

Newsletter u3a

aka The LestFest

AUG 23

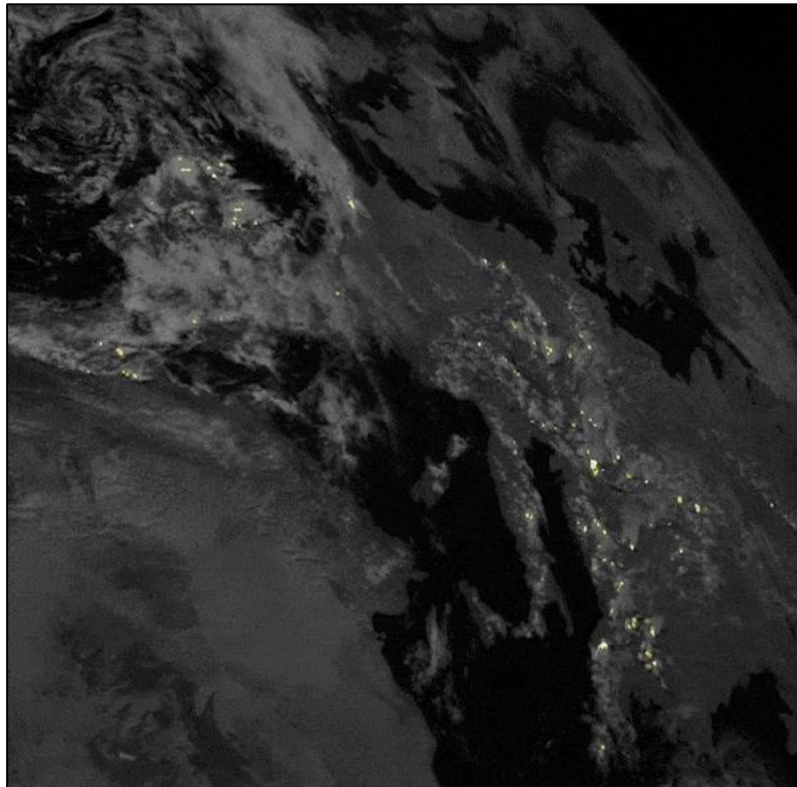
Reluctant Editor: Colin Lester 🙄

Replacement solicited

Contact

colin@clester.plus.com

*and for the time being use that email address to submit
pictures, quizzes, funnies, reports
and any other materials for inclusion
in future issues (if any) of this publication*



What does this scintillating photo show, and where was it taken?

Answer on final page

Photo is copyright – credit: final page

Chairman's Page

❖ **Welcome to our August newsletter.**

Thank you once again to Colin Lester for producing this.

- ❖ At our monthly meeting on the **16th August** – our speaker Ruth Lowe takes **Mary Quant's** career through the late 1950s up to the 1970s. This talk covers her early life, time at Goldsmiths College, London, life with Alexander Plunkett-Green whom she married in 1957 and the fashions of the eras that sparked the fashion revolution. Ruth brings along some real Mary Quant fashion items to re-awaken the memory of the 1960s.



At our **September meeting on the 20th** our speaker **Kevin Reynolds** will take us on a look back at how and why our relationship with the birds in our garden has changed over the last 150 years, including discovering when we started to feed the birds, put up bird boxes and how we decided that some species were "garden birds"?

Please join us for what we expect to be an interesting and enjoyable time together.

- ❖ **We now have a provisional programme for outings that goes up to May 2024.** This will be varied and should be great fun.

Updates on Outings and Interest Groups will be distributed in the middle of August and updated further at our next monthly meeting.



- ❖ Please note that **our 9th Annual General Meeting is on Wednesday 18th October at 2pm at NVSSC**; this will be followed by Wendy Martin talking about 'Gorillas & Climbing Lions'.

We still need volunteers to join the committee.

