

Grouchy Girls 2020

Views expressed on this webpage are not necessarily those of Carlton & Gedling U3A.

JANUARY 2020

In Maggie and Barbara's absence Sue Lake took over, for which we are both very grateful. An excellent attendance with 3 new faces wanting to 'Let of Steam' joining our group .

Paul McCartney is headlining Glastonbury. Is it time that some oldies retired? 🤔

This stirred up plenty of anti-ageist feelings. Certainly not was the cry, if they've got it why not flaunt it, e.g. Dolly Parton, Tom Jones are still going strongly and bringing in excellent large audiences. Some older well known stars have done many years entertaining, have a huge repertoire and can appeal to all ages, Glastonbury is proof. Why not carry on if you have the voice, though some should realise that time has not been kind. Rod Stewart has started to do more Swing suiting his older voice perfectly.

Promoters push the stars to carry on but adulation and money are big factors in not giving up. In Paul McCartney's case maybe the old material is no longer right for his voice? Whose going to tell him? whilst audiences are there he won't stop .

Superstitions are bonkers we don't believe in them - But which ones do you go with? 🙌

Of course they are bonkers but whose going to walk under a ladder – just in case. Safety issue.

No washing on New Years Day – we think this one's great, at least its a day off or was everyone suffering from Hangovers so made it a day of rest?

Touch Wood stems from the Cross and Crucifixion

Salt over the Shoulder for good luck

Saluting Magpies

There were many more but we all felt that they stemmed from the past and couldn't think of ANY new present day ones.

Have you already broken your New Year Resolution? - Which have you kept in the past?

Few in the group bothered making them, usually they were unrealistic and you were setting yourself up for failure, so why bother. Monthly resolutions worked better and were more achievable e.g. Dry January. Giving up chocolate, cakes, biscuits, 🍪🍰🍰🍪 and keeping away from the snack cupboard for SHORT periods worked, though not for a whole year. Most felt that resolving to be kind and happy were the best resolutions

FEBRUARY 2020



Icy weather and colds meant only 16 Grouchy Girls at The Willowbrook for this month's meeting. We had a change of format i.e. a fun session in February instead of at Christmas.



So, coffee and chat followed by 9 of us staying on for lunch. I hope everyone enjoyed themselves as much as I did!

We'll be back on Tuesday 10th March at 10.30 for some more grouching, so come and join us to discuss celebrity status, holidays in the U.K. and ways to stay positive, despite the news bulletins.

MARCH 2020

It was lovely to see over 30 GGs this month, and the level of discussion was very interesting. Topic one was whether we should resist all the glossy ads. for **foreign holidays** and stay in the **beautiful U.K.** No surprise that weather was the main drawback, but as retired folk we are able to take advantage of a good forecast and take off on a mini-break. The GGs did feel that cost in the U.K. was higher but that cities everywhere are expensive.



How do people abroad see the UK as a holiday destination? The 'tour de Yorkshire' made a positive impact as does our heritage, including our Queen (no comment on the rest of the royals) but our tourist board could do a lot more. Various UK holiday firms are out there but the lure of blue skies is tempting. Retired folk and young families need to go for good price and not many of us had been on cruises and didn't realise the costly extras.

What constitutes celebrity status? The GGs are planning to get enormous falsies, fake tan and long nails to feel well on the way to being celebrities. Most 'celebrities' emerge from reality TV shows and have achieved...what? Then they get a pension fund from making idiots of themselves eating insects.



Celebrities from sport, acting etc., have their own rewards in fame and fortune, but we appreciate the celebs that use their fame to do excellent work. Remember the celebrities of our youth like Sir Edmund Hillary, Scott of the Antarctic & Grace Darling. The only modern celebrity who has achieved that came to mind was Greta Thunberg.

GG tips to stay upbeat in these trying times:- friends, wine & chocolate for a start then plan a holiday as something to look forward to. Exercise and fresh air always boost the mood, so get gardening & walking the dog. Stroking pets is known to make us feel good and human cuddles excellent too; though we might have to elbow tap for now!



Finally, count your blessings and make sure you come to the new look Grouchy Girls group (see above). Keep smiling

APRIL 2020: Survival Skills from the Grouchy Girl

The article you've all been waiting for, great ideas from the GGs. Now I was an early self-isolator, and like many I went cleaning mad. Happily this madness faded and the usual squalor presides.

So many GGs have been out there walking in this glorious weather, and Sue F has been spotted in a whirr of bicycle wheels. Gardening a lifesaver, and Sue L started digging for treasure and now only the top of her head is visible as she goes down deep. Not so Lyn R who sits in her garden hot tub listening to the birds! Lyn dear, that does not qualify as gardening.

Let's get on to stage 2 of lockdown activities. Some are knitting for the baby unit at the hospital but Shirley is knitting a tent

It started as a jumper and I've put in a bid as too much baking has piled on the pounds. A GG auction for the knitted tent is now on-going.



