

Bramhall u3a Learn,  
Laugh,  
live

# Upbeat February



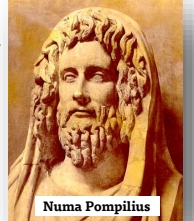




# Did you know?

We all know **February** as the shortest month of the year, or, depending on where you live, the coldest. But, do you know where the name February actually came from?

Around 700 BC, the second king of Rome, **Numa Pompilius**, added January and February to the end of the calendar in order to conform to how long it actually takes Earth to go around the sun. The two new months were both originally 28 days long. Originally March 1 was New Year's Day, but later, about 153 BC, the beginning of the year was moved to January 1.



Numa Pompilius

## February used to be called 'cabbage month'

Before we adopted the Latin name for our second month, the Anglo Saxons used much more vibrant names to describe the month now known as February.

The most common Anglo Saxon name was **Solmonath** (Solmōnaþ), which means **mud month** or **cake month** depending on the translation. A lesser-used term was **Kale-monath**, which meant **cabbage month**. Perhaps, the ancient English were eating a lot of cabbage in February? Strange.

## But where did the word February come from?

Since other months, like January, are named after Roman gods, you'd be forgiven for thinking February was just the same. Possibly named after the Roman god Februs? But, the word February comes from the Roman festival of purification called **Februa**, during which people were ritually washed. In this case, the god was named after the festival, not the other way around. It must have been a pretty good festival.

## February - a month for love

We all know that St. Valentine's Day is February 14th, but did you know it's based on the Roman festival of Lupercalia, the event welcoming spring?

St Valentine was in fact a real person, who died around 270AD. He was a priest who lived in either Rome or Terni in central Italy and was martyred by Emperor Claudius II. His connection to the love story is probably based on the fact that he conducted marriage ceremonies between women, and men who were hoping to avoid being drafted into Claudius' army. Men with families were considered to be less committed soldiers, which may account for Valentine's falling foul of Claudius.

Geoffrey Chaucer linked St Valentine to the time of year when birds commence their mating rituals: *For this was sent on Saint Valentine's day, when every foul cometh there to choose his mate'*

The earliest known Valentine card was sent in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orleans to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London. By the 18th century flowers, confectionery and cards were frequently sent and by the mid-1820s some 200,000 cards circulated in London alone. A strange fashion emerged around then of 'Vinegar Valentines', insulting the recipient. In Great Britain around £1.5 billion is spent each year on Valentine's Day alone.

**February, February** - such a dull month  
Cold wet days, dark wet nights  
The snow is coming on the Easterlies.  
Stay indoors, wear your mask outdoors,  
Stick to your bubble, no rave parties  
Best to shop only by special deliveries.  
And worst of all, no fun U3A activities

But wait... Is that colour in the garden?  
The yellow of the hardy winter aconite  
The birds are now beginning to show.  
Blackbirds, blue tits, was that a red kite?  
Pansies peeping through the virgin snow  
And yes, I have had my first vaccination.  
Oh, February, perhaps you are not so bad after all. **Bob Dumbarton**



# A warm welcome to a chilly February

How are you finding the second lockdown? Having experienced it last year it should be no trouble to old hands like us. In the current weather, it's actually quite welcome having an excuse not to go out.

It does seem that it will be longer than we thought before we get back together again, so once more, our AGM will be held electronically and we will all get a chance to vote on line. For those who don't use the internet, paper copies will be available at no charge. Aren't we generous?

I have had my first Covid jab with no after effects, so hopefully everyone of us will be done before too long. In the meantime, look after yourselves. Remember to wear your mask when out and take care.

