

# Newsletter

*aka The LestFest*

## JANUARY 2024

*Reluctant Editor: Colin Lester* ☹️

*Replacement solicited*

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*

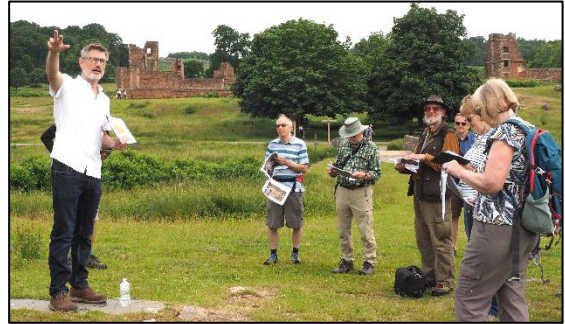


What is this (real) bird? More significantly, what's unusual about it, and  
(hint) can you tell what sex it is? *Answers on p8*

*photo credit: John Murillo, University of Otago, New Zealand*

## Chairman's Page

- ❖ **Welcome to our January 2024 newsletter.** Thank you once again to Colin Lester for producing this newsletter.
- ❖ Our **Next Meeting** is on **Wednesday 17th January 2024** at 2pm at the St James Church Hall in Newbold Verdon.
- ❖ The talk this month will be by Professor Richard Thomas who is Professor of Archaeology from Leicester University. The talk will be on the '**Archaeology of Bradgate Park**'. I am sure we have all enjoyed walking around, taking photographs and generally enjoying the scenery, the wildlife and the buildings standing there today. Now we will have a chance to discover not only about the buildings but what lies beneath them and in other areas of the park, and what to expect from future explorations.
- ❖ Along with the many talks and presentations booked for your pleasure during this year, there is a long list of varied outings. Some of these are nearly fully booked, and for some that you have already booked we will need payment at the meeting. We will share these with you before and during the meeting where you will have the opportunity to book them.
- ❖ The Christmas Party went with a swing, helped by what seemed a lot of drinks on the tables (I suspect mostly alcoholic). We were firstly serenaded with songs by Holly, dressed in a Santa Outfit, who not only sang the most popular Christmas songs but gave us a history of some of them which we think as being fairly recently written, but found out have their roots in the 1800's and even before. Everyone joined in the singing, and I think if we had more room some of you would have been up and dancing to the music, obviously helped by the alcohol? When the music stopped it was the starters' signal for the Christmas Party Food. Thank you all who brought the many varieties of food, there seemed to be plenty for everyone; well, there wasn't much left. You even formed a, *fairly*, orderly queue around the tables.
- ❖ **We hope to again 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 on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> and see what we get up to! Please join us for what we expect to be another interesting and enjoyable time together.**
- ❖ 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 very impressed, and relieved, by the number of you who turned up early and helped to set-up the hall and even more so, by those you who helped to stack the chairs and remove the tables after the meeting. We had planned for extra time to do this but, due to your help, we finished well on time. We do still need still volunteers to help the monthly meetings go well, so if you can please come along after 1.30 pm, it is much appreciated.





# Photos from our December Meeting

The Chairman having kindly included a summary of the Meeting on his p.2, we trust pictures will suffice here.

Members had been asked to sport festive wear if available. Many obliged, with a wide variety on display.



Elf Margaret properly disdainful of your Editor's thumb getting in the picture



Tinsel Queen in serious mode



Appropriate antlers at the far end, as only female reindeer keep them in winter



Seasonal sweaters were much seen, but perhaps unknown to long-term Africa dwellers



...with a fine display here (of sweaters, not Africa dwellers – as far as your Editor knows)



View down the Hall, as Holly gets ready to serenade us



(l): What was it you said to Holly, Lou, that made her throw up her hands like that?; (r): Whatever it was she looks as if she's hurt her hand punching you (though you're still smiling...)



