

## **WBU3A CORONAVIRUS TIMES!**

No 1

Dear Member,

As you will be well aware our U3A is not functioning at the moment and given the current national situation is likely to be so for some weeks or more. We are well aware that our 800 plus members will be doing the right thing by "self isolating" and we also know that this will be a trying time for many. We can't, of course, solve these big problems but can try to make things a little brighter and at the same time keep you in contact with your U3A. Looking ahead to when the national picture starts to improve and organisations like ours are thinking of restarting our programmes we want to make sure that we are still in regular contact with our membership to pass on all the latest information about WBU3A.

So, over the next few weeks we plan to send out a regular mailshot (once a week) with a variety of items in it which we hope will inform and prove to be useful as you sit self isolating. In the end this will only work if people send in items for us to include so please read on to find out what might be in our mailshot and how you can contribute to it and so make it relevant, helpful and entertaining.

Tony Beale



### **VIDEO CALLING:**

Our computer wizard, Clare Deeming has helpfully passed on a link to BBC item that members who are isolating might find useful in the next few weeks.

Clare writes: "I've just found this news article on the BBC website about how to make a video call through **WhatsApp** (or similar App). There are very good basic step by step instructions. It would be good to share with the membership as some people may not have used the Video aspect before and might enjoying actually seeing someone whilst speaking to them rather than just a phone call". The link is:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-51968122>

I followed the instruction - as Clare said they are very simple and it worked first time - within seconds I was speaking to my daughter in Manchester whilst my granddaughter Sophie waved to me in the background! Thanks Clare - you're a star!



## HOW CAN YOU HELP WITH OUR WEEKLY MAILSHOT

So, how can you help? We have over 800 members who will all be self isolating. Many will find this difficult as they miss the social contact, others may quite enjoy the experience because if nothing else it will allow them to catch up with some of those jobs they have been putting off: my wife, for example, announced over the weekend that her Coronavirus Resolution was to turn out and clean one cupboard or drawer each day! Mmmm! But whatever your position on the problems and opportunities of self isolation one thing is sure - we will all have different concerns, plans, worries and ideas - so we see this weekly mailshot as means of pooling those ideas so that everyone benefits.

Here are some of the things that I thought of that might be included:

- Gardening tips for this time of year
- Links to web sites (like the one provided by Clare) which provide help, support or ideas.
- Book recommendations that could be downloaded to your Kindle
- Basic recipes that can be easily put together - allowing for the fact that shopping isn't too easy at the moment
- Links to articles or web sites with ideas for keeping healthy and fit in the confines of your own home.
- Items about how you fill your time and are coping with the present situation.
- Cartoons to amuse about the current situation
- Puzzles - such as word wheels, sudoku etc.
- Recommendations for enjoyable or informative TV programmes that might be available on i-player etc

- Items that are of particular interest to our age group.
- Things that you would simply like to share with others - for example, maybe a poem that you wrote or a photograph that you took which would make you feel good to share and which might bring pleasure to others.
- Recommendations for particular items that might be obtainable via (say) Amazon and which might help to get us through the next few weeks. (For example, the Guardian newspaper the other day gave a list of good board games to play).
- How to play games like Patience which can be played alone.
- Reports from our various groups about things that they did before we had to curtail them and plans for what might be on the cards for when things return to normal.

The list is endless, these are just my ideas. And, of course, within the mailshot there will be any specific items of U3A news - for example advice from the national U3A or items that are specific to our own running of WBU3A. I am happy to collate all items that are sent and produce, as far as is reasonable, a mailshot each week. But I cannot produce it without your assistance, so help to keep the lines of communication open and WBU3A functioning in spirit if not in fact for the next few weeks by sending me something to include. For the rest of this mailshot I'll include items that I can contribute at the moment to get things going. All items for inclusion should be sent to: [wbu3a.members@gmail.com](mailto:wbu3a.members@gmail.com)  
Tony Beale

## CORONA CAPERS: HEADLESS CHICKEN

Member George Zielinski forwarded me this gentle, humorous and beautifully written piece poking fun at our present predicament! Thank you so much George. Look forward to another of your Corona Capers!

I don't know whether you have heard the rumours yet, but there seems to be a bit of flu about.

A few days ago, our wise and noble government urged us all not to stockpile essentials. Accordingly, I immediately rushed out to the shops to stock up.

I saw a woman eyeing some items, so I dashed in and grabbed the lot before she had made her mind up. I now have a lifetime's supply of nail clippers.

The government is now urging us not to panic. I would very much like to panic, but I can't seem to manage it. Can anyone give me some advice please?



I Googled "How to panic" but the only advice I could find was an article by a psychiatrist about how NOT to panic, so I am doing the opposite. I am trying to overload my prefrontal cortex, (not as easy as it sounds), and also to create social contagion, which is why I am distributing this message.

A digital elbow bump to you all. I would love to give you a digital handshake or hug, but it would be too dangerous.

George Z. Desperately Calm.

## Pass The Time With A Puzzle

**Sudoku no 4,756**  
Medium. Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9. Printable version at [theguardian.com/sudoku](http://theguardian.com/sudoku)

			1	3				
							2	3
9				6			1	4
				7			4	5
	5	1	2		4	8	6	
7	4			3				
4	1		5					8
6	7							
			3	9				

**Word wheel**  
Find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the central letter and at least two others. Letters may be used only once. You may not use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found.  
TARGET: Excellent-88. Good-80. Average-73.