Cheers,

**Alaister Macrae - Chairman**

## If in any doubt . . . Then don't

Unfortunately, there are a number of Covid 19 scams doing the rounds at present. The **Chartered Trading Standards Institute**, or Trading Standards, as we used to call them, has received evidence of fraudulent messages being sent out. Some people are being sent a text message, claiming to be from the NHS, which informs the recipient, "NHS: we have identified that you are eligible to apply for your vaccine. For more information and to apply follow here" The message ends with a link to a fake website that has been mocked up to look like a legitimate NHS site. They then request personal details, including name and address and banking details. This is a red flag. **The NHS will never ask you for personal, banking or card details. Please ignore and delete.**

Full details are on the Trading Standards website:

<https://www.tradingstandards.uk/news-policy/news-room/2021/fake-nhs-covid-19-vaccination-messages-target-vulnerable-public>

**Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC)** have also reported a number of annoying scams that you should be aware of. For information go to: [www.gov.uk/guidance/identify-hmrc-related-scam-phone-calls-emails-and-text-messages](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/identify-hmrc-related-scam-phone-calls-emails-and-text-messages)

**HMRC** will never send you any notifications by email about tax rebates or refunds. They will also never ask for any personal or financial information.

### **Text scam - 'The new lockdown support plan'**

**HMRC** is aware of coronavirus (COVID-19) text scams telling customers they are entitled to funding due to the new lockdown support plan. Do NOT reply to the text and please do not open any links in the message

### **Text Scam - 'COVID-19 refund'**

**HMRC** is also aware of various text scams offering a 'refund' in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Do NOT reply to the text and do not open any links in the message.

Do NOT visit the website, open any attachments, disclose any personal or payment information

Please send any **phishing** text messages to **60599** (HMRC) or email [phishing@hmrc.gov.uk](mailto:phishing@hmrc.gov.uk) - then delete it.

**HMRC** is also aware of an automated phone call which will tell you that HMRC is filing a lawsuit against you. The caller then asks you to press 1 to speak to a caseworker to make a payment. **Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs** have confirmed that this is a scam and you should ignore it.

End the call immediately. This scam has been widely reported and often targets elderly and vulnerable people.

Other annoying scam calls may refer to National Insurance number fraud or offer a tax refund and request you to provide your bank or credit card information. Do NOT speak and end the call. If you can, block the number.

If possible, report any suspicious messages to Action Fraud, [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk), as this provides intelligence and assists authorities in combating scams.

**Please, if you are unsure, never disclose any personal, bank or card information, by text, email or phone**

**\*Remember - If in doubt ... Don't\***

David Feehey

# Bramhall u3a Information



**Alaister Macrae**  
Chairman



**Peter Webster**  
Vice-Chair,  
Newsletter & Magazine



**Alistair Gardner**  
Treasurer



**Chris Stubbs**  
Groups



**Christine Hollingsworth**  
Holidays



**Bob Dumbarton**  
Events, Newsletter  
& Magazine



**Meg Rowell**  
Minutes  
Secretary

**Along with:** **Helen Webster\*** - Speakers; **Dudley Newall\*** - Outings; **Kay Witham** - Membership;  
**Edward Haynes** - Community; **Frances Bell** - Theatre; **Jill Rickman** and **Vera Moore**  
*\*New committee members for 2021* **Vacancies: Business Secretary + Groups Accommodation Secretary**

## Your committee for 2021

### \*Contact information\*

**Our website address, for everything u3a, you need to know:** [www.bramhallu3a.org.uk](http://www.bramhallu3a.org.uk)

**Group enquiries:** [groups@bramhallu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@bramhallu3a.org.uk) **General enquiries:** [enquiries@bramhallu3a.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bramhallu3a.org.uk)

**Charity items:** [charities@bramhallu3a.org.uk](mailto:charities@bramhallu3a.org.uk) **Upbeat Magazine:** [magazine@bramhallu3a.org.uk](mailto:magazine@bramhallu3a.org.uk)

### Bramhall u3a - Subscriptions for 2021

**The Committee unanimously agreed that the annual subscription for 2021 will be held at £10.**

**It will not be required to be paid until the end of March 2021.**

**The membership fee has remained at £10 since Bramhall u3a started in 2010.**

### Membership Renewal 2021

We will be sending out the membership renewal forms for 2021 in the middle of February.

The fee will remain £10 and cheques and stamped addressed envelopes should be returned as usual. Unfortunately, for the time being, we will be unable to hold meetings when membership can be renewed.

