

Newsletter

aka The LestFest

NOVEMBER 2023

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 and where is this object, and what records has it broken?
Answers & photo credits on final page

*Did you catch the 'deliberate mistake' in the October issue? see p.8**

- ❖ **Welcome to our November newsletter.** Thank you once again to Colin Lester for producing this newsletter. Our **Next Meeting** is on Wednesday 15th November at 2pm at the St James Church Hall in Newbold Verdon.
- ❖ **Membership Renewals:** Membership fees were due last month (October) for the year starting from 1st Nov. **For those few who have not yet got around to paying it would help us greatly if you could renew ASAP.**
Full membership is £25 (for a full member of another u3a the membership fee is a reduced rate of £21).

You can pay by Bank Transfer, the bank details are:

The Co-operative Bank
Account name: West Leics U3A,
Sort Code 089299
Account No 67262030
Reference: Your Surname, Initial and Membership
Number e.g. ELTON A 175

Please email Kathy Elton (membership@wlu3a.org.uk) once you have done this and we will update the membership form and provide you with a new membership card. ... or you can pay by cheque at the November Monthly meeting (payable to West Leicestershire U3A).



- ❖ The talk this month is "**Gopsall Hall & Estate**" enthusiastically presented by **John Foley**. Only a few miles from us and dating from 1750, it is probably one of the grandest Georgian country houses in Leicestershire, if not the UK, and we are sure that John will enchant us all with his in-depth knowledge of this wonderful building and the surrounding estate. John will bring with him some extensive and illustrated guides to **Gopsall Hall** for sale after his talk, these cost **£30.00** – if you would like to own one of these guides please remember to bring along the cash!



- I think we all marvelled at the adventurous and potentially dangerous trek to Uganda given by **Wendy Martin** to fulfil her ambition to see **Ugandan lions**, one of only two species that climb trees. The news of the British honeymoon couple who were murdered in this exact area, and on the day of the talk enhances the reality of the potential dangers she faced.
- ❖ **Please join us for what we expect to be another interesting and enjoyable time together.**

We still need volunteers to help the monthly meetings go well: **assistance in setting up the hall before the meetings** – it only takes 20 to 30 minutes and, of course, even less with more helpers. Thank you for those people who helped during the October meeting, it was greatly appreciated, and all of the many members who helped to stack the chairs after the meeting. **We need more going forward! Sign-up sheets will be at the next monthly meeting.**

Notes on our November Meeting

This was the last Meeting to be introduced by Andy Elton as Chairman, the AGM preceding the talk. Many thanks to Pete Fraser for the report and new Chairman Lou Grice for notes & the speaker's illustrations.



*A full-house Meeting,
though your Editor forgot it
& arrived after the talk.
He's 85 you know...*

Andy opened the Annual General Meeting and gave his annual report. All resolutions on the Agenda were carried unanimously, including an extra one to correct an error in the Minutes for last year's AGM. All proposed Officers were elected unopposed though there were still no candidates for Vice-Chair (which will be filled by co-option). Discussion included a proposed 10th anniversary celebration of WLu3a. Enthusiasm greeted the suggestion of a party next June, and ideas and volunteers were called for. The possibility of refreshments for Meetings was also chewed over, though lack of space around the drinks area and a possible hot water etc safety issue could make that difficult. A Member said that the Hall has no problem with refreshments, including alcohol, being brought in. Having begun a few minutes late, the AGM was brought to a close after about 15 minutes.

Introducing her talk on Gorillas and Climbing Lions, speaker Wendy Martin gave a brief account of the work of the [Ripple Effect Charity](#) (formerly Send A Cow), for which she is an Ambassador.

Photos following on this p. are all © Wendy Martin with thanks to her



*Ankole Cattle, indigenous to Uganda, were among
many creatures seen on Wendy's trip across the land...*

Begun as an idea to send a few cows to Uganda for nourishment during a serious drought, the first obstacle was getting them there: it was considered impossible to fly live cattle that far, yet that's what they did, with great success. They then trained local farmers to use the resources they had at hand. The charity is still



*...like this Giraffe with its Oxpecker
valet keeping it free from insects*

working with African farmers, and across more countries.