Thank you to the people who have already volunteered to join the committee including someone to be Chair. **Please consider whether you can help here; It really can be fun 😊**



Notes on our July Meeting

About 50 Members had the pleasure of hearing July speaker Claire Howell, a consultant on music and film memorabilia, who had brought with her several rare or unusual records. She began by outlining her early days and interests in collecting – at one time she collected Coke memorabilia, of which she showed an example – hinting at influences from her grandmother who had a big antiques business, and leading to Claire owning a record shop at the age of 23. Later she began giving various support to rock groups, including working for



Chairman Andy introducing speaker Claire Howell

The Rolling Stones in 2006, but “You weren’t allowed to speak to the performers,” she added sorrowfully.

Nowadays she has a record shop in Wolverhampton (though since Covid her sales have dropped 90%) and also does freelance work for Hansons auctioneers & valuers, having turned down the offer of a permanent job with them. Hanson work with a variety of goods, including regularly holding auctions for collectors. Collection of rock & roll records is falling off, said Claire: as time passes and the days of supergroups fall further into the past, so interest in those sort of memorabilia dwindles. 1960s records can nevertheless be worth more than those from the 1980s, when shortages of vital components as a result of the oil crisis meant that the latter were less well-made, fetching only about £30 apiece now.

Claire gave us a history of record manufacture, and the subtleties in their labelling and packaging that can make a difference to their value nowadays, as can rarity. A Beatles one that she showed us was worth £5-10K because it was withdrawn when

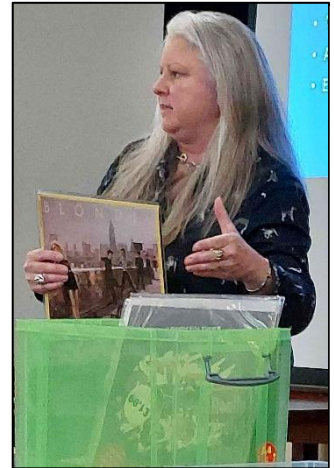


Photo: Roger Prescott with the Editor's thanks

Some unusual discs that Claire had brought along illustrated her talk

Parlophone found the label colour was unpopular and changed it on most of the pressing before putting it back on the market, while the US-version of the ‘Beatle Bakers’ record she showed is worth about £2.5K because the front of the sleeve wasn’t liked so it too was withdrawn and re-released with a new front illustration pasted over the original. A Led Zeppelin record would be worth more or less depending on the colour of the diagonal flash across one corner of the sleeve. Autograph copies are worth more too: on the death of the performer, these records will appreciate in value but not the regular ones.

Many audience questions followed, revealing among other things that the most expensive record she’s sold personally was £2.5K, a classical music disc



Claire shows a sheet of Elvis stickers

by a Russian defector who’d got permission to return to the USSR only to be shot on crossing the border. Claire surveys various lists to assess the value of a record on offer, first pressings being best value. Some people offer whole collections though those will get less than the sum of the individual records sold singly. Website discogs.com has a range of record valuations.

Unusual photos of a group or single performer can be worth quite a bit, especially if copyright is sold with the picture. An old rock concert ticket can be worth hundreds too, as nearly all audience members threw them away. Hansons have four specialist sales a year for music with purchasers from all over the world, and take 17% + VAT from the seller, with the purchaser fee set at £130.

Claire’s advice on selling small-value items is to use online sites like eBay, or charity shops, car boot sales, etc. A flamboyant speaker, she was warmly applauded as she wound up her talk. The usual run-down of outings, interest groups, and quiz answers brought the Meeting to an end.



Claire’s description of some photos Norma had brought to show her produced a degree of hilarity

Photo: Liz Prescott with the Editor's thanks

QUIZ 1

Sports – Answers on final page

1. In 1968, at which racing circuit was Jim Clark killed?
2. England's 1966 World Cup Final team was Banks, Wilson, Moore, Cohen, Stiles, Hurst and...?
3. In 2012, who became his country's first Ryder Cup player?
4. An award was made to which six players for 500 Premier League games in its first 20 years?
5. Rugby in Stockport, cricket in Sussex, basketball in Sheffield: what's the connection?
6. In Wimbledon 2010 who defeated both Federer and Djokovic on the way to the final?
7. In the 1992-3 European Cup, who knocked out reigning champions Leeds United?
8. At the 1948 Olympic Games, which Dutchwoman won most athletics gold medals?
9. Did Leicester CCC choose their name for 1-day games from the soccer or rugby team?
10. Only 1 kind of horse is allowed to compete in the 1,000 Guineas and The Oaks: which?

