

Newsletter

aka The LestFest

FEBRUARY 2024

Reluctant Editor: Colin Lester
Replacement NEEDED

Contact

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*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*

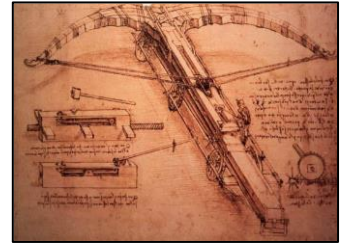


What sort of birds are these? And what is special about the one at
centre left that's doing all the yakking? *Answers on p8*

photo credit: Jonathan Plissner, Midway Atoll NWR, US Fish & Wildlife Service

Chairman's Page

- ❖ **Welcome to our February 2024 newsletter.** Thank you once again to Colin Lester for producing this newsletter.
- ❖ Our **Next Meeting** is on **Wednesday 21st February 2024** at 2pm at the St James Church Hall in Newbold Verdon.
- ❖ The talk this month will be by **Graham Hayes** on **'The Da Vinci Inventions'**.
Leonardo was not only a painter but a brilliant engineer who conceived ideas vastly ahead of his own time, many of which you will recognise and are in use by us all today.
- ❖ Along with the many talks and presentations booked for your pleasure during this year, there is a long list of varied outings and even more interest groups for you to join in with, which were described and displayed at rear of the hall at the January meeting. Some of these are nearly fully booked, and some, that you have already booked, may need paying for at the meeting. We will share these with you before and during the meeting where you will again have the opportunity to book even more of them.
- ❖ The January presentation was by Professor Richard Thomas who regaled us with the **'Archaeology of Bradgate Park'**. Who knew what lay beneath this beautiful park and for how long it has remained undiscovered? It also seems that there is much more excavation work that is to be undertaken. Richard kept his talk to the timescale we asked him to, but he has much more to share, perhaps we will ask him back to complete his talk later in the year.
- ❖ **We hope again to see those of you who usually come to our meetings, and would really like to encourage those of you who don't normally manage to join us, to come along to the next meeting and see what we get up to! Please join us for what we expect to be another interesting and enjoyable time together.**
- ❖ **How about not just enjoying the meetings but become more involved and support the committee to provide help and information for the members. There are currently two areas on which we urgently need your help :-**
 - **Vice Chairman** ~ as a 'stand-in' for me when I am not available (possibly a few times a year when I am on holiday!) ~ it should not take up a lot of your time.
 - **Newsletter Editor** ~ **even more important** this role is to continue with the editing of the excellent Newsletter that is currently edited by Colin, who always states that he does it reluctantly, but he loves it really (Colin needs to step down in March). The newsletter is circulated every month and enjoyed by all of the members. If we can't find a replacement, then unfortunately the newsletter will have to end.
- ❖ Don't forget you can bring along your own drinks (alcohol included) but please bring suitable non-breakable glasses etc, also remember there won't be any tables to rest them, or you, on!
- ❖ The committee were once again very impressed, and relieved, by the number of you who turned up early and helped to set up the hall and stayed behind to stack the chairs after the meeting. We do still need volunteers to help the monthly meetings go well, so if you can please come along soon after 1.30 pm it is much appreciated.



January Meeting

A fascinating talk on archaeological digs and discoveries in Bradgate Park, with details of its recorded history, was given to us by Leicester University's Professor Richard Thomas on 17 January. An Upper Palaeolithic site was identified near Little Matlock Gorge when dog-walkers recognised flint knapping shards there; the only other such settlement site in the country being in Derbyshire. No later settlement has been found in the Park til the Iron Age (c.600BC-1AD), an enclosure having been seen from the air by Lidar survey on the far ridge (from the Newtown Unthank end). Circular ditches were seen, having been dug around houses beneath the roofs to catch and drain away rainwater. Only a few tools were found there though; nor is there much evidence of Roman activity.

Bradgate was made a park in 1241, though much smaller than now, with a ditch on one side and a fence on the other keeping deer in and poachers out. A team of students investigated what had been recorded as a Late Tudor park-keepers lodge, finding it more substantial with construction similar to that of Leicester Guildhall. Evidence suggested a short-lived hunting lodge existing c.mid-C13 to C14 when the Black Death caused abandonment, decay, and ultimately collapse. The rest of the talk was on Bradgate House itself – see pictures below.



