



Branston & District u3a – 22nd November 2020

Dear Member,

Another week has slipped by, and for Janet and I it seems to have been fairly quiet on the whole, so quiet that we have several times during the week thought that it was Friday, no idea why, but it was quite a relief when Friday actually came and we could relax, knowing that it really was Friday. We've decided that we're going to call each day non-Friday, other than real Fridays, of course! Confused? So are we! And of course, Sundays are exceptions to the rule, because Sundays are Keeping in Touch days, so they're special.

But this week will, of course, be anything but normal, because tomorrow morning, members of the Family History Group will have their first Zoom meeting. Or at least they will if I remember to schedule it and send the invitations (note to self – do this immediately!).

Fallen Women

And it's the start of a new era for us as a u3a, as on Tuesday, we have our first proper Zoom Monthly Meeting after such a long time without any. So, we're looking forward to Andrea White's talk on "Fallen Women".



The trial Zoom meeting seemed to go well on Monday judging by comments, and a number of new "Zoomers" have had initiation meetings, so it looks like we are all "Go" for Tuesday's Meeting. I want to thank all those who joined the meeting, it was very helpful to me, and I hope it was to you also. If you have any further comments, please let me know – or if you prefer to contact one of the other Committee Members, that's fine! And if you still haven't dipped your toe in the Zoom pool and want to be introduced to it, just let me know and I'll try to fit you in before Tuesday's meeting. In case it helps, MaryAnne Williams sent the attached instructions on how to use Zoom for the first time.

Andrea and I had a practice session on Friday, and we are confident that her slides show well, and that confirmed my confidence that all will go well. So I'm looking forward to seeing you Tuesday at 2.00pm. I shall start the session a few minutes before that, with Members being unmuted, so that you can say "hello" and generally make a hubbub, and then I shall mute everyone once I begin to introduce Andrea in preparation for her talk.

At the end of her talk, hopefully we shall be able to have a question and answer session. To enable that to happen with questions and answers being audible, I shall ask you to raise your hand to your camera so that hopefully I shall be able to unmute you for your question.

We had over 40 Members join last week's trial, so we are expecting more on Tuesday. That being the case, it would be good if couples would use a single device as our license allows up to 100 devices to be used. If we find that this is insufficient, we'll buy a more capacious account for future meetings.

You will need [this link to join the meeting](#), and you might need the meeting ID : 537 668 5352 and passcode : fallen . So, see you on Tuesday! As I did with last week's trial, I will also send an invitation email so that you don't need to rake through this email to find the information.

Keeping in Touch – More Widely



A few weeks ago, I included a note from John Tyerman about the u3a Facebook group, and we are curious to know how many Members signed up to it, so if you did, I would appreciate it if you let me know, please.

As well as the u3a Facebook group, it is possible to subscribe to the monthly National Newsletter, and I have attached November's as an htm file in which there are numerous items of interest. If you like the look at it and don't want to miss any, you might like to [subscribe to it](#).



The u3a East Midlands Branch recently held a Zoom-based event which was recorded, and here is a link to that via YouTube. Even if you go no further than the first minute or two, it's worth watching to see some of the things that can go wrong in a Zoom meeting if the host is not in full control. Note to self – watch and learn! [Here is the link](#).

The Quiz Masters



Congratulations to Chris Hodson & Arch, Colin & Joyce Beck and Janet Foster for correctly identifying the hidden attraction in last week's crossword as Blackpool Tower. Janet admitted that she managed to do so despite failing to get 10 clues, but at least she was honest about it!

This week, we have another quiz compiled by Ron Oxby, and it's "Pot Luck" with some thought-provoking questions. Let me know how you get on with it, and see if you feature on our website front page! Many thanks to Ron for supplying the quiz.





The answers to the u3a "Sixty Finds" quiz of a fortnight ago finally appeared this week, and the answers are attached. They prove that Chris & Arch and Janet really are ace quizzers. This week's u3a quiz comes from Madeley & District u3a and is composed of cryptic clues for British place names. Again, do let me know how you get on with it.

