

Newsletter u3a

aka The LestFest

JUN 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*



How many individual creatures can you
count in this photograph, and what are they?

Answer on final page

Chairman's Page

❖ **Welcome to our June newsletter.**

Thank you once again to Colin Lester for producing this.

- ❖ At our monthly meeting on the **21st June** our speaker is **Pete Lewin** who founded Pete Lewin Newfoundlands which is a non-profit company that work their Newfoundland dogs for suicide prevention. Pete will be telling us about his story of working with the dogs to provide emotional support for staff from the emergency services and military veterans as well as anyone else who feels they need support.



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

At our July monthly meeting on the **19th July** – Hanson's Memorabilia auctioneer and valuer **Claire Howell** will be joining us to tell of many interesting and entertaining stories including that of auctioning a lock of Elvis Presley's hair!



- ❖ Two updates on Outings planned for the next few months:

Bridgewater Garden visit on the 9th July; We have slightly less people (42) than we hoped which means the *bus fare has to go up by £3*. The total cost is now £28 (or £18 for RHS members). Can everyone please let Margaret Proctor have their money by the June monthly meeting and if you are an RHS member also let Margaret know your membership number.

Bowls at Market Bosworth on the 20th June has been **cancelled** by the bowls club due to circumstances beyond their control. John Dexter will arrange for monies to be repaid.

Further updates on Outings and Interest Groups will be distributed in the next ten days and updated further at our next monthly meeting.

- ❖ Your u3a committee will be **changing at the AGM in October**. We have some people who are standing down or needing to change roles. **We need volunteers to join the committee**. Please consider whether you can help here.

To continue as a u3a we need as a minimum: Chair or a Vice Chair and Secretary. If we do not fill these roles we will need to close as a u3a or merge with another u3a in the area. **Please consider whether you can help here** If you want to know more then please speak to one of your current committee. **This can be fun and enjoyable** ☺



Notes on our May Meeting

From Jane & Alan Smith, with the Editor's many thanks



There was a good turnout for the meeting

In a nutshell, the story was about Mary Bryant (née Broad), a lass born in 1965 in a small village in Cornwall who simply stole a bonnet from market, was caught, tried as a highwaywoman, and actually sentenced to death; however, because of her young age was reprieved and sent to the penal colony of Australia. After an arduous sea journey lasting eight months (including giving birth in awful conditions) she arrived in Australia. She married at the colony, had another child and survived as best as she could for a while.



Colin King and some audience members simulating the sounds of a sea squall



This was a very expressive speaker...

In 1791, she, her husband and children escaped with a few other men by boat and after sailing and rowing over 3,000 miles up the East Coast and round to the North Coast landed in Timor, which was a Dutch colony. At first the authorities were told these new arrivals were shipwreck survivors, but then Mary's husband got drunk and let on that they were escaped prisoners and they were sent back to Britain to be tried again, by which time both her husband and their two children had, sadly, died.

She was sentenced again after a second trial, but by this time details of her story had become famous in Britain and she was

freed following a campaign on her behalf led by the celebrated biographer and lawyer James Boswell, as later on were her surviving fellow escapees. What a tragic story though – hardly good times in which to live!

We then assumed that the talk was over but no – Colin finished his stint with various jokes and a song about sheep shearing (during which he accompanied himself on the guitar). A hearty amount of applause followed.



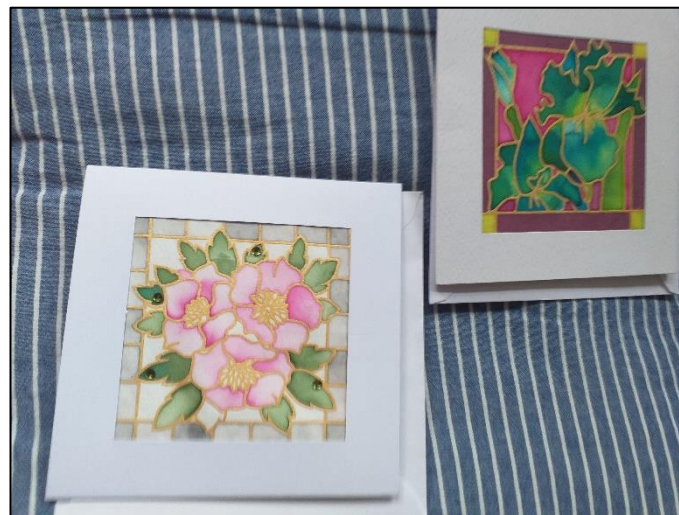
...and an all-round entertainer, who might bring us more of his stories and singing on another occasion

Then WLu3a Group officers read out answers to the quiz that had been distributed on sheets before the meeting began, and the usual events and interest groups run-downs. A thoroughly entertaining afternoon, and for those that weren't there – you missed a treat!