(above) Another full house for January, a new arrangement making for better screen viewing



- (left) Plan and (beneath) 19th photo of Bradgate Hall remains, with an outline of its history:
- House built by Greys of Groby c.1499-1520; among first unfortified, brick Houses in England; along with extension of park to current size
 - Childhood home of Lady Jane Grey in 1537 (d.1554)
 - Various 17th Century remodelling phases took place
 - Abandoned 1739
 - ruinous by 1789

Green Frog service

The 'Frog Service' was a 50-person Wedgewood dinner service. Catherine the Great commissioned it in 1773 for her Gothic summer palace built in a frog marsh outside St Petersburg. There were 952 pieces with 1224 views of British landscapes, antiquities and gardens.



One of the views on Catherine the Great's 1773 dinner service was this picture of Bradgate Park



Within the brick walls of the Hall was this stone building, perhaps an earlier laundry



Some artefacts from different parts of the Hall site; a coin from Henry 8th's time was also found, and a medallion showing Adam & Eve



The Bradgate Hall site, showing areas where the University team have carried out excavations: they hope to be able to return for more at another time but are now writing up their results



Dendochronological date of chapel roof timber 1540-65. We can narrow the date range to 1540-53, as the 3rd Marquess was executed for treason in February 1554 and the property taken over by the Crown.

(above left) The only complete building left on the Hall site is the Chapel, with roof timbers shown here under investigation regarding dating the construction



(above right) The joys of archaeological excavations – an architecture student from Leicester University investigates what's beneath ground level at one part of the site

QUIZ 1

Sports – Answers on final page

1. Arsenal first won the Premier League in 1998; who comprised their important back five?
2. Three British golfers each got the world no.1 place in 2011 or 2012 – who?
3. In 2001 following on 274 behind Australia, which Indian 5th-wicket pair turned it round to win?
4. As a player, Alex Murphy led to Challenge Cup victory which three rugby league sides?
5. Which boxers were The Brown Bomber and The Bronx Bull?
6. Nicolas Anelka has served five Premier League clubs; which?
7. What annual race is held at Churchill Downs racecourse, and which city is it in?
8. The Bledisloe Cup is competed for by which two countries, and which sport is involved?
9. Pele predicted two sides would be in the 2002 World Cup final; which?
10. Ex-Olympians Leon Taylor & Gail Emms BBC-commented on which sports at London 2012?

TOPICAL MATTERS 1 – Driving

It might seem a bit late for this warning, but it's something to keep in mind for the future. IAM RoadSmart (which used to be called The Institute of Advanced Motorists but for some reason felt the need to change the name to the more ambiguous one above) have been looking at the total costs of being had up for drink driving (not infrequent in the Festive Period. Taking everything into account – not just the large fine if convicted – they found a maximum total of £70,000 (rounded to the nearest 10K, presumably).

For u3a members it may, of course, be less, as IAM included 15 months' potential loss of earnings calculated as £38.5K based on average UK salaries. Yet apart from the fines of £5K (an estimate, as the sky's now the limit which makes the caveat over earnings loss far less reassuring), there can be £11K in legal fees, and £13.5K for increased insurance premiums over five years after a disqualification which would also incur up to £2K of taxi and public transport costs.

We might ourselves not pay the latter as it's easier for non-employed people to avoid having to travel; but what about members of our family and our still-employed friends? It might be a good idea to show this to them, especially as younger people are more likely to risk driving after drinking e.g. during festivities or on special occasions. The bank of Mum & Dad (or Grandma & Grandpa) could be at risk, after all!

More at www.iamroadsmart.com/drink-drive .

Source: <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/media-policy/media-enquiries/news-details/2020/12/09/watch-out-for-the-70-000-drink-warns-road-safety-charity> ; original source IAM RoadSmart Members email 21.12.23

External Events – Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Site

£6 per person for attendance at any of these events, pre-booking essential via the links on these titles:

- [the-medieval-horse/](#) Sunday 4th February 1.30-2.30
- [the-archaeology-of-bosworth-battlefield/](#) Sunday 11th February 1.30-2.30

TOPICAL MATTERS 2 – AI worries allayed?

