

Newsletter u3a

aka The LestFest

MAY 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*



Is this a new comet in our Solar System, or a meteor or meteorite entering Earth's atmosphere, or some deep-sea creature amid plankton, or something else?

Answer on final page

❖ **Welcome to our May newsletter.**

Thank you once again to Colin Lester for producing this.

- ❖ At our monthly meeting on the **17th May** professional storyteller **Colin King** who will be telling us the story of **Mary Bryant – the only woman to escape the Penal Colony of Australia.**



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



At our June monthly meeting on the **21st June ‘Swimming with Newfoundlands’** our speaker is **Pete Lewin** who founded Pete Lewin Newfoundlands, 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.

- ❖ **Your u3a committee helps ensure that we can operate as a u3a.**

Your current u3a committee		
<u>CHAIR</u> Andy Elton	<u>TREASURER</u> Jane Smith	<u>SECRETARY & MEMBERSHIP</u> Kathy Elton
	<u>VICE CHAIR</u> Vacant	
<u>COMMITTEE MEMBERS</u>		
Paul Bannister	John Dexter	
Margaret Proctor	Sue Meadows	
Pam Grice	Lyn McDermott	

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 April Meeting

The Editor's apologies: he has forgotten who it was he asked to do a report on the Meeting, so he can't chase it up; here is what he himself can recall of it

Chairman Andy Elton welcomed us all to the Meeting, and introduced the speaker straight away.



This was Peter Liddle MBE (seen at left – no, it isn't Elvis), former Leicestershire County Archaeologist and, while retired, still gives courses on archaeology in Leicestershire & Rutland. An at times amusing and always interesting speaker, he kept the audience engaged throughout.

He told a fascinating story, from the discovery by a Rutland farmer and his son of something unusual in one of their fields following unusually inclement weather, their use of a mechanical digger to remove a layer of earth (not, we were assured, a normal method for archaeological digs), through the involvement of their whole family and then, as some tiles began to show through, of LCC's heritage team and the University.

As they, along with students and volunteer fieldworkers, carefully uncovered the remains of what had been a significant Roman villa, they



This part of the mosaic shows Hector (lower l) slain by Achilles (rear l) whose chariot's horses confront a grieving Trojan king (r)

found a mosaic coming to light. Very unusually

for such a setting, it told a story: the fight between Hector and Achilles, from *The Iliad*. Peter's screenshots showed the unveiling of it bit by bit as he told of how the subject was deduced.

Various technological aids were used to probe the ground and discover the outline of the buildings, while the different trenches dug to follow up areas of interest they revealed were enumerated.

Eventually, part of another mosaic was found, and various other artefacts were displayed. One of his final slides showed the whole team of workers who

had painstakingly brought to light the unusual and important Roman artefact.

In the end, though, it had to be covered up again to preserve it, and the careful way that was carried out was depicted layer by layer to bring the site back up to the level of the rest of the field. That will now not be worked agriculturally, to ensure preservation for possible future digs. Meanwhile, the extensive photography of the uncovered floors, pillar bases etc is available for further study.

Some informed questions were well fielded by the speaker, who received hearty applause at the end. There followed a short break, then the answers were given to questions on a quiz sheet that had been distributed before the Meeting, followed by John Dexter's Groups round-up, and Andy's reminders of outings. The Meeting ended soon after 4pm (*presumably, your Editor having shoved off shortly beforehand*).



Rocks, sand, and soil were used to re-cover the mosaic

Poetry Corner 1 – Environmental Haiku

“We’ll reach 1.5

Within a decade. Stark fact.

Beyond that: our choice.”