I'm in the final stage of making a double-bed size patchwork quilt while listening to my Sounds App as a way of avoiding Covid19 programmes.



To me jigsaws are painful but some GGs have taken this hobby to a new level of suffering;- Wen is doing a crossword puzzle jigsaw where you have to solve the clues to do the jigsaw and Barbara B is doing a 3D one.



Crafty Mary W is already making Christmas cards, clever girl, and Sheila is playing mah-jong online. We are all so grateful for technology to keep in touch with family and friends. One GG has rescued her violin from on top of the wardrobe for the first time in decades! Come on GGs, we could rival Music for Fun group as somewhere, if not a forgotten recorder, we could all be practising on comb and tracing paper.

Keep smiling and stay safe,
Maggie

MAY 2020: GROUCHY GIRLS IN LOCKDOWN

Rumours of GGs talking to themselves are sadly true. Without our letting off steam session, we now wander around chuntering happily. Paul wishes I was virtual so that he could press the mute button!

In reality we are busy souls, doing all manner of crafts, gardening, jigsaws etc. Lesley was so proud of the double bed cover she made but not so happy when the vacuum cleaner sucked it up and ripped it. Some of us have fallen by the wayside from manic cleaning sessions but how we love our new hobby- washing the shopping!

The last I heard, Shirley is STILL gazing at the ceiling from her bed, as dust settles on her, feather duster in one hand and bottle of Baileys in the other. She SAYS she is still waiting for that spider to leave the web so she can dust the ceiling.

Don't laugh when you see Bridget with her clothes held together with safety pins and string. She has nobly cut off her buttons and donated them to her daughter to make button headbands for NHS staff. Or was that her old clothes?

GGs lucky enough to have grandchildren are missing them but grateful for virtual contact. Two GGs have new grandbabies they have yet to meet. Hats off to those GGs caring for frail parents.

Online feedback for our 3 topics of the month:

1. As older ladies do we feel patronised by younger folk? The general consensus was that we are too feisty to let that happen, but dislike being called dear (ay up duck preferable) and when people say 'Bless' it is always patronising. Deidre, who uses elbow-crutches, says she is sent to the front in queues now, so, as ever, most people are thoughtful.
2. Are you planning a holiday after lockdown? Travelling by plane a serious concern as air is circulated, and will countries be happy to have us visit? TV travel programmes may replace visits abroad but Eurotunnel and ferries a possibility. One GG would be happy just to visit Clumber Park.



3. Do we wear matching undies? Does anyone still wear stockings and suspenders? Only one GG says she always wears matching sets, but in the full knowledge that doctors don't give a hoot, we wear our best set to appointments! The only use for suspenders is keeping fitted sheets in place. In old films women peel off stockings in sexy manner, but we just remember suspenders cutting off our blood supply.



JUNE 2020: ZOOMING

What a joy to see the 15 GGs after so long, in our first Zoom. A few were Zoom virgins while some are zooming all over the place. I don't mind housework but hate dusting and have found dust useful for writing the times of Zoom sessions!

We had only one topic, **positive achievements during lockdown**. These ranged from Mary sorting her knicker drawer (50 pairs!) to Sue paddle-boarding on the Trent. Gill can now get inside the garage and Pat dumped years of filing. Needless to say, her husband then wanted something he hadn't thought about for years - too late!

Chris's husband (also a Chris) tried to join in our Zoom, but was told he could only join in if wearing drag and full make-up. In the photo' Shirley is wearing the jumper she knitted- and she is STILL waiting for the spider on the ceiling to move so she can dust.

So, gardening, walks, sewing, photography, baking and finishing embroidery and other projects started in years gone by have kept us out of mischief. Lockdown has been most difficult for those who live alone, but we are all happy to **phone a friend**. Please get in touch if you want to link up with another GG for a chat.

Maggie

JULY 2020: STILL ZOOMING

Once again *Zoom* had a little malfunction as we had to re-use the link as time ran out. I will inform my Zoom support team (Paul) but I'm wondering is it because Paul and I were Zooming simultaneously.

Our talk to begin with was what did we rush out to buy when the shops opened, and it makes me love women of a certain age that it ranged between compost and a ladder! Thank goodness that Pat kept standards up by having her nails done and of course, she longed for hair styling. Next we talked about who felt confident about going inside e.g. cafe, buses. Most felt they were not ready to go inside yet although Chris had been in the Wrinkly Lettuce for breakfast & Sue B has been out and about on buses, feeling safe as few people on board. Pat and I felt very safe at the Bonington theatre.

We do need to support local businesses so we shared places where you could go that had kiosks etc. For Jean who lives alone, the thrill was having someone else making her a coffee. So, outside meetings preferred and Jenny C has organised the Canasta Group meeting outside the Willowbrook this afternoon.