Arts & Crafts Group



The items above were all made at the last meeting of the Group. The next meeting will make silk painted cards like these:



QUIZ 1

Sports – Answers on final page

1. Which darts player said trying to beat Phil Taylor was like eating candy floss in a wind tunnel?
2. Which of the Major golf tournaments is always held at the same place?
3. New Zealand lost a 2011 three-match Rugby Union series against which side?
4. Who lost their Premier League place in 2002-3 with a record total for a 20-team division?
5. From 1954 to 1965, which Australian golfer won 5 Opens?
6. Tim Chappell sent the last ball of a 1981 1-day match against New Zealand underarm – why?
7. Who has held the world record for the Long Jump since 1991?
8. Who won five World Cup Skiing titles from 1985 to 1993?
9. What's the sporting connection between Wolverhampton and Warrington?
10. Who was the Wimbledon champion who became a Pentecostal minister in 1991?

TOPICAL MATTERS 1 – Home Fire Safety Check

Ben Grove of Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service, giving a talk at Newbold Verdon Baptist Church Hub on 24 May, said that the service can carry out a free safety check of your home. Request one from <https://leics-fire.gov.uk> or phone 0116 2105555; or there's a QR code to scan on leaflets from the Hub.

West Leicestershire u3a Wine Appreciation Group

24 May meeting *by John Dexter, to whom many thanks*

In an apparent change of emphasis our meeting seemed to have morphed into a Music Appreciation Group. The Eurovision Song Contest loomed large, apparently the top five entries were in a major key, those presented in a minor key were flat and uninteresting – thank you Roger for those words of wisdom which left most of us bewildered!



It would appear most of us were unable to recall the entries from this year, although I gather that that well known European country – Australia – did rather well. However when the subject of past entrants was raised, such as Brotherhood of Man, Lulu, Sandy Shaw, Katrina and the Waves, Abba and others, memories were stirred, with most being accompanied by both music and words! Must be an age thing.

We were saddened by the news of the demise of Tina Turner, glasses were raised all around, as were memories of most of her back catalogue (with words and music) together with tales of attending her concerts.

We then moved on to films: who appeared in which one and what music featured; followed by TV channels and shared services, even when you need a licence to view.

Hey, we were losing focus on the purpose of our gathering, especially after an impassioned discussion and concern about the mores of our current society both on TV and in the community.

We had to get back to the subject in hand – South American wines.

Two Malbecs by Alza were put forward for evaluation – one from Chile and one from Argentina with the latter being adjudged to be much the better – more flavour, less sharp and dry.

We tried an 'I Love Malbec' from Argentina with the express intent of finding the Blackberry, Plum, Black Cherry, Chocolate, spice, as well as leather notes, as specified on the label. The consensus was 'It is just wine': quite good, with more body and smoother than some of the others, but even that was mentioned on the label.

A Perez Cruz, single vineyard, estate bottled, Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz was deemed excellent, but did spark a debate about transporting heavy bottles about the world. Apparently, scientists (aka PR people) have said that wine in a box will keep for up to six weeks. This has never been proved though, about three days seems to be the norm.

As a group we are evidently maturing and becoming more discerning. My suggestion for next meeting of a reprise of 'Our Wines of Yesteryear' together with accompanying nibbles such as 'cheese and pineapple hedgehogs', 'sausage on a stick', Mateus Rose and Liebfraumilch etc., was met with widespread disdain. An age thing?

So we have decided to celebrate the longest day with

'Bring what you really like' on Wednesday June 21st 7.30pm Alan's Way.