**Kay Witham**



### Your Bramhall U3A website:

[www.bramhallu3a.org.uk/](http://www.bramhallu3a.org.uk/)

### Or, to contact Stockport Council

The website is:

[www.stockport.gov.uk/](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/)

or Telephone: **0161 480 4949**

If you can, use the SMBC website. It is often the fastest and easiest way to access the council.

You can make payments, report issues, make applications and also to find info. about all council services.

[www.stockport.gov.uk/contact](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/contact)

### \*\*\*Check your bin collection days\*\*\*

**Please refer to the sheet recently distributed by Stockport MBC  
or go to ...**

[www.stockport.gov.uk/find-your-collection-day](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/find-your-collection-day)

**Please put your bins out by 7am**

## Please share your Upbeat

If you can, please send your magazine on to a friend or 'buddy' who has not yet seen it. Please contact them to chat about it or give them your copy. Or, if you can, print parts of it yourself and post it or give it to them to enjoy. **Its always worth being UPBEAT with others**



# Our groups, U3A and general info.

After setting up a highly successful **Pickleball group**, which has kept going throughout the Pandemic whenever possible, we are very sorry to have to say goodbye to **David Pechey** as co-ordinator.

At the group's inception he managed to obtain the services of Elaine Shawcross, the Regional Director for North West Pickleball to train prospective members. Last year David got her to return and run a skills improvement workshop. He also has the satisfaction of one member of the group becoming the English National Singles Champion in the seniors category, an accolade to the hard work he has done as coordinator.

As we say goodbye to David, we welcome **Julie Suckling** and **Steve Goodall** who will share the running of the group.

**Chris Stubbs Groups Organiser**

## Art Appreciation

The next two Art Appreciation group Zoom talks will be at 2pm on Wednesday 10 February on Aubrey Beardsley and Wednesday 10 March on Barbara Hepworth. Fingers crossed we may be able to visit the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in the summer and see the work of Barbara Hepworth in real life.

**Kay Witham**

## North West Region u3a – Tuesday talks

The committee for the North West Region of the u3a has initiated a series of monthly talks, similar to our monthly meetings, but using Zoom.

The talks will be held on the second Tuesday of the month usually starting at 10.30 am.

### The next talk is

**Tuesday February 9 at 2pm Antarctic adventures**

Presented by Neil Stevenson, u3a Regional Trustee

**Bramhall u3a** members can register for the talks or find further information by going to:

[www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west/events](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west/events).

There is probably a limit on numbers so all places may have been taken by the time our Magazine is circulated.

## u3a National Office

u3a National Office have organised a series of online talks such as “A Taste of Japan”, “Maths Problems and Puzzles” and “Wellbeing in Nature”.

For details and booking, go to <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

**Mike Hollingsworth**

## u3a National Newsletter

The Third Age Trust publishes a monthly Newsletter and if any member is interested in reading this online publication, they can sign up by clicking on the link and filling in their details. [national website](#)

## Science for All group

**The Science for All group has met using Zoom for 10 talks since it recommenced in May.**

Talks are on the first Wednesday of the month, starting at 2pm.

The talks programme for the beginning of 2021 is:

**3<sup>rd</sup> March**

**The Solar System and a little of what is beyond**

by Martin Whillock

**7<sup>th</sup> April**

**Fibre and how the internet gets to you**

by Brian Wells

If you would like to join the Group, please email [groups@bramhallu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@bramhallu3a.org.uk) with **Science for All** in the Subject line.

**Mike Hollingsworth**

## I wandered lonely as a cloud

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,

A host of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

*William Wordsworth*



# Quiz Time ...

Answers to all questions are on the back page, but no cheating ...