TOPICAL MATTERS 1 – Scams

There seem to be more than ever each month. J.Y. of Markfield posted on Nexdoor receipt of an email requiring payment of £351 for annual sub. to **Dental Probiotics LLC**, of which he/she had no knowledge, so watch out for them. Another Nextdoor post described a text from 447368306715 about a withheld parcel and supposedly sent from EVRI (but spelt with a small i); the number was found to be reported as a scam so if you get something from it just delete it at once.

Which? magazine advised that holidaygoers facing flight cancellations are also at risk from fake **EasyJet** customer service **Tweets** with 'Online Help Hub' links to a phishing website, or requests to Direct Message the sender which is similarly risky; and some phishers have even infiltrated conversations between genuine EasyJet advisors and customers. Always check Tweets purporting to come from EasyJet have the address @easyJet and have a gold verification tick.

Which? also pointed out a **YouTube** scam which plays on the **MrBeast** video challenges in which subscribers can win money. Fake ads for his operation are appearing, but clicking on them would take you to a phishing website where the promise of money to come tempts you to send your personal data to the phisher, who may also download malware to your device. Another scam appears on **Facebook** where fake offers of **free Network Rail travel cards** have been appearing, clicking leading you to a fraudulent website which asks for your bank details so you can send them £3 postage. If you tried that you'd be taken for much more than £3, and get nothing in return!

A different kind of fraud is advised by Leicestershire Trading Standards, who've found that some members of the public have been paying a **deposit for home improvement** work which then doesn't get done. They advise that before agreeing to work being done we should: check the status of the providing company using the Companies House website; check the provider's website, references, and independent reviews on sites like TrustPilot; make sure you have a signed contract before paying any deposit; and always use a secure payment method. There are recommended traders lists from various sources including <https://trustedtraders.which.co.uk/>.

Other scams are notified and summarised not only on the *Which?* free scam alert service noted in previous issues of this Newsletter but also on the Leicestershire Trading Standards website <https://www.facebook.com/leicstradingstandards>, where you can find a seasonal newsletter which also has details of rogue traders & other useful information. The same organisation's Facebook pages <https://www.facebook.com/leicstradingstandards> is another source and also has up-to-date information about products withdrawn from sale – especially important for foodstuffs you might have recently purchased – and other matters of consumer interest: well worth a visit.

QUIZ 2

(with thanks to Jean Johnson)

General (Answers on final page)

1. What is the strongest muscle in the human body?
 2. What is the common name for a Yurt in the Asian Steppe country?
 3. What is studied by an aurologist?
 4. Is Charterhouse School in Bucks, Berks, or Surrey?
 5. Who was Shakespeare's mother?
 6. Which 80ft-wide British island is 230 miles west of The Hebrides?
 7. What penname did Lord Tweedsmuir use for his novels?
 8. In Australia, is a dinnyhayser a sheep shearer, a two-pint glass, or a knock-out punch?
 9. Where is Lime Street Station?
 10. Who was in *Wuthering Heights*, *The Rocketeer*, and *Flash Gordon*?
-

West Leicestershire u3a Wine Appreciation Group

26 July meeting *text by John Dexter, photos by & © Roger Prescott, with the Editor's thanks to both*

In view of our subject – Spanish Wines – I decided to give our members a treat. Dee and I were lucky enough to source a Limited Edition Verdejo, a bright, dry white wine produced in Rueda where the Verdejo grapes have been grown since the 11th Century on limestone-rich soils. We were a bit disappointed by the mixed reactions of the group – varying from 'awful' to 'okay'. So much for our efforts to impress! Perhaps the £5 price tag may have been a clue, but also illustrating the purple prose on the label may not have translated to the product!