Holly asked Members to sing along with her, and many joined in with gusto



Holly herself gave as flamboyant a presentation as ever, together with commentaries on the origins or special features of the seasonal songs from the 50s and thereabouts with which she regaled us, and compliments on Members' singing



Our three stalwart bookers-in were as always doing a great job making sure we all knew we were there (and that emergency services would know too if needed)



As at previous Christmas Meetings, Members provided food to follow the entertainment, and the laden tables attracted an orderly rush of the hungry



A view of what was left after the gannets had been satisfied, as your Editor (squawk!) can testify. The few leftovers were offered for all to take and enjoy at home



# QUIZ 1

## Sports – Answers on final page

1. In 2005 who scored 52 at no.10 and took 9 wickets to give English women double Ashes?
2. Which England international played for Watford in four league divisions?
3. Who were the two British singles players in the 1978 Davis Cup final?
4. Who won the 1995 World Rally Drivers Championship as the youngest ever?
5. Only two horses beat Red Rum in the Grand National – which ones?
6. Which Premier League side have been relegated twice with fewer than 20 points each time?
7. An injury-time try conversion by which Welshman denied England the 1999 Grand Slam?
8. The last US city to host the Winter Olympics was where, and when?
9. Zimbabwe beat Australia in the 1983 Cricket World Cup; who helped with 69n.o. & 4 for 42?
10. In 1986 who won the Masters in Augusta aged 46, & who was his caddy?

## TOPICAL MATTERS 1 – Scams

Fake Websites: Norton Anti-Virus say that they've recently seen a 25% increase in scams worldwide, including numbers of fake shopping websites. Not only do the villains try to get your money for non-existent or defective goods, they're also (or alternatively) after your financial data including passwords. Advice includes not using links in a message or email to reach a shop site, but going to it direct from your browser; make sure the website address starts with 'https:' and not just 'http:', that it doesn't have multiple slashes or other symbols in the address, and that it has no typos; and – especially for particularly good offers – research the seller using Trust Pilot or a similar reviews website, or (for UK sellers) check the firm on the Companies House website.

Source: NAV email Dec 23, & Gen Threat Labs – other anti-virus providers also provide warnings so do sign up for them

## Some WLu3a interest group Christmas celebrations

Those lunches and dinners attended by your Editor as a member of particular interest groups are pictured below. If your group had a similar celebration of the Festive Season, why not send him a photo to include in the next issue?



A better shot of the Bridge Group lunch, having been taken by Your Editor thus avoiding his mug intruding, this excellent event having taken place after their usual Thursday-morning session at The Gate Hangs Well, Carlton, on 21<sup>st</sup> December, with thanks to Joan for arranging it with helpful manageress Mandy thanks to whom not a single bridge card got defiled by food

The Table Tennis Group (l) held their evening dinner at The Black Horse, Market Bosworth, on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December. Your Editor might be seen craning his head over Pat's on the right, but probably better not trouble. Thanks to her and Roger for arranging the excellent event, and to an unknown diner at the next table for taking the photo

## December Outing – Evita

2.15 on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December saw a large number of Members occupying most of a row in the stalls for the matinee performance of *Evita* at The Curve. If all were like Your Editor, they much enjoyed what was an fine production with great direction and some brilliant choreography, several standing in ovation at the end. Thanks to all involved in organising this treat and we hope for more like it.



Clear though it seems here, Your Editor at first didn't read 'Evita' on the fire screen, seeing the first letter's right-hand shadow as a pseudo-Nazi symbol. Turned out he wasn't the only one to misinterpret the letters.



A near-full row of WL u3a Members – what a lovely sight!

# West Leicestershire u3a Wine Appreciation Group

*Report of the meeting on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December by John Dexter, to whom many thanks*

Our Christmas meeting was less of a WAG meeting and more a social gathering of friends at Sue and Paul's house. Thus fellowship, shared conversation, jokes, food and banter rather overshadowed wine-based considerations. Some of the cracker sourced jokes were a bit iffy although Margaret did her usual sterling work with some more tasteful examples of the genre. Notwithstanding, a bottle or two were sampled – no idea what they were though – it was that sort of event!