Climate policy researcher Andy Reisinger, an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) contributor and working-group leader, reinterpreted the latest IPCC Synthesis Report as 35 haiku poems. ([Twitter thread](#) | [Thought-provoking scroll](#))

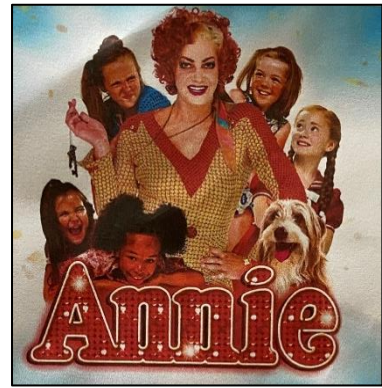
Source: Nature Briefing email 20th April, used with the poet's kind permission

West Leicestershire u3a Theatre Group

from Pam Grice, to whom many thanks

On the first of March the Theatre Group went to see the musical *Annie* at the Curve Theatre in Leicester.

All of the cast members, including Craig Revel Horwood as Miss Hannigan, were fabulous, especially the young girls playing the orphans.



However, the outstanding cast member was the young girl playing Annie; without doubt she was the star of the show. For such a young girl her singing, acting, and dancing skills were outstanding – she even managed to control a dog on stage. What a star!

We all thoroughly enjoyed the show and it proved to be another excellent group outing.

QUIZ 1

Sports – Answers on final page

1. Which is the only country to have won the men's Rugby League World Cup 11 times?
2. Why is Shelley Rudman and Kristan Bromley representing Britain in the same sport unusual?
3. When did Andre Agassi win his only Wimbledon singles title, and against whom?
4. In 2012, where were the Olympic equestrian events held?
5. Which is the only club to have risen through all 3 tiers of the Football League by play-offs?
6. What is the lightest boxing weight and when was it introduced?
7. Worcester Country Club, Massachusetts, was the site of what first-time event in 1927?
8. Which designer at McLaren was central to the 2006 Formula 1 spying case?
9. Who was Sportsman of the last Century, according to *Sports Illustrated* and the BBC in 1999?
10. How many snooker points for potting red+black+red+black+red+pink+red+brown+red?

TOPICAL MATTERS 1 – Fraud

– Neighbourhood Link's 24 April 'Alert' email included a link to their **Get Safe Online** website advice on Ticket Fraud, which should be of use to those planning to book online for any events this Summer: https://www.getsafeonline.org/ticketfraud/?utm_source=nw&utm_medium=email . A leaflet is available: <https://members.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk/AlertMessage/Attachment/47C7978359B5ED88AEB961B30FB3BB0B> .

– **NatWest** account holders need to be alert for messages with a link to a spoof website, while **Saga** has suffered a data breach which puts at risk some customers' data, and **Amazon** are warning about impersonation despite 'having taken down thousands of dodgy phone numbers and phishing websites'. These and other online risks are identified in regular *Which?* scam-alert emails, which seem available to anyone, not just subscribers, from their website via this link [sign up here](#) – let the Editor know if that fails to provide no-obligation alerts and he will perform a *mea culpa* at the next Meeting.

– Their 27th April email included details of a 'Brushing Scam'. In this type of fraud, an Amazon-linked sales merchant sends an unsolicited item to a person chosen at random, then uses the householder's name & location in a fake online review of it (five stars, of course). Souzichou scarves have been favourite deliveries recently, for instance, so if you have received one – or any other unwanted item, including a substitute for some other product you have ordered – tell Amazon using their 'Report Unwanted Package' form [report the package](#) .

West Leicestershire u3a Wine Appreciation Group

26 April meeting *by John Dexter, to whom many thanks*

As this was our meeting nearest the Coronation we selected 'Celebration Wines' and knew we had hit the right note when Roger broke out the celebration cocktail forks! The rest of us made do with cocktail sticks.

Sue brought the official Coronation Quiche and very nice it was, although no-one seemed able to confirm this actually conformed to the published recipe.

We also learned that sailors on an RN Ship do not have to stand for the Loyal Toast (unless the Sovereign is present). See – Live, Learn and Laugh!

The Coronation loomed large with many anecdotes and, indeed, memories of the last one being aired. Does anyone remember Prince Charles, then aged 4, kissing the new Queen's cheek? Prince William has to kiss the new King's cheek (clarification did ensue) to demonstrate loyalty – who knew? None of our members was actually present in London but many had watched it on very small TVs and remembered parties. One of our number did claim to have watched it in colour although this was met with some scepticism. Forgot to mention it was a newsreel aired in about 2005?