There's been quite a lot of news about Artificial Intelligence in the past year, but at least we know that their programmers have a proper sense of decorum.

Robot deliveries of groceries have been taking place in Cambridge for a while. In December 2022 a cyclist noticed seven of these cold-boxes-on-wheels queuing at a pedestrian crossing. As she stopped to take a photo, the leading box asked a passing woman if she would be kind enough to press the crossing-lights button so that they would turn green, allowing it and its cohort to cross safely.

The woman seemed surprised, but obliged, and the little fellows were able to proceed on their way.

Who's Afraid of The Big Bad AI now?

Source: *The i Weekend Paper* 3.12.22 and see demo at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-0u0RsVWQ>

West Leicestershire u3a Wine Appreciation Group

Report of the meeting on 24 January by John Dexter, photo from Roger Prescott; to both many thanks

In the interests of propounding the founding tenets of the u3a, Roger prepared a paper suggesting which wine glasses to use. Remember 'Learn, Laugh and Live' – this paper covered the first, we seem, as a group, to have the second well covered, and are working on the third.

With regard to the glasses, large ones for red wine to allow greater aeration, medium U-shaped glasses for white wine to better retain the chill, a slightly smaller one for blush wines. A flute is recommended for sparkling wines to minimise air contact and direct the bubbles upward. Dessert type wines and port, which are usually fortified, would be served in smaller glasses to account for the higher ABV (alcohol by volume). This explains the plethora of glasses presented at dinner, but we need not worry too much as I find the staff are adept at setting the table correctly.

To the wines – our Parish Council presented our group (aka Joyce) with a selection of both red and white bottles left over from a recent event, hence this month's topic 'Corporation Wines'. We sampled a Chilean Chardonnay, an Australian Shiraz, and a Tuscan Sangiovese, leaving the balance for a future meeting. All of these really were excellent, with the general consensus being the PC should be a preferred supplier – especially at the price to us!

Inevitably, additional wines were presented including a couple of very tasty rosé / blush ones from both France and New Zealand. These were bolstered by a Rugido – a Spanish red produced from the Bobal grape: no, me neither, but Roger was quite excited by it, having never heard of this grape before. It certainly does not feature in my wine bible. A fairly dry, full-bodied red, and a good score from the group.

Bob presented an English red wine by Time Keeper, judged by all to be pleasantly fruity albeit a bit like fruit punch, as well it might with an ABV of just 5%. So, low alcohol wines can be acceptable, contrary to our previous experience.

Do you know how many window cleaners serve the good people of Newbold? A straw poll identified between 6 and 8, who knew? This led on to a bout of 'village gossip' which subject was compromised by our inability to recall names and relationships – "you know, his sister was what's her name whose mother-in-law lived with thingy". This moved on to 'the good old days' of tin baths, earth closets and – heaven forbid – no central heating! Actually, no electricity or running water either, and we were not talking of camping trips, although that did come up. It was hard in the good old days, apparently. We are a disparate group, and most of those days were not experienced here in Newbold, but rather in Scotland, Yorkshire, Sunderland, Lancashire and the like, proving it was 'Grim Up North'. It was very interesting to hear the effect of so many dialects around the country, with words and phrases being banded about which most of us had previously never heard, let alone understood.

I recall a colliery storeman locally explaining that pits just a mile or so apart had totally different names and words for common products such as crowbars etc. So imagine how our different dialects affect others. Bob used to act as interpreter between colleagues from Glasgow and rural Ireland. Pat experienced even more challenges with Nigerian children trying to learn English from Scots, Yorkshire émigrés, and Californian teachers.

At least we have all come together in a spirit of companionship to enjoy each other's company.

Joyce announced the room rental will increase in March. In view of our, deliberately, depleted reserves we will have to increase the charge for attending our marvellous meetings to £3 from our April meeting; this being a specially negotiated charge for concessions... Our next meeting will be on 28 February at Alans Way, topic to be announced.