## How is your Geography? Courtesy of mylondon.news

1. What country has the shortest coastline in the world?
2. Name a county that borders Scotland.
3. What was the first capital of England?
4. Which London Tube line was the first in the world?
5. What is the smallest country in the world?
6. What is the biggest country in the world?
7. What is an Atol?
8. The 2004 Boxing Day tsunami set off from what ocean?
9. How many times could you fit the UK in the US?
10. What will be the maximum speed of HS2?  
a) 205 Mph b) 225 Mph or c) 245 Mph
11. Name the capital city of Brazil.
12. How many countries in Europe start with the letter C?
13. What US State is Niagara Falls in?
14. How many Tube stations are there in London?
15. What was the country of Myanmar formerly known as?
16. Name as many of the six countries bordering the black sea as you can.
17. Can you name the most Northern head or Southern point of the UK?
18. What is the man-made canal that splits North and South America called?
19. Name the river that runs through Cambridge.
20. What is the tallest mountain in Nepal?

**In a recent survey although 83% of all drivers thought that they were good drivers, over half admitted they didn't recognise all the current road signs. See if you can recognise these road signs.**

### HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR TRAFFIC SIGNS?



### Pancake Day!

This year Pancake Day, or Shrove Tuesday falls on February 16th. The day after, Ash Wednesday, marks the start of Lent, so in times gone by, a modest little feast was held in people's homes, anticipating forty days of fasting. It was also the day when people were 'shriven', or absolved of their sins before the purification of the fast.

This rather restrained celebration is hardly to be compared with the events to be seen in some other parts of the world. 'Mardi Gras', or Fat Tuesday is celebrated, as is Carneval in many countries. 'Carnevale' literally means 'farewell to flesh', as no meat is eaten during Lent.

Some of the most spectacular events are to be seen in Italy, with the extravagant masked parades in Venice and the 'Volo dell' Angelo', when a young women is zip-wired across St Marks Square. The Battle of the Oranges in Ivrea must be one of the most extraordinary ways to celebrate!

**Helen Webster**



# On a lighter note ...

I still can't believe people's survival instincts told them to grab toilet paper.

I'm going to stay up on New Year's Eve this year. Not to see the New Year in, but to make sure this one leaves.

If I had only known in March it would be my last time in a restaurant, I would have ordered dessert.

At the store there was a Big X by the register for me to stand on... I've seen too many Road Runner cartoons to fall for that one.

Having some states lock down and some states not lock down is like having a peeing section in a swimming pool.

Until further notice, the days of the week are now called, thisday, thatday, otherday, someday, yesterday, today & nextday.

**THEY SAID A MASK AND GLOVES WERE ENOUGH TO GO TO THE GROCERY STORE**  
**THEY LIED, EVERYBODY ELSE HAD CLOTHES ON**

The dumbest thing I've ever purchased was a 2020 planner.

When Does Season TWO of 2020 Start? I Do Not Like Season ONE.

Keep in mind, even during a pandemic, no matter how much chocolate you eat, your earrings will still fit.

The buttons on my jeans have started social distancing from each other.

I never thought the comment "I wouldn't touch him/her with a 6 foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are

For those of you who can't work out social distancing, this is two meters apart.

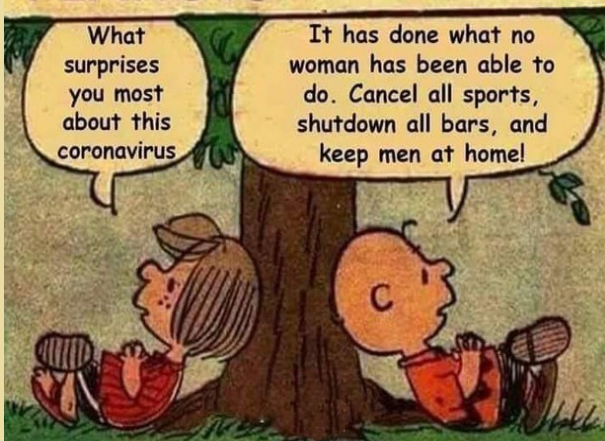


## \*\* Breaking News \*\*

A US vicar has died after injecting himself with disinfectant... Donald Trump is being charged with bleach of the priest.

Sitting on the couch & my husband sweetly whispered.. "The best part about all of this is that I get to spend more time with you" as I looked over at him lovingly I realized he was talking to the dog not me

## PEANUTS



BEYOND THIS POINT YOU MAY ENCOUNTER NUDE SUNBATHERS EATING WAFFLES







## Hannah Winbolt

The third of our redoubtable local women to be commemorated in Suffragette Square, Stockport, is Hannah Winbolt.