A couple of puzzles from this morning's Guardian.



## Learning Things In The Strangest Of Places

On a bright but bitterly cold day last Saturday my wife Pat & I decided to pop out for an afternoon walk before the government closed us down completely. We decided to go to Hickling and have a short walk along the canal bank, reasoning that it would be, as usual, very quiet there and far from the madding crowds.

And so it proved. We parked our car with 4 or 5 others by the pond, zipped up our fleeces and set off, the only other human in sight was a guy sitting fishing in the pond. As always the canal and surrounding fields were silent - despite the bright sun and blue sky it seemed that we were the only people on the planet.

As we walked we noticed that the canal had been cleared of weeds and other water vegetation since last time we visited which was probably back in the autumn and after half a mile or so we came upon our usual stopping spot where there are a couple of wooden benches for weary walkers to rest.

We have sat on those benches hundreds of times over many years, but this time was different. You see behind the benches is an old wooden cabin. It has always been there, crumbling, dilapidated, covered over with vegetation; obviously unused for many years - a bit of an eyesore in all honesty. Such was its condition that I had rarely given it a thought except to idly wonder why it was there. I always assumed that it was something to do with the fields that surrounded it. Now, however, it was surrounded by wire fencing and obviously under renovation.

There was a large sign at the side informing us that the shed was being restored by the canal preservation group - using, so far as possible, the original timbers and brickwork. It also informed us that it was a "Lengthsman's Cabin".



I didn't know what a Lengthsman was although it wasn't too hard to work out! On returning home and using the marvels of the internet I soon discovered that from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards Lengthsmen were important in keeping a length of canal open & free from creeping vegetation etc. so that canal boats could safely navigate the waters. Each man had a length of canal to tend - hence the title "Lengthsman".

I found this little bit of history fascinating, especially when I looked at the brick fireplace, still stained black with soot from many years ago. On that silent and remote length of canal I could just imagine some Victorian (or earlier) Lengthsman, pipe in mouth greeting passing canal boats as they carried their wares to and from Nottingham and Grantham and he worked in the sun keeping down the water vegetation. And I could just imagine that same man huddling around his fire as the wind and rain battered his little work place on a cold winter's day. It all gave a wonderful "extra" to our "self isolating" Saturday afternoon walk!

Tony Beale



A 21st century version of David & Goliath!

### DONT FORGET!

With all that's going on at the moment it's easy to forget the everyday things. So don't forget that we put the clocks on this weekend!

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

We are approaching the April 1st deadline for renewing your annual membership. Thank you to all who have already done so - we now only have a very few people who have not renewed. If you haven't yet renewed - or are not intending to renew please try to get in touch as soon as possible. We appreciate that at the moment the U3A isn't functioning but it is helpful to our administration to put this to bed as quickly as possible. Renewal costs £16 or £12.50 if you are a full member at another U3A. All members were sent a Renewal Notice in late February but if you have mislaid yours mail me ([wbu3a.members@gmail.com](mailto:wbu3a.members@gmail.com)) and I will email you another. All the details about payment etc. are on the form. The completed form and your remittance should be sent to our Treasurer, Bob Wilmot - his details are on the form. Thank you

### Thought for the day – and perhaps our current discontents!

Seventeenth century French mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal famously commented: "All mankind's miseries derive from being unable to sit alone in a quiet room." I don't think that he was thinking of 21<sup>st</sup> century pandemics and self isolation when he wrote this but maybe he has a message for us all in these troubled and uncertain times!!!

### SCHOOL'S OUT!

It won't have escaped the attention of those of you who are grandparents that "School's Out!" – and is likely to be out for a few weeks or more. Two of my grandchildren (twins) are 10 and like other families across the country are not only missing school but facing a considerable period of time not "gainfully employed"!

To help my son and family out – and to try to ensure that the twin boys don't spend all their time playing on mobile phones or causing mayhem I have put on my teacher hat once again. I spent most of my 40 year teaching career teaching children of 10 & 11 in primary schools so I am producing, each week, a selection of in depth activities (maths, English, handwriting, art, history etc.) on a theme and suitable for children of that age. There are 7 activities each week and they choose which 5 they want to do (i.e. 1 each day). This week's theme is TIME (because at the weekend we put the clocks on!). School set work of course takes priority but these are a fall back and perhaps something a bit different.

Although they were intended only for my grandchildren the word has got out and I am now emailing them across the world – this morning to Australia! If any U3A member would like a copy to forward on to their sons, daughters, grandchildren just drop me an email ([wbu3a.members@gmail.com](mailto:wbu3a.members@gmail.com)) and I'd be delighted to mail you one.

Tony Beale

If you've enjoyed this mailshot and found something of use in it please help to keep it going by sending items for publication. We are not looking for personal notices (e.g. selling things) but for informative and entertaining pieces that will keep our U3A functioning and ready to leap back into action as soon as we are able. But above all we are hoping that it will provide help and pleasure in these challenging and changing times Thank you. (Send all items to Tony Beale [wbu3a.members@gmail.com](mailto:wbu3a.members@gmail.com))