TOPICAL MATTERS 2 – Anti-virus software

Which? magazine has recently run a survey on renewal tendencies among AV software providers, finding that almost all of them either pressure a subscriber to sign up for auto-renewal or make it an actual requirement of subscription. Although the auto-renewal can be cancelled at a later date, providers rely on subscribers forgetting to make the cancellation or neglecting to check the date when it becomes due.

Why cancel such a handy facility? Because almost invariably automatic renewal carries a higher subscription – usually much higher – than the original subscription. The Consumer Association survey found that the increase varied from 33% to 325%. One provider applied no increase between registration and auto-renewal, but their subscription was £119 a year as against initial registration fees of between £14.99 and £49.99 for the other nine providers in the survey.

It's easy to change provider so don't get caught out by unexpectedly expensive auto-renewal of any of your software which, while not quite a scam in the AV market, does seem to approach the boundaries.

Source: Which? members info email 19.5.23

QUIZ 2

(with thanks to Jean Johnson)

General

Answers on final page

1. What is a clocher?
2. In 1993, which group had successive Number One hits with *Pray*, *Relight My Fire*, & *Babe*?
3. Who wrote the play that *My Fair Lady* was based on, and what was it called?
4. Where are Europe's only active volcanoes?
5. Nora Barnacle married which author in 1931 who died after an ulcer operation 10 years later?
6. What word describes an agreement, some pine or fir for working, or to distribute cards?
7. Is a labret culpable negligence in law work, the front of an insect's head, or a lip ornament?
8. What's the common name for the disease chorea which causes involuntary movements?
9. Is neroli oil made from flowers of avocado, olive, or orange?
10. What sort of thing was the monster Charybdis in Greek mythology?

TOPICAL MATTERS 3 – Fraud

In 2022, fraudsters stole £2,300 **a minute** from ordinary people like you (*well alright, perhaps not as canny as you; just as canny as your Editor, then*). The figure (total £1.2bn) comes from UK Finance, 'the collective voice for the banking and finance industry', via a *Which?* email. UK Finance's 76-page Annual Fraud Report for 2022 is available to view at https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/system/files/2023-05/Annual%20Fraud%20Report%202023_0.pdf. Those who relish horror films will no doubt enjoy it.

Be particularly careful to avoid becoming the victim of identity theft. One man had his driving licence stolen in 2019, since when there have been lots of fraudulent listings on Facebook Marketplace for expensive goods using his identity. Naturally enough, he is on the receiving end of the anger of those scammed. Another recurrent scam that's recently come around again is the diet pills offer supported by fake endorsements from Dragon's Den to encourage personal details to be submitted... to the scammers who will use them to fleece those who send them.

These and other fraud dodges are detailed in the *Which?* email aforementioned – remember, you can get these fraud-warning emails regularly, without obligation and free of charge, by using this link: <https://act.which.co.uk/page/103781/data/1?ea.tracking.id=scam-alerts%09%09%09%09%09%09%09%09%09%09>.

NEW GROUP? 1 – Science-based Subjects

There's a move to get a group started for talks & discussions on topics in science, technology, the environment, climate change, *et al*. If you have any interest in this, email colin@clester.plus.com with a note of particular topics or themes you'd like covered, if any. An initial meeting would decide timing, format, venue etc.

It would be hoped that some speakers could be found to talk to the group (preferably at no cost), but some input from members would also be required, either by reading out appropriate newsworthy articles to be followed by group discussion, or by any group member/s with expertise on a topic giving an introduction to it followed by a question-and-answer session and/or group discussion.

Jean Johnson, who introduced the idea for this putative group to your Editor, gives her interest as 'most science based topics', while your Editor would say the same but with a special emphasis on the environment, climate change, and other existential threats facing the human race.

It is not envisaged that any particular individual should lead the group, but that any decisions would be taken by general agreement.

NEW GROUP? 2 – Fine Arts

Some of our Members have fine arts skills and practices, and it seems that forming a group with those of like mind would give more opportunities to share photographs of, or original fruits of, their artistry, discuss merits and approaches, survey and evaluate styles and schools, perhaps set targets or competitions, and anything else the eventual groups members might wish to do, not excluding mounting exhibitions.

Should you have any questions or interest in perhaps helping to form such a group, or joining one, please contact Pat Gilbert on patgilbertsmail@yahoo.co.uk.