Wendy visited Uganda in 2014 as part of her ongoing work with the Charity (though as usual at her own expense), when she was able to take in the northern part of the country, previously out of bounds due to fighting since 1986 between the regime and rebel groups. She extended her stay, aided by the tour organising company, so as to visit two areas famous for particular forms of wildlife.

She wanted to see hyenas, but though finding a lair the hyenas were absent. Then the guide noticed movement, and they returned to find young hyenas at play, giving them some great photographs.



Her main target, though, was [lions in fig trees](#) in Queen Elizabeth National Park, one of only two places where they are known to have an arboreal habit, spending much time above ground watching for their next meal while keeping away from other predators.

The second target was [mountain gorillas](#) in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. The encounter with the dominant male Silver Back was enthralling though a bit unnerving as they stood very close to the huge gorilla, and in fact one of the great apes brushed her leg while moving past her. Despite misadventures she eventually saw multiple of both species, sharing with the audience photographs of these and many other creatures.



*A few days later the Chairman received the following from the speaker, WLu3a having given her £50 for her talk:
I was delighted when I counted the cash in my collecting box. There was £77.40 in there. Absolutely brilliant. So, I will
be paying in £127.40 to Ripple Effect on Friday. Please thank all your lovely members for their generosity.
A letter of appreciation was also received from Ripple Effect themselves.*

QUIZ 1

Sports – Answers on final page

1. What Australian victory year is recorded on the Ashes trophy?
2. Who was the first Italian to win a title in the Premier League?
3. Bjorn Borg beat which previous champion in two finals of Wimbledon singles tennis?
4. Unifying the IBF & WBA welterweight titles, who did Amir Khan beat in 2011?
5. Moving to Wigan in 1985, who broke the rugby league transfer record?
6. First in 1957: Crepello; last in 1981: Teenoso. What?
7. Who was manager of Sunderland when in 1998-9 they won promotion to the Premier League?
8. Which team was in every English rugby league Premiership final from 2005-2012?
9. Which US athlete tripped over Zola Budd in the 1984 Olympic women's 1500 metres?
10. Which golfer died just a few months after winning the 1999 US Open?

TOPICAL MATTERS 1 – Scams

Energy Scams: Ofgem have had reports of consumers getting calls claiming to be from them or someone working on their behalf, offering free boilers and/or energy advice. Ofgem warn that these are scams, and ask anyone who've had such a call to report it to www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/avoid-and-report-energy-scams, where advice on avoiding such scams can be found.

Black Friday: Most will know that the last November Friday (24th this year) sees many discount offers for online purchases, some continuing through to Cyber Monday (27th). The County Council's Trading Standards office stress that this is a prime time for scams, and offer advice on avoiding disastrous online shopping, including sticking to well-known reputable traders, using secure payment and varied passwords, checking web addresses and avoiding clicking on a email hyperlink, etc. For more details and the latest scams they've identified see www.facebook.com/leicstradingstandards; to keep updated click 'Follow' on that page.

Landline switchover: The Local Government Association (LGA) warn that fraudsters are exploiting the analogue-to-digital change in the national landline phone network, particularly targeting the elderly and vulnerable. Most telephone providers will be moving customers from the analogue landlines to new, upgraded services using the internet, the changeover expected to be completed by 2025. The LGA say that the 1.8mill people using devices like personal alarms or lifelines which are telephone-based are particularly vulnerable. Scammers will try to get bank or other financial details by claiming it's necessary to avoid disconnection during the changeover; but providers will never ask for such details by phone. The switchover is free of charge, so there should be no call for subscribers to give out those details.

Rogue traders: Trade organisation websites show traders near you, yet may carry advertisements from apparent traders who are not genuine. The LGA recorded a Leicestershire resident being defrauded of life savings by a supposedly reputable trader implying they were carrying out roofing, pest control, and gardening work, and offered investment opportunities too. There were none, and no work was done. These sorts of scammers can be very charming – some recent BBC Radio consumer items have shown how even normally sceptical people can be charmed in this way and suffer consequences – though will sometimes get angry if they fear losing control, in the hope of cowing victims into submission; which sometimes works too.

Reporting scams: A reminder that scams or attempted scams and phishing can be reported to www.actionfraud.police.uk or on 0300 123 2040; or to the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline 0800 223 1133. Educational resources are at www.citizensadvice.org.uk, and LCC's scams leaflets and door stickers are available from www.leicestershire.gov.uk. Which? scam alert emails are free to subscribe to from their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/whichalerts/> and the site has details of latest recorded scams.