Fortunately the rest of the offerings were immeasurably better. Obviously, being Spanish, Riojas were in the ascendant although several other reds made their presence felt. A Pizo Gran Reserva 2015 was excellent – Jon announced it had 'good legs' – he was at the other end of the table so I hope he was referring to the wine. None the less the wine was as smooth as the comment. It is interesting to read the labels: one of the Tempranillos is produced by 5th generation owners, while the Pizo mentioned above was grown on slate. Each had a tale to tell.

We had our fair share of white wines to sample. As often happens, the definition of the selected area is sometimes elastic, as seen with a Roero Arneis from the far east of Spain – an area better known as Italy! Back in Spain proper a dry Marques de Almeida Albariño was deemed better than the aforementioned Verejo – talk about damning with faint praise! However, a Jordi Miró Grenache Blanc was, it was reported, not just a fine wine but an M&S fine wine – the provenance being reflected in the price.

Speaking of price, Joyce really did push the boat out specifically for us. During a recent trip she bought a bottle of Favaio 1999 – a dessert wine from the west of Spain. To say it was exquisite would be an understatement. It was a privilege to have been able to sample it, the more so when she admitted how much it cost.

When it came to nibbles, Roger balked at £7 for a 150gm sample of Spanish cheese, so offered up a German one – which was probably far nicer!

The evening started on a sobering subject. Normally we are regaled with tales of sun, sea, and sangria, but this time there were reflections on Auschwitz, Cambodia, Yemen, and so many other centres of appalling inhumanity. More close to home were memories of funerals, some heartbreaking, some uplifting, although the local one with up to 2,000 mourners did take some beating.

Perhaps it is a reflection of our demographic that, having taken a deep breath, we moved on to politics and education, with universal university attendance coming in for particular comment. Global warming is something which exercises our members, with a wide range of views – from yes to no and plenty of scope for discussion in between. Even the cricket was discussed – was Global Warming responsible for the rain which curtailed the last Test?

Discussion about the cost of living brought us to the difficulties faced by the restaurant trade, and it was even mooted our Lunch Club may be the saviour of the entire industry – or is that overstating the case? Speaking of which, a glass was raised to mourn the closure of The Case in Leicester.

/On a lighter note...

On a lighter note, old French films were discussed – at some length. Unfortunately, your reporter was totally in the dark on this subject so would probably be unable to spell any of the titles and will have to leave it to your imagination.

Speaking of being in the dark, one must confess that the specific mention of wines in this and other reports relies entirely on an immediate study of the relevant labels rather than a deep-set knowledge – and we have already demonstrated their partiality, so take it all with a pinch of salt!

*Next meeting **Wednesday 23 August** at Alan's Way. Subject 'Greek Wines'*

TOPICAL MATTERS 2 – Solar Power

It has struck your Editor as a bit strange that relatively few of the properties in our area have solar panels on their roofs. You can save on the cost of electricity used for regular household tasks like dishwashing, laundry, electric-powered cooking etc if carrying them out on a bright day (direct sunlight itself isn't necessary, it's just a bonus) – he himself hasn't paid for any of those since his panels went online – but you can get income from any extra energy generated which will be fed into the national grid.

Alternatively you can have all the free electricity your panels generate, whenever you want, if you get a solar battery as well as panels (if planning for that it's cheaper to buy both as a package than having them installed separately). There's a bonus for the nation and the world, too, in reducing the overall output of greenhouse gases – albeit by a relatively very small amount.

Those small amounts add up, though. The Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) calculate that at least 60% of solar energy needed by 2035 to meet the UK carbon reduction targets can be met by rooftop panels. That, too, would mean less covering of the countryside by solar farms.

If you think you already know all there is to know about solar power, CPRE have devised a quiz of facts about it. Your Editor thought he'd get all the questions right, but failed on some. See if you can beat him on <https://cpre.typeform.com/solar-quiz-ps>. And do consider having solar panels installed if you haven't already got them – the capital cost is fairly high but think how much a new car cost you, and in any case you'll start saving and earning as soon as they come on line, so they're an investment for you and your inheritors too.

