‘*what oft was thought, but ne’er so well expressed*’.

### Covid 19

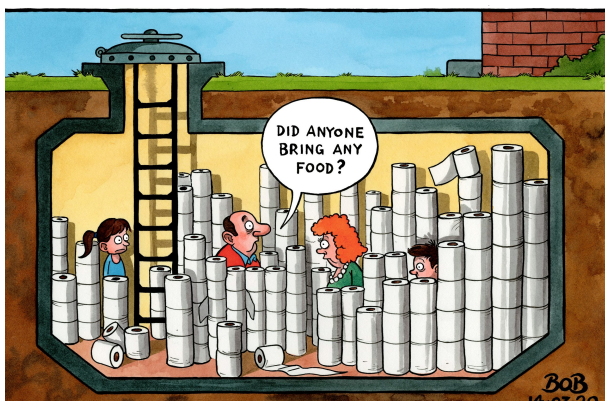
When this virus flees the roost  
Will we have finished reading Proust?  
Written our memoirs for posterity?  
Become accustomed to austerity?  
Cleaned out that cupboard, full of grot?  
Oh, my dear friends, I fancy not!

We’re far too busy, every day.  
To get work done, much less to play.  
Our phones and tablets are red hot  
With Emails, Facetime, Zoom- the lot!  
Friends forward messages of cheer.  
There isn’t time to dwell on fear.

I made a timetable, like school  
But one week on I look a fool.  
I haven’t kept to it at all  
The hope of doing so is small.  
I thought I might learn Modern Greek  
Well, I’ve already lost a week!

When we emerge—emerge we shall  
I’m off to caper down the Mall  
To breathe the fume-less London air,  
Sporting my curious, unkempt hair.  
Will it then matter, if, as feared  
I find I look like Mary Beard?

Gill Rowe 28.03.20



## Ageing!

I’ve gone *down* another notch,  
I’m sad to say,  
I was shocked by what I noticed  
In the mirror yesterday.  
After fifteen weeks of ‘lockdown’,  
My face now seems quite strange—  
But I don’t really *understand*  
Why there *should* have been this change.  
Looking like uncared for spaniel,  
Sort of *beaten* and all droopy,  
My eyes are bloodshot, rather vague,  
And my body seems more ‘stoopy’.  
The ‘bags’ and wrinkles now all  
Tend to look much bigger,  
As do the bulges of the tum and bum  
That are spoiling my whole figure.  
My hair has grown so much  
Without the hairdresser’s deft touch,  
It no longer has a style  
And I find it hard to smile...  
Still,... I suppose at eighty-five  
I should be thankful  
I’m *alive!* ‘Ellar’



### Role Reversal— Pay-back Time!

After 12 weeks in isolation,  
my offspring pushed me  
round Barclay Park in  
a wheelchair and vivid  
memories of pushing *them* in  
their pushchairs surfaced and made everyone  
laugh! It was extremely uncomfortable, in  
spite of being strapped in and sitting on  
a cushion. Kerbs, every slope, every bump in  
the paving or tarmac, going across grass...  
All proved to be ridiculously difficult, but  
*hilarious*. A whole new experience! Now I  
*know* why kids fidget and make such a fuss  
about going in *their* pushchairs! Lee

### Design A Mask to suit your personality or mood ! Send us a picture.

Adapted underwear seems to be  
a cheap option!



## Nursing Redeployment

*A Health Visitor returned to the wards*

1. 2020 is the year the world  
Won't easily forget,  
When all we took for granted  
Had to change.  
A new strain of deadly virus  
Brought a nightmare daily threat  
And in pandemic 'lock-down' life was strange.  
Pubs and clubs, theatres, cinemas  
Were shut down over night,  
Together with the non-essential shops,  
And surrounded by these ghost towns  
Just emphasised our plight  
Especially when now patrolled by 'cops'.

2. Wearing masks may protect *others*,  
But they're not much use to *you*....  
Still, at least it's one small gesture  
When there's little *else* to do!

3. Some would say the NHS was *already* in a mess  
But funds and new ideas came thick and fast—  
New hospitals were erected  
So much quicker than expected  
And the medical profession,  
In the forefront now, respected,  
Hit the headlines as real heroes—  
Much more *valued* now, at *last*!

4. Some of us were re-deployed,  
Willing, tho' not overjoyed,  
But were delegated all the *worst* of tasks each day.  
When some colleagues 'went to ground'  
And a few could not be *found*  
*We* felt resentment and *frustration*  
In the service of the nation,  
But there was little we could really *do* or *say*.

5. "What about *our* PPE?...  
I hope there's some for me...?"  
"You might have to wait and see!"  
.....This can't be *right*!  
Twelve hour shifts became the *norm*,  
*Endless* filling out of forms...  
Then suggestions that we *all* should work at night!  
On the wards, we washed and lifted  
Bewildered, bed-bound patients,  
Did the drugs round, feeling anxious,  
Served the meals,  
Emptied bed-pans, answered questions,  
Went home *totally* exhausted  
Just one more 'Corona moaner'  
*Overwhelmed* by what *we* feel.



"I know it's been a rough shift,  
but look at the bright side...  
only 7 hours to go."

## Is It Really Thursday Again?

*Life in Limbo, or the 'Twilight Zone'.*

Hands up if you now have an immaculate house and garden, a refined, re-vamped wardrobe, a trim figure and a freezer full of home-made goodies!... Me neither! (*Ed.*)

## General Knowledge Quiz

Answers in next newsletter

1. Who wrote The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy.
2. What is the middle colour of a rainbow.
3. Which Country held the first "Miss World Contest.
4. What would a soldier carry in a frog.
5. The left hand page of a book is called...
6. On Which Planet does a day last 8 months.
7. Which U.S President had to borrow money to travel to his inauguration.
8. The English place called Dubris by the Romans
9. The Hall of Mirrors is in which major French building.
10. Who is currently fourth in line of succession to the British throne.
11. Name the first credit card in the U.K.
12. Which country's flag has an Eagle and Snake.
13. The creator of Dame Edna Everage and Australian Culture ambassador Sir Les Patterson.
14. In Greek Legend who killed King Priam of Troy.
15. On which race course are the Sussex Stakes and the Lennox Stakes run.
16. Actress who starred in The Devil Wears Prada.
17. Which famous work closes with *Working men of all countries unite*?
18. Which condiment dates from the 1830's
19. Name the 49<sup>th</sup> state of America.
20. Name the largest land mammal

Contributed by Kathi and Rita

**We would welcome members' contributions to the August newsletter.**

**News, Views, Cartoons, Pictures etc  
Deadline Saturday, August 1st  
for publication the following week**