Sources: Neighbourhood Link Trading Standards Service scams newsletter em 11.10.23 & web page

<https://members.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk/AlertMessage/Attachment/B6A077A1EE7542D5ECD39C159E9523D0>; Ofgem webpage <http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/avoid-and-report-energy-scams> via Nextdoor Neighbourhood em 231007 & webpage https://nextdoor.co.uk/p/Jwn82LHMqJKj?post=17592221829173&utm_source=email&is=npe§ion=cta&mar=true&ct=AYeD_KKXUVE1LFi1aVKYp_0xZy_iJZhXRlOn9P4rNj2FQNNawskH7KQqvPWPnUzW&ec=iD9EVf8Fqz_GipY9l9G7iq%3D%3D&mobile_deeplink_data=eyJhY3Rpb24iOiAidmld19wb3N0liwqInBvc3QiOiAxNzU5MTJyMTQyOTE3M30%3D&link_source_user_id=17592186709997

QUIZ 2

(with thanks to Jean Johnson)

General (Answers on final page)

1. Boötes is a Northern Hemisphere constellation – true or false?
2. Does the pH scale run from 0-14, 1-109, or 1-27?
3. Which poet wrote *Four Quartets* which appeared in complete form in 1944?
4. Which actor played Cliff Barnes in the *Dallas* TV series?
5. How much of a person's produce was a tithe?
6. What creatures does a sericulturist breed?
7. Mel Brooks produced a film that was a spoof of Alfred Hitchcock's films. What was the title?
8. Were UK postcodes introduced in 1968, 1970, or 1972?
9. What was Agatha Christie's maiden name?
10. The films *Billy Liar*, *Marathon Man*, and *Midnight Cowboy* were all directed by....?

Arts & Crafts Group



Some recent works

with thanks to Jane Hill for the
photographs

WLu3a Members may like to note that the Table Tennis Group's weekly fee has been reduced from £3 for 2hrs and £2 for 1hr, to £2 and £1 respectively, with effect from 27.10.23

West Leicestershire u3a Wine Appreciation Group

Report of the meeting on Wednesday 25 October by John Dexter, to whom many thanks

What subjects do social norms suggest be avoided during convivial gatherings? Yes, that's it – Religion and Politics. So what were the primary discussion points at the beginning of our meeting? Try HS2, Asylum seekers' accommodation, A&E and ambulance waiting times, politicians, pensions, and the state of the nation!

Religion as such came out of it relatively unscathed. Perhaps we should rename our group the Political Appreciation Group, although that does hint at a level of approbation. Interestingly there was very little dissent about most of the subjects, which perhaps reflects our demographic – or that the views expressed were correct. No worry, when we rule the world it will all be okay. Now where is my nomination form?

By the way, did you know the LRI A&E Department is one of the largest/busiest in the country?

Fortunately none of the foregoing put a dampener on our prime objective – to Appreciate Wine. Joyce reported on her evangelical efforts with the Desford Wine Circle where she had been invited to give a presentation about specific wines. It seems they have a far more structured and formalised set-up than ours, involving a proper agenda, food and wines supplied by the Group, etc. By all accounts her wine selections were well received, especially the post-prandial reds. Little hope, though, of converting them to our more freewheeling approach.

Our subject this week was aimed at winking out some of the 'old bottles from the back of the cupboard' – or Pot Luck. Roger's luck ran out completely when an ancient bottle's cork totally disintegrated, rendering the wine inaccessible. Fortunately he had back-up – of which more later. Joyce brought a home-produced Cherry Wine, all that was left of a large batch from 1999 – a beautifully sweet semi-dessert wine; pity there is no chance of a reorder. Paul assured us the optimum keeping period for a Chablis is 11 years which made his 2011 offering only just out of date, still very palatable though.

All this was overshadowed by my very special unlabelled Australian red which was, we believe, the first offering to receive a negative score! Such comments as 'rank', 'undrinkable', 'what the h***?' It really was not very good, although the (removed) label did give a warning – 'Red blend, Zero alcohol', with a picture of a fox who may possibly have been the source of the product, it certainly was not wine. Non-alcohol beers have come on in leaps and bounds of late, but from this experience non-alcohol wines have a long way to go.