We all took the opportunity to raise a glass to Pat Morton whose funeral was later in the week – a lovely lady, seen here halfway down the right-hand side at a meeting earlier last year

QUIZ 2

(with thanks to Jean Johnson)

General (Answers on final page)

1. Which daily newspaper is printed on pink paper?
2. Which sf author wrote the short story 'The Defenestration of Ermintrude Inch'?
3. 'Well-built' cooking detective Hency Crabbe was in which TV series?
4. Whose book of guidelines to correct English was published in 1926?
5. 'Grabble' means 'to grope' or 'to feel about for' – True or False?
6. POWs disguised an escape tunnel with a vaulting horse in which film?
7. Edward I was eldest son of Henry II – True or False?
8. In which American state is the city of Cairo?
9. He was Attila the Hun in *Sign of the Pagan* and the gunfighter in *Shane* – Who?
10. Douglas Hurd took over the post of Foreign Secretary from whom?

Arts & Crafts Group

with thanks to Jean Johnson for the photographs

The January meeting was a planning one, several possible projects for the year ahead being discussed, including these two items:



Volunteers needed for L&RNu3as

The Leicestershire & Rutland Network of u3as has for many years provided groups in the two counties with support, a discussion forum, training, social activities, and two-way communication with the National Office and Regional Trustee. At its AGM in March these roles will fall vacant: Chair, Business Secretary, Minutes Secretary, and Network Co-ordinator (one nomination having been received for the last). The work is not frequent or onerous, and gives those involved a chance to meet their peers from other parts of the counties as well as learning more about the organisation both locally & nationally. For more details or to volunteer please contact Roger Prescott coordinator@landru3a.org.uk.

TOPICAL MATTERS 3 – Scams

There have been so many scam and other security alerts since the last issue that most of these latest notes will have just a brief description possibly with weblinks to further information.

Fake e-gift cards: if one of your contacts asks you to send a gift card to someone ‘dear to them’ saying they’ll reimburse you, as they ‘can’t make the system work’, you should cut contact and report it to Action Fraud.

Unsolicited phone calls: 5.5mill spam and cold calls were recorded last year. Ofcom action this May might reduce the number (or not). Read details and find how to avoid or report such calls at www.which.co.uk & search for ‘Cold calls’ (or ‘Text scams’ or ‘Phone scams’ for more information on keeping your savings safe).

Local crimes & prevention: The Leicestershire Police Market Bosworth Beat Team recorded several thefts of and from motor vehicles in their area this year, and ask for any evidence of marauders or unusual activity caught on CCTV etc or by direct observation. Visit www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk where there’s a ‘Contact Us’ page. [Crime prevention advice / Leicestershire Police \(leics.police.uk\)](http://www.leicestershire.police.uk) is useful for protecting home and property.

Password security: A number of organisations and websites offer advice on constructing the safest sort of password to use for all Internet and mobile phone usage. <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/passwords> has a good survey, while [CyberAware](#), [Cyberhood Watch](#), [The Cyber Resilience Centre](#), and [National Cyber Security Centre](#) are also useful sites, among others. In general, remember that names of family members or friends, or pets, or favourites of any sort (film, childhood toy, game, food, etc etc), may be available to scammers if you’ve ever referred to them on social media or another Internet facility, so should always be avoided.

Cheap food scams: Some reports have been made on social media of online offers of cheap food items which may be scams (though it’s said some are genuine). The fake ones are said to originate in Romania, and aim to gather your personal and credit card details for undisclosed purposes, presumably nefarious.

Hidden crimes & security webinars: More than scams are discussed in these from Neighbourhood Watch, but worth checking out this page <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/webinars> for what advice is available: ignore the dates associated with the titles, all were recorded so that clicking on one takes you straight to it.

‘Best Product’ review websites: One of the best is *Which?* but there are some that are scams, loading adulatory reviews on results pages and/or garnering personal data if not your money. Watch out for an overseas address for the reviews company despite a co.uk web address, and pop-up panes urging payment for ‘Deal of the Day’ before it expires, and in any case always check against a reputable reviews website like Trust Pilot – if that has no entry for what’s recommended on another site it’s a cause for caution anyway.

Memorial donation requests: Some lousy people are taking advantage of social media notifications of the death of a person to create fake pages or accounts for the deceased in which their passing is also noted together with requests to send donations in their memory to..... you guessed it, the lice themselves. It’s reported that Facebook in particular is slow to take down such fake pages of which they’ve been notified, so always check with a relative of the deceased, or if you know none then delay for a couple of weeks to see if the request persists – if it’s been taken down in the meantime then it wasn’t genuine. The last thing that anyone on their deathbed wants is for money to be given to scammers in their name.