Source: CPRE Monthly Update em 230715

TOPICAL MATTERS 3 – Telephone Landlines

I expect most of us have heard by now that the landlines system for phones will cease operating in 2025. BT has been holding 'pop-up' meetings in various Midlands locations to explain and discuss the matter (why are these things called pop-ups, by the way? Is it because BT have given such short notice of them being held? Your Editor missed all the ones round here – if you managed to attend one, and can shed more light on the change than what's in this item, please tell colin@clester.plus.com.)

Some details can be found on <https://community.bt.com/t5/Home-phone-including-Digital> and its subsidiary webpages. The ageing landline system will be replaced with a digital connection with no electrical supply, making us all more vulnerable to the effect of extreme solar events sending us streams of particles that may be violently disruptive to all our electronic systems Oh no, sorry, that's not what they're saying at all, it's all going to be much better than it was in every way. Our landlines can be plugged into our Smart Hub 2 broadband routers, free adaptors or free Smart Hub 2s being provided if necessary, and the change-over will be as smooth as the Post Office's change to Horizon computer accounting ... Whoops sorry, that should have been 'as smooth as the smoothest cream'.

For those who have no broadband connection, and/or no mobile phone accounts, and rely on the landline for emergency calls due to an existing medical condition, OfCom have insisted BT provide some sort of alternative backup: a broadband connection, or hybrid phones to connect to a mobile network, must be provided free of charge. For more details see <https://community.bt.com/t5/Home-phone-including-Digital/Elderly-vulnerable-customers-without-Broadband-Notification-of/m-p/2300622#M89884>.

Source: KP communications team via Nextdoor email 17.7.23

TOPICAL MATTERS 4 – Foreign Medical Costs

Getting medical treatment abroad could cost tens or even hundreds of times more than the price of travel insurance, says *Which?* magazine. A fall in Spain which ends up with you getting stitches would cost £500 on average, according to insurer Admiral, while breaking your arm skiing in France would result in treatment costs of up to £1,000. (Other insurers are of course available, as are other surveys of costs from e.g. The King's Fund, the OECD, the Commonwealth Fund, WTW, and several more.)

Costs outside Europe are much higher than within the EU, especially for more serious injuries. Stitches in the USA will set you back £1,800 – and you might also have to pay for an ambulance call-out which would cost you £2,500. You'd have to lay out up to £12,000 for dealing with a jellyfish sting in Australia, and a heart attack in the USA could set you back a whopping £230,000!

In contrast, a *Which?* survey in March found that the average paid by travel insurance customers (for those without pre-existing medical conditions) was £40 for a single-trip policy, or £96 for an annual policy.

A UK Global Health Insurance Card (UK GHIC) or UK European Health Insurance Card (UK EHIC) can reduce overseas costs, but treatment won't necessarily be free as you'll have to pay the same as do the local residents. Nor do the EHIC or GHIC cover all contingencies – for instance, rescue from cruise ships or ski slopes, or repatriation to the UK, would not be included.

More details of the EHIC and GHIC are on <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>. Not all UK citizens may be eligible to attain an EHIC abroad, but the explanation as to who is eligible and why has defeated your Editor – check for yourself on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-residents-visiting-the-eueea-and-switzerland-healthcare> to show how better than his are your own comprehension skills.

Here are some of the overseas medical costs found by recent research:

Average costs across popular destinations

Country	X-Ray	Food poisoning	Stitches	Ambulance call-out	Painkiller prescription
USA	£150	£5,000	£1,800	£2,500	£750
Mexico	£100	£3,500	£700	£2,500	£500
Jamaica	£150	£3,500	£1,200	£2,500	£750
India	£70	£2,000	£500	£200	£350
Thailand	£80	£2,000	£700	£350	£350
Spain	£100	£2,000	£500	£300	£150
France	£40	£250	£100	Not enough data	£20

If you take out a travel insurance policy, these costs could be covered by your insurer, but cover note and other documentation should always be read carefully to check what exactly is included and to what extent.

If you are going to take an August holiday or one later in the year, the reassurance of having good travel insurance would help to make it a relaxing time – and do enjoy it!

