



## **Branston & District u3a – 15th November 2020**

Willow Emerald Damselfly

Dear Member,

I hope that you remain well, and are still coping with our second lockdown. This time around, it doesn't seem to be anything like as draconian as the first full lockdown. I understand that a number of shops in town have found ways of remaining open even though you wouldn't expect them to sell "essential" items, with one entrepreneurial gallery on Bailgate apparently having a few grocery items on display to circumvent the regulations.

It was good news earlier in the week when Pfizer's vaccine was proclaimed to be successful and there is hope of early general release. I'm not sure how much of a drawback the need to keep the vaccine at -70degC will be, but it looks like other less labile vaccines are following close behind. I must say that I was a bit taken aback when, on the news, they showed a presenter handling -70C metal storage trays with ordinary laboratory gloves, I would have been in trouble had I been seen doing that.

And it's interesting times in the garden, with a real mix of summer, autumn and spring – we still have begonias and dahlias at almost their peak bloom, the mahonia bush has almost finished its flowering season, some primulas are in full bloom, and normally January-flowering cyclamen are already showing a few flowers. However, we've begun to see Blue Tits venturing onto our feeders, which is a sure sign of approaching winter, as we seldom see them at other times of the year.



### **Z-Zoom, We Meet Again!**



I trust that you are looking forward to our Monthly Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup>, I've had a few members asking to be guided through the process of joining Zoom meetings, and they have been successful albeit that one or two have no camera or microphone on their computers, but they can see and hear the proceedings. So let me know if you need some tuition.

As I said last week, I shall be holding a short trial meeting tomorrow (Monday 16<sup>th</sup>) at 2.00pm to ensure that we can operate successfully with a large number of Members in a meeting, and I would ask that anyone thinking of joining next week's meeting also joins tomorrow's so that we stand more chance of having an uninterrupted time next week. One of the aims of the u3a is that we learn together, and we're certainly doing that at the moment, and quite frequently we're also having a laugh together!

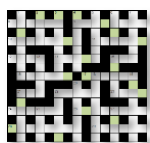
[The link for tomorrow's meeting is here](#), and you'll need the Meeting ID : 847 4823 2724 and the password : bdu3a .

I will re-send the details tomorrow in a separate email so that you don't need to plough through this message again. You will be able to join the meeting with your microphone on, but once I have begun my talk (which will be on wildlife, as if you hadn't guessed, and will be quite short), I shall ask you to mute yourself so that we have as few distractions as possible.

At the end of the trial, I will ask for comments on your experience of the presentation which you can give during the meeting or later by email or phone.

### **...And The Next Question Is...**

As always, Janet Foster, with or without Rodger and/or Google, had her winning "Should Have Paid Attention at School" entry back to me by 1.00pm last Sunday. Once more, she has been joined by Chris Hodson & Arch. Both entries were 100% correct, so well done to them. It's a good thing that we didn't offer the proper "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" prizes, or the Membership fees would be increasing very soon!



This week we revert to Crossword No 12. This one has shaded squares (properly called "lights", I understand) which contain the letters forming an anagram of a British tourist attraction. When you have solved the crossword, let me know what you think the attraction is, no need to send in the whole crossword – I shall assume that you will have completed it, I know how trustworthy all our Members are!

Chris Hodson & Arch and Janet Foster also sent in their answers to the "Sixty Finds" quiz. The answers have not yet been posted on the u3a website, so I'll assume that Chris, Arch & Janet have done an excellent job as always. I'll let you know next week! There's no new quiz on the u3a website either, I'm afraid, so you'll have time to finish reading War and Peace or the full works of Charles Dickens – or your latest Mills and Boon ("Christmas with a Billionaire" looks interesting!).

If you fancy another quiz, Janet has spotted this in the u3a Facebook account; *"On the u3a Facebook "Keeping in Touch" page there was a recommendation for a charity quiz sheet "Whatever the Weather" arranged by Rotary club of Tiverton, proceeds to "Make a Wish Charity". Copies of the quiz are available by [emailing this address](#). Minimum donation for entries (which close in January) is £1, a worthwhile cause and a very interesting quiz, hours of fun!!*

### **Jean Meechan**

It has come to my notice that former Member, Jean Meechan, died recently, just a few weeks after her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Her funeral took place last week. Jean was a Member for about for 6 years, but failing health and a move to a nursing home closer to her family meant that she did not renew Membership this year. I understand that Jean moved to Nocton in the mid-50s and had the honour of being voted Miss Nocton at one stage. She belonged to the Local Heritage Group and regularly attended Monthly Meetings. Our condolences go to her family and friends.