Hannah Winbolt was born Hannah Oldham in 1851 in a cottage in Great Moor, near Stepping Hill Hospital. Due to its location on the west side of the road from Stockport to Buxton, the cottage was at that time part of the estate of the Davenports of Bramhall Hall. Three brothers, Peter, William and Henry Oldham lived in adjoining cottages with their respective families. Hannah was the youngest of the three children of William Oldham and, like many others in the area, members of all the Oldham families were engaged in the hand-loom weaving of silk. Hannah did receive a rudimentary education, part-time, at a small local school, but only till the age of eight, before being required to start work silk-weaving, a fact which obviously influenced her later endeavours.

It should be noted that the Oldham brothers were well respected locally. Hannah's uncles, Peter and Henry were founder committee members of the Stockport Great Moor Co-operative Society, which joined with another society to convert the ground floor of a cottage into a small shop. This business enterprise grew and set up various local branches, but the original location, now in premises built in 1927, still exists as a Co-op on the corner of Cherry Tree Lane, across the road from the Travellers' Call on the A6 in Great Moor.

By the time she was 10, Hannah was described as a 'nurse', though what this entailed is not certain. Ten years later, we find that Hannah is the only one of the family still living at home and working as a silk-weaver, while her niece, Charlotte, aged ten, is helping them as a bobbin-winder. It was this personal experience of child labour that later encouraged her to fight for the rights of women and children.

After Hannah's father died, her mother, along with Hannah and Charlotte, moved to Store Street, which still exists as a narrow cobbled street of neat terraces off the A6 in Great Moor. This street and the next road off the A6, were developed by the Winbolt family, who duly called the second street 'Winbolt Street', also still in existence as a residential street. Hannah married one of the Winbolt family, John, in 1874. Over the years, they lived in various houses on Store Street, finally settling in Number 2. Hannah never had any children, which undoubtedly gave her much greater opportunity to pursue her work for the betterment of women's place in society.

At this time, Hannah would travel to Manchester by train to sell completed silk cloth. It was on one of these journeys that she met one Lydia Becker, who asked Hannah to sign a petition for women's suffrage. Lydia was a leader of the suffragette movement in Manchester, a city always in the forefront of matters relating to the rights of women. Hannah, clearly inspired, was soon elected to the committee of the Union of Women's Liberal Association and founded a branch of the Association in Hazel Grove.

Over the next few years, she travelled all over the country, delivering speeches on an impressive variety of topics around the issue of the rights of women and children, including the education of children, housing of the poor and equal pay for women. She even campaigned for the abolition of the House of Lords. It is interesting to note how relevant these topics appear now, over a hundred years later. She and her colleagues were happy to trade on the fact that she was a 'working woman', especially one with a marked local accent.

Her public appearances could be quite contentious affairs. She enjoyed using humour, in particular against hecklers, but at one outdoor meeting in Stockport in 1893, it is recorded that, *'When Mr Shuttleworth and Mrs Winbolt appeared on the platform, a number of Tory roughs threw mud and orange peel at them. Mrs Winbolt was struck several times by these missiles.'*

In 1895, a South Wales newspaper described Hannah as, *'an experienced workwoman, with a natural gift of eloquence and a burning desire to help women who have to earn their living by manual labour. She delighted and encouraged her fellow delegates with her vigorous advocacy for limitations on the hours which young half-timers have to work and the placing of an equality of women with men so far as employment is concerned.'*

In 1902, she was chosen to present a petition to Parliament in Westminster from 4292 Cheshire textile workers, calling for more rights for women.

A sad footnote to the remarkable story of Hannah Winbolt is that when she died in May 1928, she would only have had the vote as a property owner after inheriting her husband's property in 1919. Full voting rights were accorded to women in July of that year, just two months after her death.

