

Newsletter 123 - May 2023 (2)



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Future Talks

Meetings are held in Hillingdon Baptist Church on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 10:00. The link for hybrid meetings will be sent out to everybody before the meeting.

Date	Title	Speaker
17/5/2023	Medicine in the Ancient World	Judith Sinclair
7/6/23	Artificial Intelligence - with questions and answers	Carol Mitchell

If anybody wants to join the *Geology* meetings they are on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 10:00. If you are not on the mailing list let Judy Peddie know so that she can send a link

Next one is on Tuesday 23rd May

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Canals (*part2*), a Plough (plow), restrictive Laws and a Blight

John Howard

Because of food shortages and near famine in Europe during the Napoleonic period, the U.K. government introduced the 'Corn Laws' (meaning all seed crops) by 1815; to encourage home production by import taxation restrictions. Yeoman farmers grow wealthy but food prices in the expanding industrial towns became impoverishing, for mill workers and miners alike.

Meanwhile in the expanding USA, getting food to the rapidly growing greater New York state industrial towns and City, from the mid-west Great Lakes; was hampered by the Niagara Falls. Hence in 1828, the 363 miles of the Erie Canal navigation of rivers and canals was completed, negotiating from Buffalo across upper New York state; to link up with Hudson River for New York city and the sea.

(Despite the many locks and viaducts, to accommodate the 500 feet or so fall to sea level and Mohawk and Genesee Rivers; the canal made an immediate profit and began widening).





Also, an enterprising blacksmith named John Deere arrived on the hard soil planes of Illinois in 1837. He set about creating the cast steel curved self-polishing (plow) plough.

The now famous John Deere agricultural equipment company was founded in 1847 and 'the plow that broke the planes' made the USA the world largest wheat producer; (helped subsequently by another great canal, the Canadian 'Saint Lawrence Seaway'; from the Great Lakes to the sea, opening in 1959).

By 1846 numerous UK food price riots and general unrest, lead Robert Peel's Liberal government to repeal the Corn Laws. Which forced many farm labourers to seek work in the industrial towns because the 'landowning gentry' were suddenly short of money, unable to compete with low imported US wheat prices. However bread was now affordable to factory workers in the northern towns, so Disraeli's Conservative government did not give-in to subsequent landowner pressure; to resurrect trade restrictions. It worked so well that it became the Conservative 'free-trade mantra', *(which worked well because the World wanted what the UK had to sell which was engineering and technology, railways, iron ships and weapons!)* But worst was to come for Irish tenant farmers and their English landowners, because adding to low farm produce prices and dependence on the single potato crop; along comes ***Phytophthora infestans***; the potato blight from 1845 to 1852. *Rough estimates say a million landless Irish dead from starvation and related diseases whilst a further million emigrated.*

In 1853 the futile 3 year Crimean began with huge loss of British soldiers to bad force integration and supply; they needed a Wellington, the master of logistics.... A triple whammy, famine, pestilence and wars.

I leave it to you to reflect on the parallels of historical and the present day importance of canals and a Merchant Navy we can call our own, with independence of supply that brings.

Websites for You to Check

[Power giant told by own advisers to stop calling biomass 'carbon neutral' \(msn.com\)](#)

[Sunshine vs. the grid: Why the Czech Republic had to shutdown their solar plants over Easter \(msn.com\)](#)

['Disturbing' find made on one of the world's most remote islands off coast of Brazil \(msn.com\)](#)

[Pictures from above: What a bird's eye view of Africa reveals - BBC News](#)

[Heat pump blow as Government blamed for 'disappointing' £450million boiler scheme failure \(msn.com\)](#)

[A strange new secret about the Earth's inner core may have been discovered \(msn.com\)](#)

[The secret ingredient in Roman concrete that means buildings can last for millennia \(msn.com\)](#)

[Wind turbines are getting old. What happens to the ageing fleet? | Watch \(msn.com\)](#)

Hunga-Tonga Hunga-Ha'apai eruption

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-63953531>

[Britain signs up old coal units as back-up in case of winter power crunch \(msn.com\)](#)

[Amazing moment neutron stars collide seen in world first video \(msn.com\)](#)

[Oxford nuclear fusion spin-out raising £400m after energy breakthrough \(msn.com\)](#)

[This bubble barrier stops Amsterdam's canal plastic from reaching the North Sea | World Economic Forum \(weforum.org\)](#) Also used in Holland's rivers.

[Jupiter, too! New James Webb photos show giant planet's rings, moons and more \(msn.com\)](#)

['Sand batteries' could be key breakthrough in storing solar and wind energy year-round \(msn.com\)](#)

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Lectures

Harrow and Hillingdon Geological Society

Meetings are currently on Zoom. If you would like to join, and are not an HHGS member, please let Hilary Place know so that you can be sent the link. Non members can have three free meetings. After that we would want you to become a member.

Second Wednesday of the month. Login at 19:45

Date	Title	Speaker
14/6/23	The Geology of the Fforest Fawr Geopark	Alan Bowring
12/7/23	The Geology of the Black Country Geopark	

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