## Gardens, Arts & Creative Writing

Garry Snelson has sent an email from the National Garden Scheme which might be of interest to some. I have attached it as a htm file so it should open in your internet browser.

Garry has also reminded of the Mirthy on-line talks with a talk on Grace Kelly on Thursday at 2.00pm and next week, a talk on the meaning of nursery rhymes. [Details can be found here.](#)

I have also attached the latest update from Lincoln Performing Arts Centre which details its Christmas offerings.

I have just received a message from Marcus Stead with details of the calendar which has produced for Happy Hooves Equine Assisted Learning Centre. Many of you will remember the wonderful presentation that we had last year from this worthy local charity. [Details of the calendar are here.](#)



Along with that is another Creative Writing story from the u3a website. I see that the winning story which I included in "Keeping in Touch" (maybe I should just refer to the Sunday missive as "KiT"?) appears in the current edition of Third Age Matters so remember that you read it here first! This week's is by Penny Holland of Horncastle u3a, and I had a picture of the church in Horncastle that is now an antique centre as I read the story, "There is a Time for Everything". I have to admit that I was rather chastened by Penny's comment about the reading from Ecclesiastes, as I have used it for the family funerals that I have led. Maybe I should be more adventurous, but it seems to fit somewhere between religious and secular. There are other wonderful short stories on the u3a website under "Learning – Creative Writing". And there's an offer for u3a Members of [30% off Bloomsbury books](#) using the code U3A30. That might be useful for Christmas gifts!

Next week we shall have a story from Andrea White, it's just arrived in my inbox as I've been writing this, so I look forward to reading it when I have my coffee.

### Ask and you shall...



One Member has taken me at my word when I suggested using "KiT" to ask for assistance, and I have received a plea for a guitar for her husband who would like to learn to play a guitar; *"He used to play when he was younger, and although we could buy a new one I'm all for recycling and wondered if any member has one lurking in their loft or garage that is seeking a new home? As he is keen to do this and with his mixed dementia levelling off it would seem an ideal hobby for him not only in lock down but also to keep him occupied. We're looking for an Acoustic Guitar preferably non electric and not too expensive. We don't want anything fancy but would be prepared to pay for it or donate to a local charity of their choice."*

If you can help, please contact me and I will pass on contact details.

## Laughter, the Best Medicine?

For your amusement, Colin Beck has sent some quotes from American Comedian Phyllis Diller which seem to have a certain ring of truth;

- Whatever you may look like, marry a man your own age. As your beauty fades, so will his eyesight.
- Housework can't kill you, but why take a chance?
- Cleaning your house while your kids are still growing up is like shovelling the sidewalk before it stops snowing.
- The reason women don't play football is because 11 of them would never wear the same outfit in public.
- Best way to get rid of kitchen odours: Eat out.
- A bachelor is a guy who never made the same mistake once.
- I want my children to have all the things I couldn't afford. Then I want to move in with them.
- Most children threaten at times to run away from home. This is the only thing that keeps some parents going.
- Any time three New Yorkers get into a cab without an argument, a bank has just been robbed.
- We spend the first twelve months of our children's lives teaching them to walk and talk, and the next twelve years telling them to sit down and shut up.
- Burt Reynolds once asked me out. I was in his room.
- What I don't like about office Christmas parties is looking for a job the next day.
- The only time I ever enjoyed ironing was the day I accidentally got gin in the steam iron.
- His finest hour lasted a minute and a half.
- Old age is when the liver spots show through your gloves.
- My photographs don't do me justice - they just look like me.
- Tranquilizers work only if you follow the advice on the bottle: keep away from children.
- I asked the waiter, 'Is this milk fresh?' He said, 'Lady, three hours ago it was grass.'
- The reason the golf pro tells you to keep your head down is so you can't see him laughing.
- You know you're old if they've discontinued your blood type.



I know that some of you enjoy the wildlife photos that appear in these missives, but as I've not been out nature watching for a week or two, the photo below is from my last venture to Gibraltar Point when I came across a very confiding young Wheatear, presumably preparing itself for its outward migratory flight. It's in a separate page so that you can avoid printing it if you prefer.

I think that's all for now, I look forward to seeing some of you tomorrow, and as always, please keep sending your observations, photos, requests, items of any sort. I'm always happy to hear from you!

And keep well,

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'James'.

James Hewson, 4 Chartridge, Branston, Lincoln, LN4 1UE 01522 828780

