

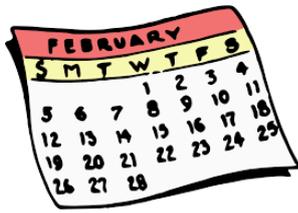


Branston & District u3a – 29th November 2020

Dear Member,

I hope that you are well and feeling brighter than this morning's weather, it really is quite dreary – and that's before you've started reading this! And I trust that you are looking forward to the thrilling prospect of coming out of lockdown –straight into tier 3 –hmmm!

Well, it appears that Janet and I are not the only ones who are losing track of the days. Within 45 minutes of sending out last week's KiT, I received the following reply from one of our Members;



"Your Friday confusion made me laugh. Last Friday I failed to meet my friend for our regular Friday socially distanced dog walk because I thought it was NOT Friday. I didn't even twig when she phoned me and said 'I'm outside your house' (why ?? I thought to myself). We'll all be bonkers by the end of lockdown. Thank you for your Sunday chats. At least then I know it's Sunday!"

The Good...

We have had some really pleasant days this week, though, and we have been out for a couple of walks around the village. For the most part, there didn't seem to be very much interesting bird life except in the "Jungle" area, where Long-tailed Tits and Goldcrests were in evidence. I've also had some very pleasant times in the garden. I'm hoping that I have now brought into safety any tender plants before the frost gets them. And I've been gratified to discover that most of the pelargonium cuttings that I took 7 weeks ago now have healthy roots, so they have been potted on. I'm wondering how many plants I might need next year if I decide to dig up parts of our front lawn where the chafer grubs have done their worst, and those cuttings will help!



...the Bad and the Ugly!

We seem to have had a mysterious (and unwelcome!) visitor – and anyone living close to us might have had the same person. On Friday evening, after dark, a gentleman rang the doorbell, and Janet answered (I was chained to the washing-up bowl at the time), to be greeted by a gent offering to sell household goods, together with a story about being down on his luck. Janet refused his approach and off he went, or so we thought. When I opened the curtains on Saturday morning, there was a small box on the front lawn, which

I thought was odd. On closer inspection, there were also a couple of soiled microfibre cloths nearby – and the box had been their container. I then realised that down by the side of the garage, there was a deposit. So, two and two together and I can only assume that the “gentleman” had taken offence at being turned away, left his deposit and cleaned himself up with some of his household goods. Nice one, friend!

Zooming Along

Anyway, onto better things. Many thanks to Andrea for her presentation of “Fallen



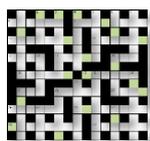
Women” last Tuesday. It was well received judging by the comments that I have received, and hopefully the Zoom experience was positive for all those who joined the meeting. We now look forward to the next monthly Meeting on December 8th at 2.00pm, for which invitations

will be issued nearer the time. The speaker will be Stephen Wells and his subject, the History of Butlin’s. Maybe his talk will make up just a teensy bit for those lost holidays of 2020!

This week’s Family History Group Zoom meeting also seemed to go well, and it was obvious that group members have been doing quite a bit of useful research during the months of restrictions. I was only party to the meeting because I was “hosting” it, and it was fascinating listening to the conversation and discovering what happens in a group that I don’t normally attend. This week, the AA&M (history) Group hope to meet by Zoom on Tuesday, so I shall have the opportunity to learn yet more! We have also made preparations for the Photography Group to meet by Zoom, as well as the Readers Group. So things are beginning to pick up again, even though we are unable to meet physically.

Quizzical Times

Need I say that Janet & Rodger Foster were first to return their answers to the “Pot Luck” quiz, with what looks like a good set of answers. Actually, they were the only ones to return their answers, so it’s congratulations to them! I don’t have “official” answers to hand, so I’ll publish them when I do.



This week we have another Crossword for you to solve, and as usual it has a number of shaded lights with letters forming the anagram of another British tourist attraction. Let me know which attraction it is to win your “prize”. No need to return the whole crossword!