Source: *Which?* email 14.7.23

Your WLU3A Committee

Andy Elton Chairman chairman@wlu3a.org.uk	Jane Smith Treasurer treasurer@wlu3a.org.uk	Kathy Elton Secretary secretary@wlu3a.org.uk
Kathy Elton Membership Secretary membership@wlu3a.org.uk	Paul Bannister Committee Member	John Dexter Committee Member
Sue Meadows Committee Member	Pam Grice Committee Member	Margaret Proctor Committee Member

TBC – Vice Chair

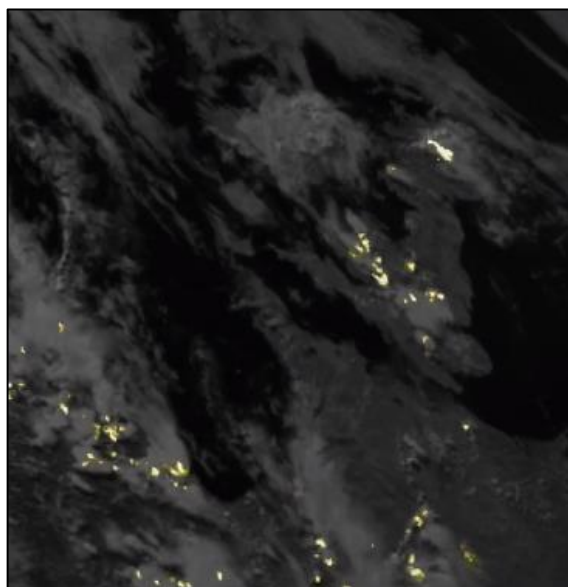
New Committee Members Needed, see p.2

Quiz 2 answers:

1. The tongue
2. A Ger
3. Diseases of the ear
4. Surrey
5. Mary Arden
6. Rockall
7. John Buchan
8. A knock-out punch
9. Liverpool
10. Timothy Dalton

Quiz 1 answers:

1. Hockenheim
2. Jack & Bobby Charlton, Ball, Peters, and Hunt
3. Nicolas Colsaerts (Belgium)
4. Giggs, James, Speed, Lampard, Heskey, & Campbell
5. Each has a team named The Sharks
6. Tomas Berdych
7. Rangers
8. Mother of two Fanny Blankers-Koen
9. Soccer (The Foxes)
10. Three-year-old thoroughbred fillies



The British Isles with part of France and Spain
Photos here and p.1: © EUMETSAT/ESA

The picture on p.1 shows lightning over Europe (Italy & Greece towards bottom right of photo, British Isles top centre, Iberian peninsula towards top left). It's part of an animation from the European Space Agency (ESA)'s new lightning-tracking satellite, Meosat Third Generation. Results from the lightning imager on the satellite are the first time scientists have been able to continuously detect lightning across Europe and Africa.

The lightning imager's four cameras cover Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and parts of S America, taking up to 1,000 images per sec. to give weather forecasters more data. It's particularly helpful over oceans and in remote locations where lightning detection was previously limited. Air traffic control will also be helped to guide planes around areas where heavy lightning is happening and where severe storms often follow.

The videos of lightning striking in various parts of Europe and Africa are well worth watching, with flashes sparkling on and off quickly above partial cloud cover as daylight comes and goes –

see e.g. https://www.esa.int/ESA_Multimedia/Images/2023/07/Lightning_over_Europe ,
https://www.esa.int/Applications/Observing_the_Earth/Meteorological_missions/meteosat_third_generation/European_satellite_strikes_lightning , and from Central Africa at
https://www.esa.int/ESA_Multimedia/Videos/2023/07/Central_Africa_the_most_active_lightning_region_in_the_world

Source: EUMETSAT and ESA, based on information provided by Thales Alenia Space; via ext.esa.int; via EarthSky News email 5.7.23 and website https://earthsky.org/space/satellite-views-lightning-from-space-predict-storms-esa/?mc_cid=71321d9bd3&mc_eid=09b41b0e07

with many thanks to EarthSky, Stefan Luders at ESA, & Valerie at Eumetsat

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