

## From the Editor / Chair

It seems very odd sitting here as the new chair of Branston U3A having not had an AGM nor a committee meeting and with no chance of it happening anytime in the near future.

With none of our interest groups in operation it is difficult to fulfill one of the main aims of the U3A movement, that of fellowship. It is very easy to become isolated and that is something that we at a local level and nationally are trying hard to avoid.

I had an email this morning from Head Office saying that they are sending out a regular newsletter and would like as many of us to register to receive it. If you wish to do this and have access to the internet then the address to go to is <https://www.u3a.org.uk/email>

Locally we are looking in to different ways in which we can keep things running without being able to physically meet up. We are thinking of trying to start virtual groups using technology to allow us to talk to each other "face to face" using computer programs such as Skype, FaceTime and Zoom. These have suddenly become very popular and work very well and most importantly they are free. More news of these when we get them up and running.

You may have heard on the news about all the volunteers that have come forward to help in the community. The government are now matching up volunteers to areas and to the sort of tasks they can do. The way they know who needs help is via a registration scheme. You can register if you have a medical condition that makes you extremely vulnerable to coronavirus for example or have difficulty in getting out and have no one to help. You'll be able to ask for help getting deliveries of essential supplies like food and medicines.

If you're not sure whether your medical condition makes you extremely vulnerable, register anyway.

This service is free. You can register yourself, or for someone else.

You can register at the following address:-

[www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable)

Thats about all for now, take care and keep safe but on a lighter note

Found on Twitter

My husband purchased a world map, gave me a dart and said "throw this and wherever it lands I'm taking you for a holiday when this pandemic is over". Turns out we're spending two weeks behind the fridge.

**John**

## General Meeting

### The Lost Railways of Lincolnshire - Alan Stennett

At the February general meeting there was an excellent attendance to hear Alan Stennett recount how the rail network in the county has changed over the years.

Alan Stennett is a writer and broadcaster who has spent most of his life in Lincolnshire. The son of a Lincolnshire farmer, he returned from London to the county to help get BBC Radio Lincolnshire on the air and stayed. He and his wife, Sue, live in the old Great Northern Railway station at Kirkstead, later renamed as Woodhall Junction.

Lincolnshire is a largely rural county, which was reflected in the early history of the railway lines. The main lines mostly passed through on their way to somewhere else and the local traffic was handled by a large number of branch lines. Alan started with the very early days when it was expected that Lincoln would be on a main line to the north, only to lose out to what we now know as the East Coast Main Line. Using old maps and original photographs, he traced the development of railways in the county, and their role in serving the great fishing port of Grimsby, 'bracing' East Coast resorts such as Cleethorpes and Skegness, the iron and steel industries of Scunthorpe and the agricultural heartland of the Fens. The network saw many early closures before being savaged by the Beeching cuts, but the story continues to the present day, where new developments offer renewed hope for what is left of the system.



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## Super Tuesday

A week before America's "Super Tuesday", we had our own special day when the STEM Group had another open meeting with David and Elaine Tattershall of Mission Aviation Fellowship telling us how the organisation provides air transport in remote areas of the world in support of day to day medical needs as well as involvement in emergencies such as the Haiti earthquake, Vietnamese tsunami, famine relief in the horn of Africa, Ebola outbreak and so on. We were given the task of working out the passenger and cargo lists for flight – more complex than we imagined. We were also invited to land a light aircraft on an African grass strip, and there were a lot of planes written off!



The afternoon's General Meeting saw BBC Radio Lincolnshire's Alan Stennett giving a fascinating talk on the Lost Railways of Lincolnshire, emphasising that much of the county's loss happened well before Dr Beeching's axe fell, due to over-optimistic building of lines with too little demand to be profitable. We also learned that the dearth of photographs of Branston and Heighington station, which the Railway Group are in the process of modelling, is due to that fact that whilst the station declined gradually, the line stayed open, so there was not the imperative to record it in operation.

**Remember for all the latest information  
CHECK THE BRANSTON U3A WEBSITE**

[www.branstonu3a.org.uk](http://www.branstonu3a.org.uk)

## Local Heritage Group

### Paul Ellis - Stone Carver

In January the group had a very interesting talk by Paul Ellis who is a stone carver / stone mason at Lincoln Cathedral

Lincoln Cathedral is considered one of the UK's most beautiful places of worship. Reportedly the tallest building in the world for 238 years, work started on the building in the 11th Century.