Janet & Rodger were also first to return their answers to the Places quiz, with a complete set of correct answers. Glenys Storey’s entry arrived a little later, with just 2 unexpected answers, so it’s congratulations all round. The answers are attached to the email.

This week’s u3a quiz, originally devised by Walsall u3a, who retain the copyright, is “Trophies and Awards”. Do you know what awards are given in what fields? Let me know how you get on with this one, as always.

I've had further dealings with Chris Wright of Madeley and District u3a, who looks after the national u3a quizzes, and he tells me that in the near future, he will be publishing the Countryside Quiz which Colin and Joyce Beck devised. That's quite an honour, so well done to Colin and Joyce. But it will leave me with a dilemma, for the week that it's published as there will be no new u3a quiz for us, unless everyone will have forgotten it from first time around. Maybe I'll do what the TV channels seem to be doing, and just offer you repeats!



Keeping in Touch - Nationally

John Tyerman has received a link to the latest u3a Podcast, [which can be accessed here](#). You will find a number of interesting articles, including an interview with the writer of the winning Creative Writing entry, Rosemary Burton, whose story of The Clock I included in KiT a few weeks ago.



Time to Leave

And talking of stories, in case you haven't made your way to the Creative Writing page of the national u3a website, I have attached another story, "Time to Leave" by Gillian Griffith of Much Wenlock & District u3a. This is another of the top three winners of the competition and shows the great quality of these short stories.



Get Well Soon

I understand that Rob Sargent has been very unwell, and he received a card from Elaine Johnson, our Welfare Officer. In response, Rob wrote the following, which I include because the final few words relate to all of us : *"What a lovely thought - I'm very taken by your kind sentiments in the card. I'm very lucky to have Valerie and family, friends and neighbours who help to melt away the frustrations of not being able to do what we have always taken for granted. But hey ho I'm optimistic about 2021. Trust you and Bernard are keeping well; and thanks to all at the U3A."*



Christmas Greetings

The thought of cards reminds me that it must be time to dig out one of those writing things (pen?), and get down to writing some. And that brings me to suggest that if you wish to send greetings to friends in the u3a, so why not send your greetings to me (by email!) and I will start building a card "wall" – include an image if you wish, and we can make it quite decorative. Let me have them in time for the KiT of December 20th, so no later than 19th.



And as we are approaching the season of Advent, I've been asked to mention the initiative being promoted by Lorna, Rector of Branston, Nocton and Potterhanworth. She is inviting parishioners to display stars at the front of our houses as a symbol of hope. The details, together with other Advent-related items can be seen in the attachment, or [on the All Saints website](#).

Are you font of this?

Last week I pointed out that I had used a different font in the PDF version of KiT and promised to explain why. The reason is that it's part of the u3a's corporate makeover, and the font is the same as that used in the new u3a logo, although interestingly the font provided (DM Sans if you're interested) doesn't have the straight-topped "3" that appears in the logo. Together with the new font, the u3a have issued a house style booklet with some quite complicated rules of how to use the font, logo, and colours – and it appears that I shouldn't have been using the yellow coloured logo on the headers, it should only be blue or white, although to me, the yellow goes better with most of the images that I've been using – so maybe that rule will be ignored. Anyway, the simplicity of the font shapes reminded me of the set of large cardboard letters and numbers that our junior school teacher used when we were introduced to the alphabet – is that an example of things coming round again? But do I get the impression that it's not something that gets anyone excited? I didn't receive any responses to last week's question about the matter.



Photo of the Week

And so, from one of my obsessions to another, and this week's photo, shown below, is from closer to home. In fact, it was taken in Whisby Country Park last year, and is of a Whitethroat, one of our summer migrants. I had visited the park in the hope of hearing and seeing Nightingales, but I missed them. The Whitethroat appearing in front of me was by way of compensation, though, especially as it perched nicely on the gorse.

I think that's all for now, I see it's brightening up a little outside, so maybe I can get some much-needed exercise. Do get in touch, I value any contributions that you might have, it seems to have been very quiet on that front this week.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James'.

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

Whitethroat, Whisby Country Park