Among the anecdotes was finding pre-1953 tinned goods in granny's store cupboard. Some things do have a virtually indefinite shelf-life but this was probably a bit excessive; besides, tins are supposed to have straight sides and ends. We then moved on to the weather as June 2nd 1953 was cool and wet, other extremes – snow in 1963 and 1990, heat in 1976 and 2022 – were discussed, everyone had a tale to tell!

Did we try any wine? Oh yes we did – Prosecco led the charge with ever more fanciful reasons to select particular celebratory vintages. One label had impalas leaping across it – 'obviously celebrating' we were informed. A Calvet Prestige Bordeaux was 'on offer' so obviously subject to celebration.

A Head Honcho Merlot came with the label instruction to 'drink with pulled pork rolls'; none were forthcoming so we couldn't sample the wine... yeah, right, it was excellent with pork pie and even comedy cheese – Wensleydale with ginger and mango – where do they find them?

The evening was brought to a conclusion with Roger's reoffering the wine previously voted 'best yet' – the Depasso Nero d'Avola Leggermente Appassito 2021. A real celebrational red wine from Sicily.

Next meeting – Wednesday 24 May Alan's Way 'South American Wines'.

QUIZ 2

(with thanks to Jean Johnson)

General

Answers on final page

1. What is the most populous Canadian city?
2. What is a natterjack?
3. An isohyet is a cartographic line connecting areas of equal what?
4. Who was played in films by Flora Robson, Bette Davis, and Jean Simmons?
5. Were The Fuggers politicians, smugglers, or bankers?
6. Is something that's scissile easily bent, cut, or stretched?
7. Which battle is memorialised by Patriots' Day each April in the USA?
8. What is Paraguay's capital?
9. Which author wrote *How the Leopard got his Spots*?
10. What's the term for a 6-sided solid all faces of which are rectangles?



Return of the Canal Trips



Tuesday 4th April saw a group of 9 take the first Canal Trip of the season. We arrived at the Marina in Market Harborough (following a challenging journey for some due to a road closure) and joined our boat for the day, Kingfisher.

Our two able captains, Tony and Jon steered us through south Leicestershire scenery to Foxton Locks, even giving tuition on negotiating the swing bridges to the less experienced people on the following boat. Tony made coffee and cooked bacon cobs (best I've had for some time) to keep us going. The day was cool to start with but soon warmed up when the sun came out.



After docking at Foxton, lunch was taken at one of the smaller pubs. A walk up the locks followed with time to chat to lock-keepers (and enjoy an ice-cream), read the signs and watch boats negotiating the locks.

Our journey back was just as pleasant and by then a lot warmer. Bob got the prize for 'famous last words' when he was heard to say 'he judged that well' just before there was a loud clunk as the swing bridge hit the side of the boat.



A great day and a big thank you to Tony for organising.

Poetry Corner 2 – Environmental Hazard

A Cautionary Tale

by Kate McGregor, with The Editor's thanks (he thinks)

Colin went on a visit one day
To see his sons who lived far away,
A walk in the woods was decided upon
Although Colin's shoes were not very strong,
They enjoyed the walk when what did they spy
A rope hanging from a tree nearby,
We must have a go his sons did shout
Although there was a lot of mud about
His sons had a go and then turned to Dad
Have a go they said it's not that bad
So Colin stepped up and took hold of the rope
He wondered if he could still cope
He swung to and fro and enjoyed the ride
But letting go of the rope began to slide
Staggered down the slope beneath the tree
Fell on his arm and had to visit A&E
The moral of this tale must be,
wear the right shoes and remember you're not three!