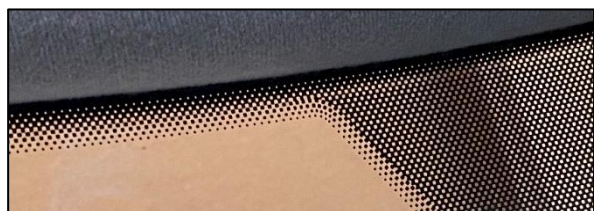


Some of Pat Gilbert's own paintings; the original artworks and these photographs both © 2023 Patricia Gilbert

A Curiosity

Have you ever noticed the dots around the windscreen of your car? Neither had your Editor, before reading an item about them.

A statement from Autoglaze pointed out that the solid black band right at the outer edge of the windscreen, called the frit band, will heat up faster than the glass itself does, leading to distortion. The



result is an optical illusion which makes straight lines look either curved or else bowed in towards the centre of the windscreen. Neither of those effects on a driver's vision is conducive to safe driving.

The frit band is an enamel baked onto the glass surface to etch it, giving the sealant a better bond where the glass fits into the frame. The differential heating it results in is just an unfortunate side effect.

Happily, the provision of the dots goes a long way to dispose of the problem. The gradual shrinking and fading of dots spreads the heat from the frit band, dispersing its excess across the glass.

The frit band has an outer face as well as the inner, bonding-contact one. The outer face protects the adhesive from ultra-violet radiation in sunlight which would otherwise weaken the adhesive's grip – a loose windshield wouldn't help your driving, either. Altogether, handling a car would be a lot more hazardous without the technology of modern windshields.

Source: In Your Area email 17.2.23 and DeDonna Tint & Sound website <https://dedona.com/the-purpose-of-the-frit-black-band-and-spots-on-windshield/#:~:text=The%20frit%20is%20a%20black,to%20bond%20to%20the%20glass.>

NEW GROUP! 3 – Pickleball

LET'S PLAY
PICKLEBALL!

The new Pickleball group has at last started, on Thursday afternoons at Sport in Desford, using two of the tennis courts there. Play runs from 1:30pm until 3:30pm. If you're interested in giving it a try, call Roger on 07984 400605 or email rophpr@gmail.com

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. A belfry or steeple (from the French)
2. Take That
3. Pygmalion, by George Bernard Shaw
4. Italy
5. James Joyce
6. Deal
7. A lip ornament
8. St Vitus' Dance
9. Orange
10. An all-engulfing whirlpool

Quiz 1 answers:

1. Sid Waddell
2. The US Masters (at Augusta, Georgia)
3. England Women's 15
4. West Ham United, with 42 points
5. Peter Thomson
6. Brother Greg said 'Concede a 6 and we lose'
7. Mike Powell
8. Marc Giradelli
9. Both have teams known as the Wolves
10. Margaret Court



Photo here and p.1 by California State Parks Orange Coast District, via Crystal Cove Conservancy and originally seen in EarthSky News email 13.4.23

The answer to the question on p.1 is 'You couldn't count them'. The blue-green blobs seen in close-up here are called by-the-wind sailors (zoological name: *velella velella*), but they are not individual creatures.

Rather, each blob is composed of thousands of tiny animals called zooids, cooperating to form a 'colonial hydroid'. As you might suspect from the sophisticated structure of each blob or hydroid, the zooids are divided into types performing different functions. The most common is the gastrozooid, providing food for the colony, while gonozooids are specialised for reproduction.

Although these hydroids float partly above water like the Portuguese Man of War which they partly resemble, they're neither jellyfish nor dangerous to

humans because their stings, which stun their algae and zooplankton prey, are too mild to harm us. On washing ashore, the hydroids quickly dry out to become crisp-like (don't try eating them, though).

Millions have this year washed up on Southern California beaches, which is thought to be the result of warming global temperatures as they flourish in warm water. The same happened from 2015 to 2019, when at one point they covered a 620-mile stretch of US West Coast beaches. With sea warming expected to continue, it's anticipated these events will multiply and the oceans become home to trillions of hydroids.

Source: EarthSky News email 13.4.23 and their website article https://earthsky.org/earth/blue-blob-colony-creatures-invade-california-beaches/?mc_cid=3ad104d09d&mc_eid=UNIQID

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