The ways of quarrying and shaping the stone at the cathedral may have evolved since those times, but today's masons use modern technology to keep the stone structures and carvings looking as fresh as when they were first put in place. One thing has not changed: the dedication and skill of the craftsmen and women in preserving and adding to the great structure.

Paul heralds from Nottinghamshire and as a youngster he started work as an engineer. Coming from a family with a military background he thought of joining the army however his brother who was a soldier suggested he would be better working with his hands and that is where it started.

For the past 32 years he has practiced the craft of stonemasonry and the art of carving stone and for the last 16 of them he has been here at Lincoln.

He has worked on many historical buildings across the country and this has included over 21 years spent working in 3 cathedral workshops, as well as 10 years employment for a number of commercial stone companies.

His talk was illustrated by some beautiful pictures which most of us would never get the opportunity to take because they were shot high up in the structure of the building.

Paul's talk was so interesting that by popular request he will back again next year



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## Visits Group

In mid January 13 members of the Branston U3A made a visit to Starglaze window and door manufacturing company at Waterside in Lincoln.

Starglaze was started in 1974 in the High Street by Eddie and Barbara Parczuk and today it is still a family business. From small beginnings they now employ over 250 people, with several awards to their name.

After a welcome of coffee and biscuits we had a presentation from the sales manager and a senior works manager who had been at the company for 39 years.

We started our visit by proceeding to the Express Trade Outlet which was a good find for anybody who wants the odd door or window or a double-glazed unit.

We then went to the glass shop which manufactures double glaze units. We saw an automatic cutting machine which reduces waste followed by toughening process, washing and assembly.

This then moved on to the PVC.u window assembly area incorporating seeing the spray booths which can give your windows or doors any colour you wish, which is a far cry from the white that the majority of us have.

They have a new machine which they are very proud of which makes seamless weld windows, which I must admit look very nice.

The last stop was to the aluminium factory which is now becoming once again a very popular product but more expensive than the plastic. The last stop was to look at the powder coating unit which again can give you any colour you require for your aluminium,

The day was very informative and the staff very pleasant and helpful.

Denis Stubbings



## Cycling Group

We are a loyal group of people who enjoy going out on our bikes. Our rides are about 25 miles in length and we aim to explore the local area. Sometimes we start from Branston Village Hall, sometimes we are further afield, taking our bikes in or on our cars. In the last year we have cycled along the Fledborough Viaduct, visited Castle Bruer, had a short ride near Christmas to see the flooding at Short Ferry, got extremely wet on a ride to Minting, and been to lots of other places. So far this year we have rides planned to Normanton-by-Spital, Collingham, and round the Navenby area. Rides are not often cancelled but if the forecast is dreadful, a ride might be postponed or curtailed, but the winter cold has not put us off. And there is nearly always a lunch stop at a pub or café. We start our rides at 10.30am and proceed at a sensible pace: we are not 'boy racers!' Come and give us a go!