In toto from Liz
Prescott, with
the Editor's
thanks

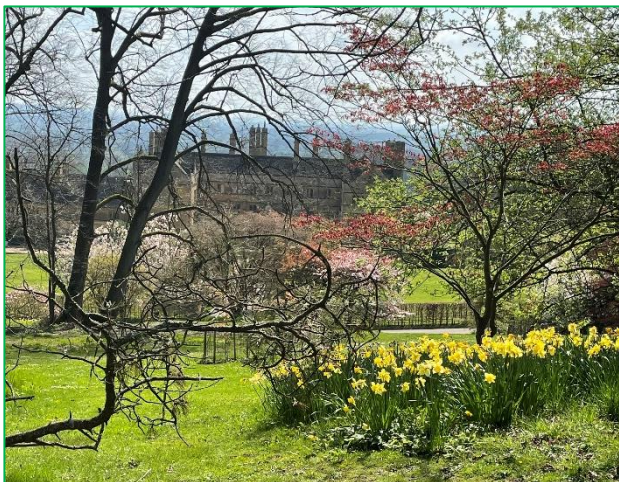
April Outing – Batsford Arboretum

The outing to Batsford Arboretum went very well. The Arboretum surrounds the 19th century Manor House built for Lord Redesdale, grandfather of the Mitford sisters who spent some of their childhood there. The estate stands on a hillside overlooking the beautiful Cotswold landscape.

*by the trip
organiser
Margaret
Proctor (r),
with the
Editor's
thanks*



*Photos by Norma Smart (people) and
Jane Smith (plants), with the Editor's
thanks*



The Japanese Yoshino cherry trees along with the Great White cherry were in full bloom looking wonderful, along with the stunning magnolias. There was an abundance of daffodils, hellebore, and primroses still in flower.



With the birds singing all around us it was a very restful and pleasant stroll around the grounds.

We were also very fortunate that the sun shone brightly all day and we were able to enjoy our lunch seated outside at the excellent cafe. A good day all round.



*Some no
doubt
welcome
R & R*



TOPICAL MATTERS UPDATE – Your Editor Targeted

Following last month's item under this heading, EasyLife have responded to your Editor's notification of the scam, though without suggesting any tightening of their own security. He is not taking the matter further.

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. Toronto
2. A kind of toad
3. Rainfall
4. Queen Elizabeth I
5. Bankers
6. Cut
7. The Battle of Lexington
8. Asuncion
9. Rudyard Kipling
10. A cuboid (such as a brick)

Quiz 1 answers:

1. Australia, on home turf in 2017
2. They're married: the sport is skeleton luge
3. 1992, against Goran Ivanisevic
4. Greenwich Park
5. Blackpool F.C, culminating in 2010
6. Straw-weight, brought in in 1987
7. The Ryder Cup
8. Mike Coughlan
9. Muhammad Ali
10. 29



Photos here & p.1 are by astrophotographer Steven Bellavia & used with his kind permission. Many more of his splendid pictures can be seen on his astrobin.com page using this link: [Steven Bellavia](https://www.astrobin.com/q/Steven-Bellavia/)

The answer to p1's question is 'something else'. Unlikely as it might seem, this is the planet Mercury, which has a tail. Though it is unusual for planets to have tails, it is not unknown, though we might be considered fortunate to have one to study within our own Solar System.

Mercury's tail, which is about 100 times longer than Earth's diameter, consists of various atoms and particles pushed off the planet's surface by micrometeorite impacts plus the pressure of sunlight, Mercury being the planet closest to the Sun and having one face permanently turned towards it – the tail thus streams away from the direction of the Sun. What makes it visible is the presence in it of sodium atoms which are very good at scattering yellow light.

In the 1980s, astronomers predicted that Mercury should have a tail, which was discovered in 2001. Many details of it were revealed by the NASA Messenger mission orbiting the planet from 2011 to 2015.

Another planet with a tail is the giant exoplanet WASP-69b, though its tail is made up of helium atoms.

Source: EarthSky News email 21.4.23 and their website article https://earthsky.org/space/how-to-capture-mercurys-sodium-tail/?mc_cid=4a3c07edde&mc_eid=UNIQID

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