

## Science & Technology STEM Group

### Visit to Branston Potato Company on 23rd October 2018

Congratulations to Branston Potato on their 50th year of production.

A company initiated by a group of farmers, collaborating to grow and market potatoes in 1968. Now an organisation across three locations in the UK employing about 750 people.

We were welcomed on our visit to this vibrant company by John Griffin, General Manager, and his team. We heard a concise and effective overview of the company's growth and development, some of the features being:-

\*Country-wide supply to two major partners – Tesco and Waitrose

\*Good opportunities for local employment

\*Ecologically aware with very little waste

\*Creation of their own anaerobic digester to produce much of their own power

\*Business growth from just supplying potatoes to the creation and preparation of ready to cook meals

Our next step was to prepare for the journey to the 'pack house' – change of shoes to a solid working pair, fitting of a visor, depositing our phones, keys and other valuables ready to observe, smell and almost taste the process of sorting potatoes from delivery to final packaging.

John and his team led these intrepid STEM potato followers step-by-step through the process from the moment the potatoes are tipped into the initial hopper, travel along the conveyor system to be washed, dried and sorted. Technology is key to this process with an optical sorter\* taking 44 photographs of each potato to identify 'big potato, small potato, long potato, or those with a beer belly, beautiful potatoes... and those with not much of a complexion; all lined up and put in their place to voyage to their rightful station in life along a conveyor line to go onwards to – key customers, baking, meal preparation, or best for mash! Finally, the selected potatoes are suitably packaged for each customer.

An amazing story of enterprise on our doorstep contributing to the local economy with 450 employees on the Branston site and the other 300 spread between Somerset and Perthshire.

A very professional and informative experience – Thank You.

*\*They use them in vineyards too you know.*

*We even met the lady responsible for the "imaginative" slogans on the trucks!!*



STEM Group  
Branston Potato Company

## Family History

The family history group is going strong; On average nine members ( different ones ) meet regularly to discuss our progress and exchange tips and ideas.

Murderers, highwaymen and vicars number is our joint ancestry; along with interesting stories and annoying "brick walls".

The internet is a great resource but you can't beat wandering around cemeteries.



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## Local Heritage Group

### Danelaw

Living in Lincolnshire we are very used to village names ending in -by, -ton, -thorpe or -borough, sometime we might wonder why but often just take it for granted. The Danes ( Vikings ) invaded and occupied our part of the country between 800 and 1066 and it is them we have to thank for our place names.

This was part of the interesting talk that the group had at its November meeting given by Malcolm Stainforth.

From around 800, there had been waves of Danish raids on the coast of the Britain, they tended to attack churches and other wealthy building to steal valuable goods which they took back to Denmark. They also scouted out the area so that in 865, instead of raiding, the Danes landed a large army in East Anglia, with the intention of conquering the four Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of England. Most people think of the Vikings as sailors but they were also accomplished horsemen and they used these skills to overrun the area we would now call the East Midlands. This was the area of the five boroughs subject to Danelaw. The Five Boroughs were the five main towns of Danish Mercia. These were **Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham** and **Stamford**. The first four later became county towns.

The Danes continued to occupy the area in an allegiance with the Norse until September 1066, when an English army under **King Harold Godwinson** took on an invading Norwegian force at Stamford Bridge. After a bloody battle, Hardrada along with most of the Norwegians were killed effectively ending the Viking rule.

Harold was himself killed at Hastings later that year.

**John Tyerman**

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## Readers Group

On a Thursday afternoon six members of the Readers Group met at Branston Library to discuss 'A Delicate Truth' by John le Carre, A member of the group opened the discussion with a general summary of the storyline that she had found on the internet, after which everyone was free to air their thoughts about the book. A lively discussion followed, and it was generally agreed that, although not one of le Carre's best, it was an interesting book and easy to read. There was a debate concerning the cliffhanger ending, as some readers would have liked an ending that tied up all the loose ends, while other readers preferred to decide the outcome for themselves.

Amongst the books we have read this year have been 'The Snow Child' by Eowyn Ivey, which was very well received, 'Down and Out in Paris and London' by George Orwell, which raised an interesting debate concerning society's views on beggars and the homeless, 'Wolf of the Plains' by Conn Iggulden, the story of Genghis Khan, and 'Fahrenheit 451' by Ray Bradbury, a classic book which was not very well liked.

At Readers Group we read a wide variety of books, and you can find yourself immersed in a novel that left to your own choice you would never have picked up off the shelf. So if you are looking to broaden your reading scope, and try some different genre, why not come join us.



**Pat Butler**

**Remember for all the latest information  
CHECK THE BRANSTON U3A WEBSITE**

[www.branstonu3a.org.uk](http://www.branstonu3a.org.uk)

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### U3A Insurance

Just a reminder that the U3A insurance covers all its members whilst taking part in U3A activities.