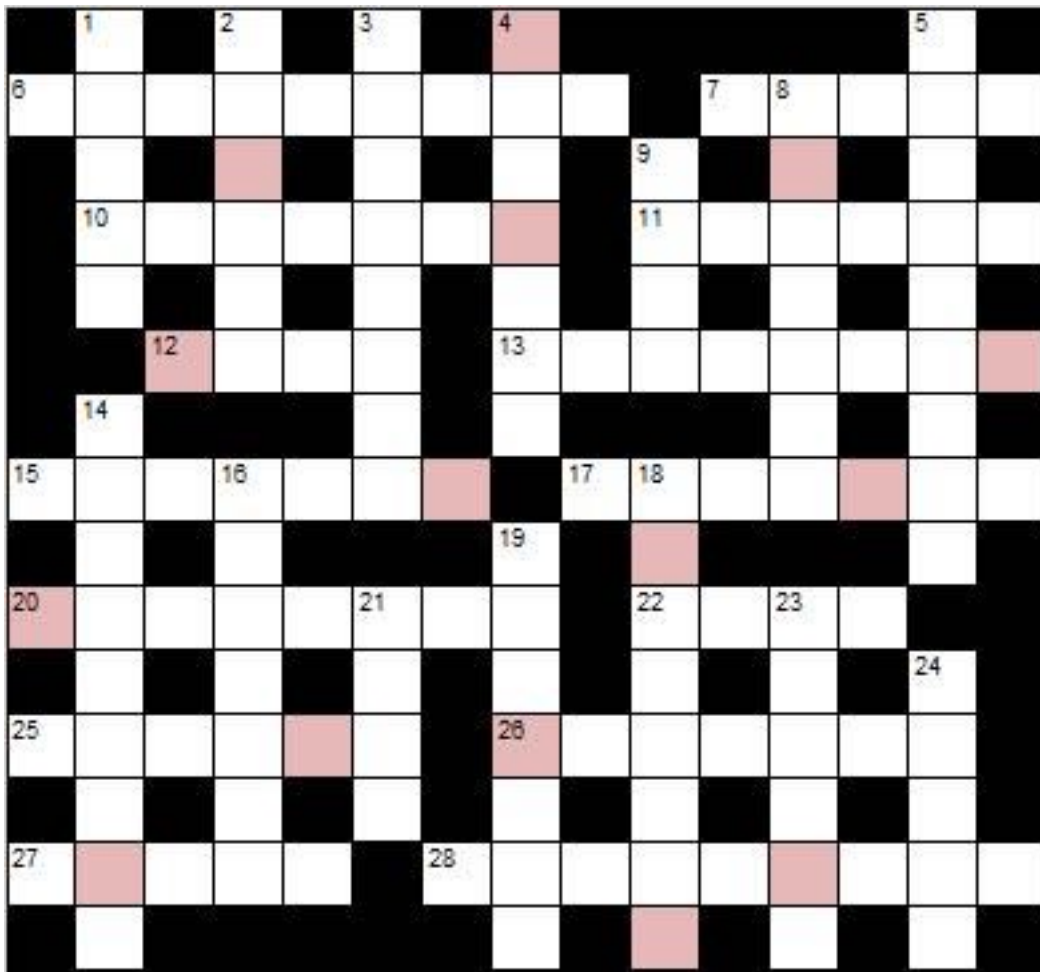


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## Found on Twitter (2)

Four passengers in a small plane, Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, Angela Merkel and a schoolgirl. The plane develops a problem and they need to bail out, but only have 3 parachutes. Donald Trump grabs a parachute, saying, "I'm the most intelligent man in the world and America needs me" – and jumps. Boris Johnson grabs a parachute, saying "Britain needs me!" – and jumps. Angela Merkel turns to the schoolgirl and says, "I've lived my life, but you have yours ahead of you, so you take the last parachute", to which the schoolgirl replies, "It's all right, there are still two parachutes left. The most intelligent man in the world was wearing my school bag when he jumped."

## To Keep You Busy



### Across

6. To the extent. (2,2,3,2)
7. Used in dens. (5)
10. Type of water. (7)
11. Villain. (6)
12. Despatched. (4)
13. Footwear fastener. (8)
15. Mindlessness. (7)
17. Nutty. (7)
20. Song of praise to God. (8)
22. A Channel Island. (4)
25. Breakfast cereal. (5)
26. A high place. (7)
27. Place of safety. (5)
28. Bleeding hearts (9)

### Down

1. Small fisherman. (5)
2. Attack suddenly. (6)
3. Story teller. (8)
4. Head appendage. (7)
5. Make more palatable. (5,4)
8. Kneecap. (7)
9. Vivacity. (4)
14. One eyed? (9)
16. Inspection. (4-3)
18. Pardon. (8)
19. Food poisoning. (7)
21. US Buckeye state. (4)
23. Turn. (6)
24. Asparagus stalk. (5)

The letters in the shaded squares are an anagram of a local village (with a twist) If you manage to find the village name email it to James Hewson and get an honourable mention in the next newsletter or general email.

[webmaster@branstonu3a.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@branstonu3a.org.uk)

The answer grid will be published on the web site in the coming days