The food offering was to its usual high standard, mostly of the 'nibbles' style. Quiche, pork pie (one of your five a day), drumsticks, mince pies, crisps amongst many others had to be sampled. The mandatory comedy cheese was actually very serious – not so much cheese with chilli, more chilli with cheese – wow it was strong! Paul was seen disappearing with the trifle, we did not expect to be taking an empty bowl home.

We did conduct a bit of business (at the beginning of the evening). There has been some talk that our normal meetings feature a preponderance of red wine. Your reporter thinks this is 'a good thing' but others would prefer a more balanced approach. As I don't yet rule the world and it was accepted that we would institute a more formal selection process. Perhaps everyone whose name starts with A, B, or C should bring white wine and everyone else red?

Thanks to Sue and Paul for hosting a wonderful evening.

Our next meeting on Wednesday 24 Jan will be back at Alans Way with the topic 'Corporation Wines' (we do like a challenge). Our members will be fully briefed nearer the time.

Wishing all our readers a Peaceful New Year.

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## QUIZ 2

*(with thanks to Jean Johnson)*

General *(Answers on final page)*

1. Which film studios were founded & run by Harry, Albert, Sam, & Jack?
  2. Where was the first roundabout road junction?
  3. Which hospital did TV's Dr Kildare work at?
  4. Why might you be criticised for achieving laloechezia?
  5. Who wrote the play *The School for Scandal*?
  6. Who was the best friend of TV's Yogi Bear?
  7. What is eaten by a pantophagist?
  8. Who played the eponymous hero in *Batman Forever*?
  9. Which London railway terminus was the capital's first?
  10. In the fable of Robin Hood, who was the son of a miller?
- 



## Arts & Crafts Group

Items made at the latest Meeting

*with thanks to Jean Johnson for the photograph*

## TOPICAL MATTERS 2 – Our Feline Friends

Do you or any of your family have a free-to-roam cat? Good at keeping down the mice, aren't they? Including harvest mice, dormice, and many other sorts of wild animals, some of which we might prefer to see more of.

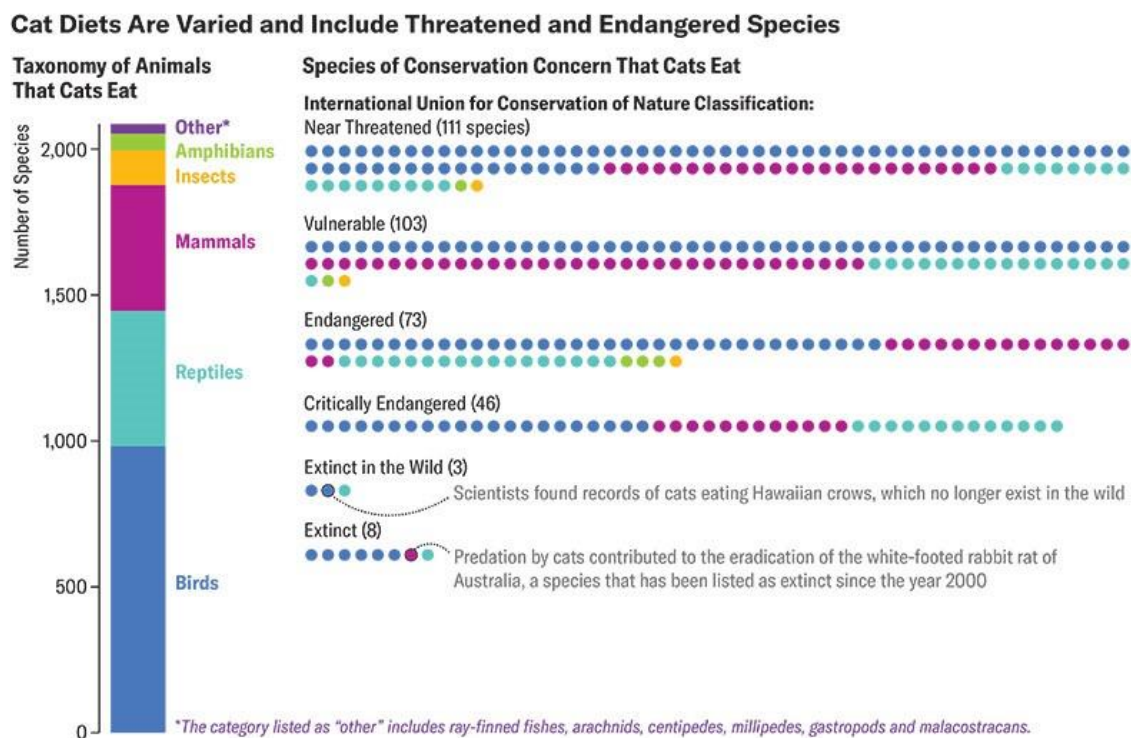
Recently researchers looked into over 100 years' worth of scientific papers, reports, and books to check on the identity of creatures eaten by *Felis catus* (the domestic cat). They found that altogether more than 2,000 species' members were in danger from our lovely pussycats – and a worrying number of their populations are actually endangered, threatened, or already wiped out with the help of our furry fellow inhabitants.