Are supermarkets guilty of a scam?: Users of Sainsbury’s and Tesco presenting a Nectar card or Clubcard at checkout used to build up points on the cards which could then be used to get money off a future purchase payment; but now the benefits are directly linked to particular items chosen by the stores. These items are advertised on the shelves or online as having a ‘regular’ price, or a ‘discount’ price for those using the benefit card at the checkout. In some cases, though, the ‘regular’ price of an item has been found to be inflated – sometimes greatly – over the retail price offered in other stores, showing that at least some of the stores that issue benefit cards have bumped up their ‘regular’ price **in order to** offer a benefit card discount. The watchword is to always try to bear in mind what the shown price was before the special offer started; and/or to subscribe to one of the regular emails from consumer-protection organisations that identify such tricks and give alerts of particular misbehaviour of this sort by any of the big retailers.

Sources (in order above): Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood email 21.1.24; Which? scam alert service 11.1.24; Neighbourhood Link Weekly Update em 21.1.24; Neighbourhood News 8.1.24; Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood 14.1.24; Neighbourhood Link Newsletter 8.1.24; Editor’s research 14.1.24; Radio 4 Money Box 28.1.24; the team at i Newspaper 11.1.24

Your WLU3A Committee

Lou Grice Chairman (chairman@wlu3a.org.uk)	Jane Smith Treasurer (treasurer@wlu3a.org.uk)	Andy Elton Secretary (secretary@wlu3a.org.uk)
Kathy Elton Membership Secretary (membership@wlu3a.org.uk)	Paul Bannister Committee Member	John Dexter Committee Member
Sue Hough Committee Member	Pam Grice Committee Member	Margaret Proctor Committee Member
Jon McGregor Committee Member		
	<i>TBC – Vice Chair</i>	

Quiz 2 answers:

1. *The Financial Times*
2. Arthur C Clarke
3. *Pie in the Sky*
4. H W Fowler
5. True
6. *The Wooden Horse*
7. False (his dad was Henry III)
8. Illinois
9. Jack Palance
10. John Major

Quiz 1 answers:

1. David Seaman, Lee Dixon, Nigel Winterburn, Tony Adams, Steve Bould
2. Luke Donald, Rory McIlroy, and Lee Westwood
3. Rahul Dravid and V V S Laxman
4. Leigh, St Helens, and Warrington
5. Joe Louis, and Jake La Motta
6. Arsenal, Bolton Wanderers, Chelsea, Liverpool, and Manchester City
7. The Kentucky Derby, in Louisville
8. Australia and New Zealand compete for it in rugby union
9. Argentina and France, neither of which got past the group stages
10. Diving; Badminton



The bird on p.1 is a Laysan Albatross that has been named 'Wisdom'. Here she's shown snuggling up to her long-term mate Akeakamai (which means 'lover of wisdom'), with whom she has thought to have produced 50 to 60 eggs over the years.

They've been returning to the same nest site at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge for quite a while – Wisdom only lays one egg a year, her special characteristic is that she's the world's oldest known wild bird. A tag on her leg which you can see in the p.1 photo allows researchers to identify her. The previous latest sighting having been in 2021, she was seen at MANWR again by a volunteer ornithologist on 1 December 2023.

About 30 of her chicks are believed to have fledged, making an important contribution to the declining Laysan Albatross population. Hunted in the early 20th Century, their numbers went into decline and have not yet recovered from 'near-threatened' status. That hasn't been helped by the flakes of lead-based paint from abandoned US Navy buildings which some of the chicks ingested, leading to about 10,000 dying each year; though since the middle of 2018 Midway Atoll has been declared 'lead-free' following a clean-up.

Wisdom is now in her 70s, however – how long can she be expected to go on breeding?

Picture Credits / copyright: USFWS and Jonathan Plissner, with many thanks for his permission

Source: https://earthsky.org/earth/oldest-known-wild-bird-wisdom-albatross/?mc_cid=d72a6c70db&mc_eid=09b41b0e07 , original source EarthSky News email 8.12.23

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