



Branston & District u3a – 3rd January 2021

Dear Member,

It seems to have been a long time since I last put finger to keyboard, but we're now here – in 2021, and this comes with best wishes for a

Happy, Healthy and Enjoyable New Year.

I trust that you had a good Christmas, despite the difficult circumstances. As predicted, Janet and I were on our own, but we did have a 2 ½ hour Zoom get-together with family on Christmas Day afternoon, and another hour in the evening, so that made up for lack of company to a large extent.

Thank you to all those who sent Christmas greetings by whatever means, especially to those who have not received a personal reply, things did seem to get quite busy during December, I'm afraid. But there were some quite inventive and encouraging methods of greeting, all much appreciated.

With all the bad news in 2020, it has put me in mind of a story that one of our church ministers used to tell of one of *his* previous ministers, who started every morning service with a prayer of thanksgiving. He always included reference to the day itself, giving thanks for the beautiful weather, wonderful event, or whatever was good about the day, always very positive. The congregation were on tenterhooks one cold, wet, stormy day which seemed to have nothing to redeem it. The minister simply thanked God that not every day was like that one!



It feels something like that with 2020 – thank goodness that not every year is like that. And hopefully we shall emerge from the Covid pandemic sometime soon and be able to get on with everyday life as we know it. Hopefully the very sensible (in my opinion) decision to give more of us a first inoculation before rolling out the second dose later than planned will bring about that normality just a little bit earlier.

However, before “normality” prevails, we are looking forward to some Zoom meetings, and this week we have the Photography Group tomorrow evening. It's maybe ironic that the chosen subject is “people at work”, given current circumstances. On Tuesday, it's the turn of the AA&M History Group and it sounds like Sue will be testing my technical expertise to the limit with what she has lined up. I see also that Anne Pickersgill is

holding the Latin Group meeting on Friday. And don't forget that we have our Monthly Meeting planned for 26th, with Michael Brook speaking on his "Musings From The Amateur Stage".

Jo Vogel

Sadly, I have to report that Josephine (Jo) Vogel died during Christmas Day/Boxing Day night. Jo was a member of the Croquet group until she was admitted to a care home as a result of her dementia. Our condolences go to her husband Les, family and friends.

Regional Trustee

Just before Christmas, John Tyerman received a letter from Jean Hogg, our Regional Trustee, and has asked me to include the letter and an associated document showing how to register with VOICE, which is referred to in Jean's letter. It makes interesting and encouraging reading as it demonstrates that the powers that be are working to improve and enliven the u3a movement.



Quiz Time

Janet Foster kept up her record of being first to return her crossword answer with the greeting of "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year" being hidden in the shaded squares. Her entry was followed by Joyce & Colin Beck, Chris Hodson & Arch. Congratulations to all! The crossword solution is attached.



Incidentally, I think I forgot to send out the solution to the previous crossword, number 15, so I'm attaching that as well this week, with apologies for the omission.

This week we feature another crossword, this time with some words from a traditional seasonal song, so let me have the words of the song to have your name in lights, no need to send the whole crossword.

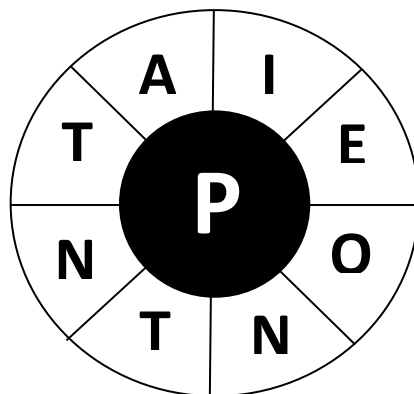
Garry and Lynn Snelson sent their answers to the Christmas Bumper Quiz early, and they look good, as do Chris Hodson & Arch's answers. However, the official answers will not appear on the national u3a website until 12th January, so we'll have to wait to see how they match up with the expected answers.



I must admit that when we had a family Zoom get-together, I assumed that Garry and Lynn's answers were correct, so I'm hoping that I didn't do any of the family out of marks, not that we were scoring! David, our youngest son, joined from the locker room of the oil rig that he was on, which made things a bit different. It was the only place that he could find with a Wi-Fi signal but not too many fellow workers interrupting. Interestingly, his internet connection was better than my sister's in Kent.

Anyway, in view of the fact that there is no new quiz from the national u3a, you might like to try this "Polywords" puzzle. See how many words of 4 or more letters you can find

using each letter only once, including one with all 9 letters. The centre letter must be included in each word. Capitalised words and plurals are not allowed. My home-made wordfinder gets 76 words, although some of them are a bit questionable! See how you do.



Story Time



We have another story, courtesy of the Creative Writing Group, written by Angie Masson. It's another gripping tale, showing once more how much talent we have in our midst.

Scam Again

Brian Haynes has again passed on some messages on scams via Garry, and you will find them as htm files that will open your web browser. It seems that courier (especially DPD) scams still feature, although hopefully they will wane now that Christmas is over, and there are some other intriguing scams going on, as reported by Which?

Talking of couriers and Christmas, I wonder if you are still receiving Christmas mail? We seem to have almost as many Christmas cards arriving since Christmas as we did before. Another consequence of the oddity of 2020.

The Long Walk

But, for the good news, you might recall that back in October, the committee members of Branston Schools Food Voucher Scheme held a sponsored walk. Recently I heard from Sylvia Minshull that they raised £1968, so congratulations to them for such an achievement. And I'm sure that Sylvia, Judy and company will be quite happy to receive more contributions!



Winter Visitors and Looking Forward to Summer

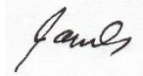


I have quite a gallery of photos for you today, with a couple of winter visitors that were displaying themselves nicely on Thursday when Janet and I were out for a walk. Just by the Old Hall there was a flock of Fieldfares, our

Scandinavian friends, together with their Redwing relatives. It was a delight to find them so accommodating, they seemed to be presenting themselves for photos.

Also, Andrea White has sent me some photos to remind us of those almost forgotten times when we were able to go away to warmer climes. So, you'll see a Roller and a very cute and sleepy lion cub from her and Frank's adventures in Africa. Jealous? Me, Jealous? As if!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

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

Fieldfare



Redwing



Roller by Andrea White



Lion Cub by Andrea White