Sarah Legge, a wildlife ecologist involved in the study, called domestic cats 'the ultimate versatile generalist predator,' and warned of more extinctions unless cats were further controlled. The chart below shows which types of species are most consumed by cats and which are under the most severe threat or already extinct:

Graphic copyright Scientific American, used by tacit approval

Cats are (mostly) lovely, but are they sufficiently domesticated for the good of species as a whole? (see p.8)

Source: [Nature Communications paper](#) (Amanda Montañez/Sci. Am), original source *Nature Briefing* email 12 Dec '23



## TOPICAL MATTERS 3 – Survey request

Do you get a lot of requests to provide feedback or complete surveys? Your Editor likes to be helpful and has acceded to many such calls in the past, but finds them becoming too prolific, obtrusive, and time-consuming.

One such, however, has come in through the Leicestershire & Rutland Network of u3as, which our founder Roger Prescott has a hand in organising and maintaining, so it's worth taking a closer look at it and even (if you can spare some moments) filling it in online. Here is the request as received by this Newsletter:

The following message has been received with a request to circulate it to as many members as possible. Will you please include it in your Newsletters and on your websites. Thank you.

" We are pleased to share with you that we have launched a short 10-minute survey to collect priority questions for future research about the connection between dementia and hearing. This work is led by the NIHR (National Institute for Health and Care Research) Nottingham Hearing Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) and the University of Nottingham in a collaboration with Alzheimer's Research UK (ARUK) and the RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf People) and supported by the James Lind Alliance.

(continues on next page)



We would like to share the survey widely to help ensure that future research focuses on the questions that matter most to those it will impact.

The survey can be completed via the link and can be made available in different formats:

<https://www.jla.nihr.ac.uk/priority-setting-partnerships/coexisting-dementia-and-hearing-conditions/>

and click on "Complete the survey" near the top of the page.

It took Your Editor four minutes to complete the survey (you need to click on the word 'survey' itself in the line 'Complete the survey' referred to above), though it's not clear what sort of suggestions might be appropriate to enter into the boxes in the first few questions so he just put 'Important' for each. Mostly it's a matter of selecting items in lists about oneself and other people one knows. It's clear they'd like to be able to follow up with you, though you can opt out of that by not entering your contact details.

Both dementia and hearing loss are, indeed, important problems particularly for those in retirement (i.e. us) and those of our relatives and/or carers who have contact with us. It may be helpful to them to have our views recorded so they can inform future research and treatment in these fields.

## START THE NEW YEAR with u3a TABLE TENNIS

**West Leicestershire u3a Table Tennis Group  
would welcome new members**

**It doesn't matter if you haven't played before, or since  
you were just a bit younger, we'll show you how**

### Why Table Tennis?

- It's fun
- It's good physical & mental exercise
- It helps keep you fit
- You'll mix with some great people!