We talked about people's reaction to lockdown relaxation and C19 has made some extremely anxious. Also empathy for those unable to see new baby grandchildren or who are living with a partner with Alzheimer's.

In the meantime we have to obey government guidelines to only meet in groups of 6, socially distanced. If you want contact details to form a group to meet up I can pass on your own contact details

Maggie

AUGUST 2020: ZOOMING AND GARDEN GET TOGETHER

We discussed three topics during our sessions, and as ever, I for one learnt something new.

Will cash be phased out in the near future?

Some shop staff are already annoyed if you can't pay with a contactless card and we understand that Covid transmission is often through touch. Some GGs worried about old people not wanting to use cards. Proof that no GGs see themselves as old! We could see that car park charges where there is poor wi-fi could be a problem. So bank transfers for the window cleaner and gardener? There wouldn't be so much tax dodging. Would we lose banks on the high street if no cash?

What would you ask a friend who said they wouldn't have a Covid vaccination?

Research indicates that less than 50% of the UK population would have the vaccine when it is available, but I'd asked the wrong question as many GGs would not want the vaccination themselves. There was fear that, for economic reasons, the vaccine could be rushed out and we wouldn't know how safe it is.

Viruses mutate so would the vaccine be effective? Also, the vaccine is only being tested on young people who usually are not as likely to be seriously ill as us oldies would be.

A few GGs highly recommended listening to Prof. Jonathan Ball on Radio Nottingham at 7.50 a.m. for information on Covid19.

How would you stay positive if there was another lockdown during winter?

Our philosophy is that if we make good preparation, it won't happen! Some GGs recommend the Sounds App for all the radio stations where you can search for programmes from the past, the play you only heard half way through, audio-books, drama and much more.

Lesley has written a list of all the things she meant to do during the lockdown we've had. The good weather meant we coped with walks and gardening first time round. Stock piling books and puzzles was popular, and we then organised a book and puzzle - at a distance, open air swap. Yes, the hand gel was out, but we were so happy to see real GGs, as Zoom is good but real is better.

Maggie

SEPTEMBER 2020

Grouchy Girls enjoyed a Zoom on a beautiful sunny day. Many GGs were giving the lawn a last mow or enjoying a walk, so we were a smaller group than usual, but had lively discussion.

Bring back Sunday closing?

The consensus was NO as nostalgia reminded us we were often bored. Jennifer said 'No way' but Shirley thought maybe a staggered approach- remember 'half day closing'? For me shopping is the last thing I'd choose to do on a Sunday, but easy to say as a retiree and many love a trip to the garden centre. One idea was for large stores to shut and revitalise local shops.

Covid19 has resulted in large scale unemployment. Providing employment is better than living on state benefits, so what services should benefit from government investment?

Strong feelings on this subject as more trained mental health workers are desperately needed. We rely too much on excellent charities like MIND. More training and better pay and conditions for workers in all areas of social care is needed more than ever.

What is the oldest item of clothing you possess?

Sally has pink leather gloves that belonged to her granny, so over 100 years old!

Wrapped in tissue paper is this beautiful Nottingham lace dress Liz wore in the photograph, and she made it herself!

Who remembers making a handkerchief top? Chris made it *and* can still get in it.

Jill has a Jaeger dress that is too good to throw away even though it doesn't fit

Memories were stirred of panty-girdles, corsets and suspender belts! Usually thought sexy by men and painful by women. The liberty bodice. and knitted swimsuits are articles of clothing from our childhoods we would like to forget. One GG had an itchy angora swim-suit with a bunny motif - imagine that on the beach!

Maggie

OCTOBER 2020

The first topic was to consider **the impact of online shopping on our environment**. In Lockdown One an appalling amount of plastic bags were used. Now most large supermarkets transfer the shopping to your own bags or even a laundry basket. Maybe a delivery van uses less fuel than individual shopping trips by car, but we should try to have larger orders, less often.

Those who don't drive appreciate having heavy shopping delivered. Another lockdown makes online shopping for presents an option. Most GGs are not buying clothes online as not going out! I asked for a GG definitions for the new word- **COVIDIOT**, Surprise, the first two were Dominic and Donald! No mask, or nose poking out above, plus the anti-mask conspiracy theory makes us mad, but parties and raves more so.

One GG had a great riddle;- If you have a breathing illness that means you can't wear a mask, what are you doing out and about unprotected?

'To dust or not to dust' now no visitors enter? Most GGs do not enjoy 're-arranging the dust' and felt it a pretty pointless activity in normal times. Now no one sees our lazy ways, the dust is useful for writing reminders! Our excuse is that pristine homes are not welcoming, and Pat felt one chore a day sufficient. Our disgraceful ways were shamed when Lesley says she loves housework.

Then other GGs came out of their dusty closets to show us their amazing range of dusters - really! We're Zooming every fortnight now so come on board!

Maggie