It's Murder Time!

Speaking of quizzes, I am in "conversation" with Chris Wright of Madeley and District u3a, having offered some of our quizzes for national distribution, and he is also involved in the u3a's Murder Mystery and is looking for more players – especially men. Chris says, *"Could you persuade some of your members to join the Murder Mystery event? Details on the website: [Learn, National programmes](#). I need to get a cast together. So far only women have applied. Need some men with a bit of enthusiasm and not scared to play a role."* I'm sure that we must have some less shy men amongst us, willing to tread the virtual boards.

...and Theatre Time

And that brings me on to a couple of messages that Garry Snelson has sent to me, both of on-line theatre productions. The first is the Original Theatre Online and then The Theatre Channel. Details of both are attached to the email, but please note that subscription fees are involved if you wish to view the plays.

Short Stories

I have had several positive comments about the short stories that I have included recently, and you'll be pleased to know that Andrea White has sent a copy of one of her Creative Writing submissions. Entitled "The Face in the Window", it was really more appropriate to last Sunday when we were still thinking about Remembrance Day. So with my apologies for missing it last week, do enjoy the story.

White-crowned Wheatear

Well, no mention of wildlife so far, and as I've not been out and about, I've scanned the archives for one of my "favourite" birds, and come up with a White-crowned Wheatear, which you'll see below. This picture was taken in Morocco on the approach to the Sahara Desert, and I think it's rather handsome.



One of the reasons that I enjoy these birds is that I stumbled across some a few years ago, again on the edge of the Sahara Desert, and so it was "self-found" – always more satisfying than having it pointed out. That was whilst on a trip to one of the other North African countries with a group of friends from church. We had gone out for a combination of holiday and to support some missionary contacts. Being a Muslim country, we don't usually refer to them as missionaries, though, hence the fact that I've not named the country.

However, as I thought about that holiday, I was reminded that towards the end of our visit, it had become obvious that our travels were being monitored by the police, although it was eventually suggested that they thought we were Americans, and because of tensions in the area at the time, they didn't want us to come to any harm. I've never been sure of the truth of that, or whether our Baptist Minister guide was fantasising. Be that as it may, as we arrived at our penultimate hotel (where a local police officer made his presence obvious at the reception desk), our guide suggested that we would probably have the hotel's speciality of wild boar for lunch – which, indeed, we did. After lunch, we set off for a nearby Roman amphitheatre (the umpteenth of the trip!), and returned to the hotel in the evening. It was decided that we should have a "quiet time" together, and we found an open area in a corridor, and set about reading our Bibles and praying, when we heard footsteps approach.

It turned out to be a group of men wearing camouflage and with guns over their shoulders. Oh-oh, were we in trouble? I confess to being somewhat nervous all of a sudden. So it was a relief to see them nod to us, greet us in German, and walk past. It turned out that the hotel was well known for its patronage of game hunters, who regularly brought back their "bag" of wild boar which then became a menu item. Whew, what a relief – but at least it added some excitement to the holiday!

Thanks and Best Wishes

And finally, a big "thank you" to Sarah Stead. No, not one of our Members, but she could be soon as on Friday she retires from her post as Clerk to Branston Parish Council. Sarah has been a tremendous help to the u3a and has worked tirelessly for our parish, often going the extra mile to ensure that the needs of all – not just the u3a – are met. We wish her, with Marcus, a very long, rewarding and happy retirement.

All Change

Well, that was an evangelical preacher's "finally", because here comes another one! I have a question – have you noticed the change of font in this week's KiT? I'll tell you why it's different next week, but any comments are welcome.

That's all for now, I think. The sun has just re-appeared and it looks like it's a beautiful day for a walk or spot of gardening – after coffee, that is. So keep well, keep safe, and I hope to see you on Tuesday!

Best wishes,



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



White-crowned Wheatear.