**We Play -  
Every Friday Morning  
10:00am to 12:00noon  
at: Sport in Desford, Peckleton Lane, Desford LE9 9JU**

**First visit FREE**

**Then it's just £3 for 2 hours play  
(+50p for tea/coffee & really good biscuits)**

**Just come along – if you like it, come again!**

**If you don't like it, at least you've tried it!**

**All equipment provided**

**For further information call Roger on 07984 400605**

# Your WLU3A Committee

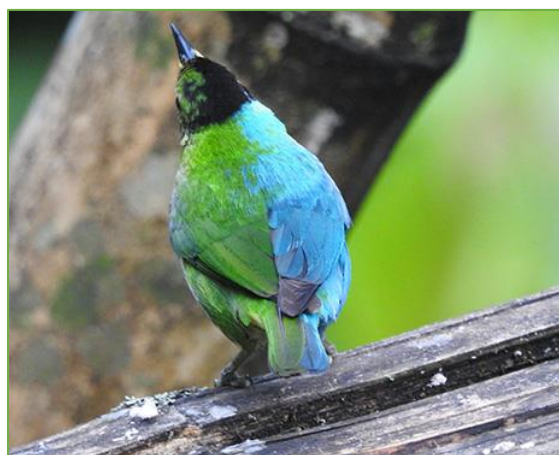
Lou Grice Chairman ( <a href="mailto:chairman@wlu3a.org.uk">chairman@wlu3a.org.uk</a> )	Jane Smith Treasurer ( <a href="mailto:treasurer@wlu3a.org.uk">treasurer@wlu3a.org.uk</a> )	Andy Elton Secretary ( <a href="mailto:secretary@wlu3a.org.uk">secretary@wlu3a.org.uk</a> )
Kathy Elton Membership Secretary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

## Quiz 2 answers:

1. Warner Brothers
2. Letchworth
3. Blair Hospital
4. It's relief given by hard swearing
5. Sheridan
6. Boo-Boo
7. Anything
8. Val Kilmer
9. Euston
10. Much

## Quiz 1 answers:

1. Katharine Brunt
2. Luther Blissett
3. Chris Lloyd and Buster Mottram
4. Colin McRae
5. l'Escargot (1975) and Rag Trade (1976)
6. Sunderland
7. Neil Jenkins
8. Salt Lake City in 2002
9. Duncan Fletcher
10. Jack Nicklaus, caddied by his son Jack Nicklaus Jr



The bird shown here and on p.1 is a green honeycreeper. Why then, you might well ask, is its plumage half green and half blue? Therein lies the clue to its exceptionally unusual nature.

In this species only the female is green – the male is coloured aqua blue. This specimen exhibits both male and female characteristics\* or, in scientific terms, is bilaterally gynandromorphic. The condition is extremely rare in birds, and previously unknown in this species.

This particular bird was seen at a bird-feeding station on a small farm amid forestland some miles from Manizales, Columbia. Once noted, it was visited by ornithologists from the University of Otago, New Zealand, who took the photographs shown in this Newsletter

and others on the website [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gynandromorphism?mc\\_cid=bdbda47a4b&mc\\_eid=09b41b0e07](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gynandromorphism?mc_cid=bdbda47a4b&mc_eid=09b41b0e07) where there's also a short video. One of them, Hamish Spencer (*sorry, Sesquicentennial Distinguished Professor Hamish Spencer*), said that many birdwatchers spend their whole lives without seeing a bilateral gynandromorph of any species, let alone getting to study and photograph one – and what a striking one it is, Hamish.

NB WLU3a Members – if you see one in your garden, keep your cat as far away from it as you possibly can!

Picture Credits: John Murillo, University of Otago, permission for only this use given by Hamish Spencer, to whom many thanks

Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gynandromorphism?mc\\_cid=bdbda47a4b&mc\\_eid=09b41b0e07](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gynandromorphism?mc_cid=bdbda47a4b&mc_eid=09b41b0e07)

Source: <https://earthsky.org/earth/rare-bird-is-half-male-half-female-video-green-honeycreeper-gynandromorphism/>

Original Source: EarthSky News email 20.12.23

*\*During the Monthly Meeting, as Holly Reynolds – having led Members on a rendition of 'Rudolph...' – told us that male reindeer shed their antlers in winter leaving only females sporting them, raising a question as to the nature of the Red-Nosed one, a wit in the audience called 'Must be Trans!'. Could the same be said of this curious part-green part-blue honeycreeper?*

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