**Helen Webster**



# Supporting our nominated charities

**St Ann's Hospice** and **The Wellspring** are still operating but are struggling with funding as normal sources of income have all but dried up. Donations are now more important than ever and can be made, directly to them, via their websites: **St Anne's Hospice:** <https://www.sah.org.uk> **The Wellspring:** <https://thewellspring.co.uk>



**Bramhall u3a member Pamela Brown has been keeping herself busy and was able to send quite a lot of knitted clothes to The Wellspring for the women at Christmas.**

**The wool was left over from some given to her a number of years ago when she made Twiddle muffs for dementia patients. The fabric came from a book of samples and these made some lovely bright bags.**

**Many thanks to all who bought our Christmas Knitted novelties. Your generosity helped us to raise £300 for St Ann's Hospice.**

## Knitting Group A

We are hoping to help them again by selling **Easter novelties.**

We have covers for:

<b>Crème Eggs</b>	<b>75p OR £1</b> (depending on design)
<b>Smarties Tube</b>	<b>£1</b>
<b>Chocolate Oranges</b>	<b>£2.50</b>
<b>Small Gift Bags</b>	<b>£1.50</b>

All are supplied without chocolate.

**We also have some lavender filled chicks and rabbits - £1**

If you would like any of the above please contact Sheila porter via [charities@bramhallu3a.org.uk](mailto:charities@bramhallu3a.org.uk)



The group was also contacted by some people giving Covid injections. As they were having to work in a draughty hall or even in a car park they were very cold. Fingerless gloves were requested. A friend and our members managed to supply them. Some as shown in the picture.

A donation is being sent to St Ann's by the grateful recipients

**Sheila Porter**



## The Card Group

**We have been working on cards for children & have new designs, we hope you like them.**

Our fun clown has bobbles on his shoes & our cute penguin will please any child. The bug on a leaf stands out & is very tactile for the little ones.

We have had a lot of fun making them, please e-mail or phone if you would like one delivered to you.

**From the Card Girls.**

**Chris D, Avril, Jill & Chris W.**



### Card delivery service.

We are so grateful to all those who have ordered cards from us, as it means we can continue to support our nominated charity, **The Wellspring.**

This is now a regular service, so that people can still benefit from our hand-made cards.

Many thanks to you all. **Jill Rickman - Card Making** [charities@bramhallu3a.org.uk](mailto:charities@bramhallu3a.org.uk)



## Alice and the Andromeda Galaxy Part 1

A story by Keith Wright

**Alice** waved as the car pulled away from the front gate of her cottage. Tim and Susan, her grandchildren, waved back from their safety seats. Aged eight and six respectively, they had eaten all the lunch she had prepared for them, and all the ice cream she had in the house. Afterwards, her son Paul had removed the packaging from the new computer he had bought for her seventieth birthday and had then set it up on her writing desk in the spare bedroom.

"Right, Mum, this is the on/off switch," Paul had explained. "I'll show you how to get "on line" and then Mary and I will wash the

lunch dishes whilst the kids explain lots of other things to you. They are really looking forward to this and Tim knows his way around computers better than I do. Are you okay with the way the mouse works?"

The children had run into the room as Paul left and had thrown themselves at their granny. Then both of them had jumped towards the office swivel chair in front of the computer screen and after some pushing had managed to sit on it together. As she peered over their heads, the next few minutes had been for Alice a blur of little stabbing fingers and changing images. She had found a sheet of paper and a pen and had attempted to take notes, but Tim and Susan were much too quick for her. They were both speaking at the same time but trying to explain different things to her, whilst constantly asking her if she understood. When it was time for them to leave she saw that she had barely written anything on the sheet of paper. Alice had walked with them as far as her front gate, using her walking stick to ease the arthritic pain in her knees, so that she could wave them goodbye.

After the car had turned the corner at the end of the street she went back into the house, made herself a cup of tea and took it into the spare bedroom. Gingerly she switched on the computer, momentarily edging backwards in her chair as it came to life. Moving the mouse timidly across the screen, she positioned the arrow on the prettiest icon, entitled "Set-up Wizard". Whilst trying to remember what Tim had said, she clicked the left side of the mouse three times in quick succession. There was a slight pause and the face of a wizard filled the screen, a face with a white beard, bright blue eyes and a broad smile.