It also insures visitors for two meetings after which they will have to become a member.

The U3A **DOES NOT** insure youngsters accompanying their parents/grandparents and it would be the parents/grandparents responsibility to ensure their safety.

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## **Annual Report for the Visits Group - October 2018**

The ethos of the U3A is "Life long learning" and I am sure that you will agree with me that we have definitely learnt a great deal this past 12 months. My thanks go to the members who organised visits this year, their input has made for a wide variety of outings.

I am not saying that any one visit was better than another as each was different, so I will do a quick round up – month by month.

For our January meeting a member of the Lincolnshire Road Partnership Team, came a talked on "Mileage for Life". The presentation bought us up to date with driving skills that was useful as many had passed their tests over 50 years ago. This meeting was well attended and many members took up the offer, for free, of having a driving session with an advanced driving instructor. Time well spent!

Another good attendance was the visit to see Stokes at the Lawn in February. We were taken around and shown all the processes involved in making a good cup of coffee. We also had a tour of the Lawn Building and learnt some of its history.

Martin and Janis took some members of the group to the RAF Waddington Heritage Centre in March this involved getting close-up to some of the planes.

An evening visit was planned for April as that was the only time we could go owing to Radio Lincolnshire's schedule. This was followed by a Fish and Chip Supper at the Burton Road Chippy.

Our May visit to Peterborough did not go ahead owing to a lack of numbers. But our June visit, by contrast, was a great success. We hired a coach and invited other U3A members to join us on this outing to the Scunthorpe Steel Works. The visit was on a Saturday when the Steel Works were closed down and the Frodingham Light Railway run a tour of the works which covers a good many acres – much too large to be able to walk around.

July saw a small group go to a Stud Farm near Alford to see the stallions, mares and foals. But as a bonus thee was a thatcher on the premises who talked about his work.

The visit in August to the Lincoln City Council CCTV Room proves so popular that there were two sessions. It was fascinating looking at the bank of

screens on the wall, but no great excitement during our morning visit.

Unfortunately the September visit to Woolsthorpe was cancelled by the National Trust on the morning due to the high winds. One couple had their own excitement as they had arrived early on site, parked the car, gone for a walk, returning to find that they had been locked in and no one about. Eventually a member of staff came to their rescue.

Here we are in October. Next month there are about 30 going to the Lincolnshire Road Museum.

(See below)

**Sue Morris**

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### **Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum**

Recently the Branston U3A Visits Group went to the Lincolnshire Vintage Vehicle Society which is based at the Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum on Whisby Road in North Hykeham. The museum houses a collection of over 65 vintage cars, buses and commercial vehicles spanning over 80 years of road transport.

One of the oldest preservation societies in Great Britain, the LVVS collection traces the history of road transport through their cars, buses, vans, motor cycles and fire engines many of which have a local connection. The vehicles have been lovingly maintained and restored by the enthusiastic members who are keen to see as many of them as possible kept in a roadworthy condition so that they can continue to run on the roads of Lincolnshire.

The Society was founded in 1959 by a group of local businessmen, with the aim of preserving local vehicles of historic interest. A former Lincoln Corporation bus, Number 5 was the Society's first vehicle and the collection has grown steadily over the years.

Vehicles were initially kept at the Sobaron Barracks on Burton Road but in 1993 the Society was extremely fortunate to receive a substantial grant from the North Kesteven District Council, and with the Society's own funds and further financial help from Beckside Construction, the new museum was erected on its current site.

For over 50 years the society has continued to grow thanks to its many volunteers. More and more vehicles are being restored resulting in very tight parking when all of them are inside during the winter months. Manpower is an issue, so they are always on the lookout for keen members who are willing to give time ( unpaid of course ) to help with the restoration projects. If you are interested they would love to hear from you.

Apart from the vehicles the collection also has transport related items such as recreation of a typical 1930s garage workshop, an AA phone box and many smaller items such as bus ticket machines.

All of these go to make up a very interesting place to visit.



### 1929 Chevrolet Coach

This coach has had very little renovation but is still in a roadworthy condition.

It was used for daily tours from Morecambe to the Lake District.



Members amongst the London Transport double deckers



### Lincoln Corporation No 23

This bus dates back to 1948 but many of us remembered it from 1953 when it was fitted with a Ruston and Hornsby air cooled engine. This gave it a very distinctive sound.



### A beautifully restored 1939 SS Jaguar

This car was bought by three society members in the 1970s for £25 It was completely rotten but has been fully restored to perfect condition and is thought to be the only one of three surviving examples of the model and the only one in the UK.