"Hello, Alice," said the wizard in faultless English. "My name is Elbin. You are the first Earthling to make contact with us. No-one else has ever pressed "Set-up Wizard" three times in less than a second. I'm now going to take you on a little adventure, introducing you to the world where we live."

Alice felt herself being elevated from her chair and drawn out of her body towards the screen. She tried to resist this movement but had no control of herself and passed smoothly through it to join the wizard inside the computer.

"Don't worry, Alice, it's just your mind I'm controlling," Elbin smiled. "Your body will stay where it is and there will be no passage of Earth time while we're away. My home is on the planet of Oz, in the Andromeda Galaxy. Your galaxy, the Milky Way, contains 200 million stars, your own Sun being one of those stars. If you could hold the whole of the Milky Way in your hand and then start walking, it would take you 3 months to reach the Andromeda galaxy. It's a long way away but I'm a magician, so we'll be instantly transported there."

Alice was then hurtled through space at thousands of times the speed of light. She somehow had no fears about what might happen next. One minute she had been making selections on her computer screen. The next she was surrounded a large number of people who looked just like Elbin, but were of varying sizes. They were all smiling happily as they jostled each other, trying to get closer to her.

"You are now on the planet of Oz, Alice. It's a little bit larger than your planet, and we have two smaller suns in our solar system, different from your one sun. They are the same distance away from Oz but on diametrically opposite sides of us. So although our planet is rotating in the same way as planet Earth, it never gets dark, because wherever we are on Oz we will always be facing one of the suns."

Alice gasped in amazement at what she saw. There were many more colours than she had ever seen before. All the wizards seemed to be moving at high speed and there was a lot more noise than on Earth.

"We evolved at a similar pace as the people on Earth." Elbin explained. "Like Earth, all life began in our oceans. But our evolution took place at the same time as that of our dinosaurs. They are much smaller than the huge monsters which roamed the Earth millions of years ago, and are herbivore. You'll see how we have



domesticated them.”

From the thronging crowd a wizard, slightly smaller than Elbin, stepped forward, pulling by the hand one of much smaller stature. Elbin’s face beamed with delight.

“Alice, this is Nogla, my soul mate, and our child Ibsen. I’m 135 years old and Nogla is 128. Ibsen is 34; he’ll continue to grow until he’s around 55 Oz years of age. Would you like to shake Nogla’s hand, the way you greet each other on Earth?”

Alice began to explain that shaking hands on Earth usually occurred only when meeting someone for the first time, or on formal occasions, but then decided not to bother and held out her hand. Nogla grabbed it eagerly and began shaking it so vigorously that Alice thought she would lose her fingers. Then she noticed that little Ibsen had bent down, and was stroking a miniature brontosaurus, one of the dinosaur family.

“He loves that dino,” laughed Elbin, “I believe you have dogs and cats as animal friends on Earth. We have different types of dinosaurs as our friends. They’re easy to teach and very loyal. Nogla, shake hands with Alice. Then let’s catch an air taxi and I’ll show you some more of our planet.” ...

*The story continues in the March edition of your Upbeat magazine*

**Your u3a Needs YOU.** Charlie Barker, our webmaster, is stepping down soon and so we need someone to replace him. If you feel that you can offer your services to our members, by eventually taking over from him, please contact Alistair Macrae at [chairman@bramhallu3a.org.uk](mailto:chairman@bramhallu3a.org.uk). **More details in next months magazine**

## Did You Know? Provided by Mike Hollingsworth

**Red hair** is only found in 1-2% of the population across the globe. It is by far the rarest natural hair colour, and is more prevalent in West European Celtic races. Figures vary, but 6-13% has been quoted for the prevalence across Scotland and Ireland which show the highest scores worldwide. This colouration, which ranges from ginger to auburn, is due to the MC1R gene and doesn't rely on either parent presenting with red hair themselves. A combination of red hair and blue eyes is particularly rare.

If you are lucky enough to be in this elite group, you will be sharing the above qualities with the likes of Queen Elizabeth 1st, Florence Nightingale, Ed Sherran, and Prince Harry, not to mention Jessica Rabbit and Wilma Flintstone. You also are more likely to be left-handed, more sensitive to the cold and, of course, of above average intelligence!

**Not all spiders spin webs.** Spiders are unique in the way that silk is involved in virtually all aspects of their lives. However, although spiders and webs are commonly thought of together, only 17 out of the 37 spider families in Britain build webs in order to catch prey.

**Silk production:** Spiders produce silk proteins in glands deep within their abdomens. It emerges as fine strands of finished silk from highly mobile, finger-like organs (spinnerets), at the rear of the body. Some insects also produce silk (like the silkworm) but, unlike spiders, their silk emerges from the mouthparts.

**Web silk:** Spiders can produce many different sorts of silk with distinct physical properties and used for a variety of purposes. The familiar orb web of the Garden spider (*Araneus diadematus*), for example, requires silk from three separate types of silk gland during its construction. Some spider families produce a woolly, entangling silk (known as cribellate silk) which emerges from special glands and which is combed out by rows of bristles on the hind legs.

**Web types:** Broadly, seven different web architectures can be recognized among British spiders – orb, funnel, tangled, lacy, radial, hammock and purse.



Photograph by Hubert Worrall

# The Back Page

**Another February fact.** Did you know that last summer **Sherloc** and his trusty friend **Watson** were sent on **NASA's Perseverance Rover** to Mars in order to carry out some highly important detective work?

They are due to arrive at Jezero Crater on **18th February 2021**.

**Sherloc** will be mounted on the end of a robotic arm. His mission is to look for clues of ancient life by detecting organic molecules and minerals and search out signs of past microbial life. His partner, **Watson**, will take close up pictures of any selected rocks.

In case you are interested, **Sherloc** is an acronym of :

'**Scanning Habitable Environments with Raman and Luminescence for Organisms and Chemicals.**  
and **Watson** is an acronym of :

'**Wide Angle Topographic Sensor for Operations and eNginneering**'.

**But of course, you already knew that.**

**Mike Hollingsworth**



SonnyandSandy (Creative Commons)

## The Geography Quiz - Answers

1. Monaco
2. Cumbria or Northumbria
3. Winchester
4. The Metropolitan Railway between Paddington and Farringdon opened in 1863,
5. Vatican City
6. Russia
7. A group of small islands
8. Indian Ocean
9. Around 40 times
10. b) 225 Mph
11. Brasília
12. 3 - Croatia, Cyprus and Czech Republic
13. New York State
14. 270
15. Burma
16. Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania
17. Dunnet Head in Caithness and Lizard Point in Cornwall
18. The Panama Canal
19. River Cam
20. Mount Everest

## How Well Do You Know Your Traffic Signs?

1. Crossroads.
2. Migratory toad crossing.
3. No stopping on carriageway. [Clearway].
4. Tunnel ahead.
5. All vehicles prohibited except cycles being pushed.
6. Opening or swing bridge.
7. Risk of ice or snow.
8. Railway level crossing without gate or barrier.
9. Cycle route.
10. Mini Roundabout.
11. Minimum speed 40mph.
12. Steep hill downwards 10%.
13. Soft verges.
14. Tramcars crossing.
15. Pedestrians prohibited.
16. Wild animals likely to be in road.
17. Towed caravans prohibited.
18. Road [congestion] charge zone reminder.
19. Slow vehicles on incline.
20. Slow moving military vehicles warning.
21. Zebra crossing.
22. Horse drawn vehicles prohibited.
23. Frail or disabled pedestrians crossing
24. Water course at side of road

**This is your magazine. Help us to keep it UPBEAT for everyone.**

**All submissions to [magazine@bramhallu3a.org.uk](mailto:magazine@bramhallu3a.org.uk) by 22 February 2021**

**The Upbeat Magazine team ...**

**Bob Dumbarton** (Content Editor); **Peter Webster** (Layout & Graphics) & **Helen Webster** (Production Assistant)

**The next edition will be available on the Friday 5 March**

We would really welcome your articles, pictures, quizzes, jokes and, of course, feedback.