I read recently there are more than 400 named cheeses, of which only one appeared at this meeting. We need to up our game a bit, even though we are not a Cheese Appreciation Group. Now there is a thought – any takers for a new group?

Speaking of food – perhaps – we mentioned Roger's back-up. Some years ago an Australian named Steve Grimley started producing a very palatable Shiraz, best known of which is probably the 'Black Pig' series. So successful was it in fact that it became the basis of a large proportion of the McLaren Vale's production. It is little known that the product was named after a herd of black pigs living in the vineyard, a favourite of which was called Tanuki – wonder what happened to him? Anyway, in his honour a 'Wisdom Shiraz' named after the eponymous pig has been produced, a bottle of which was ceremoniously opened. It was exquisite.

We started to discuss future arrangements. Sue and Paul once again graciously invited us to theirs for our December meeting – theme will possibly be 'Christmas', the prospective date being Thursday 21st December although this is to be confirmed.

Our next meeting – on November 22nd 7.30 at Alan's Way – will highlight South American wines (now isn't California in the South?)

TOPICAL MATTERS 2 – Transport future?

The world's first electrified motorway is planned for 2025 by Sweden, allowing electric cars to recharge as they pass over the road surface. The 13 miles of this E30 motorway will link Malmö, Gothenburg, and Stockholm. The method to be used – a choice from three possibilities – has yet to be decided. A pilot scheme took place on Gotland, where trucks and buses used a small stretch of road for wireless charging, a method proposed by Volvo for a fleet of electric taxis in cities. This could be the future for all road transport.

Sources: Euronews, via RAC Member email & webpage <https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/electric-vehicles-news/sweden-to-build-worlds-first-permanent-electrified-motorway/>

TOPICAL MATTERS 3 – Traffic offences

The 'In Your Area' social connection organisation have highlighted a number of traffic offences which it says are little known, yet mean those falling foul of them could be faced with paying substantial fines.

Splashing a pedestrian: If your driving through a puddle results in this incident, a fixed penalty notice would cause you £100 of grief, though if the case went to court, or if you were shown to have done it aggressively, the fine could be up to £5,000. If represented by a lawyer you would have fees on top of the fine. It's worth watching out for puddles when driving, especially when there are pedestrians about.

Sounding the horn in a built-up area between 11.30pm and 7am, or when stationary: The fixed penalty for this is £30, rising to £1,000 if you fail to pay; though you may be excused if you can show there was a genuine threat of harm or damage resulting if you hadn't beeped. Built-up areas are those with street lamps and where the usual 30mph speed limit for such roads is in force, i.e. no signs showing increased speed limits are on them.

Driving with an unsecured pet: It's an offence to have a pet in a vehicle unless it's properly secured, with a fixed penalty of £100 rising to £5,000 if you fail to pay. 'Properly secured' is termed 'suitably restrained' by the Highway Code, usually meaning in a pet crate or special pet seat.

Flashing headlights to warn other drivers of speed traps or patrol cars: A maximum £1,000 fine for this.

Throwing out litter: chucking rubbish out of a vehicle is an offence with an on-the-spot penalty of £150 (littering in other ways incurs an average fixed penalty of £140, though if tried in court the fine can be £2,500; and as it's a criminal offence, the miscreant ends up with a criminal record too).

Driving with too many people in the vehicle: This is considered a more serious offence due to dangers resulting from obscured view for the driver and insufficiency of seatbelts. Fixed penalty is a £500 fine, while a fine resulting from a court case would be up to £5,000.

Hitting a parked vehicle without leaving your contact details: This is counted as hit-and-run, with penalty-points on your licence plus a fine of up to £5,000. It's estimated that 70% of drivers have at some time had the vehicle they owned hit by another, and in 85% of those cases no contact information was left. CCTV or witnesses are the usual way of finding the culprit. Most such incidents are thought to take place in supermarket car parks *[though WLu3a Bridge Group members will have seen a car that's been hit in another sort of carpark where that might be expected, namely that of a pub like their regular venue, 'The Gate Hangs Well', Carlton, though it isn't known if the hitter in that case left details – Ed.]*

Source: In Your Area email and webpage <https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/eight-lesser-known-road-rules-that-can-see-you-fined-up-to-5k/>

Proposals for Changes to National u3a

There are some within the u3a who feel that its present organisation does not reflect the wishes of its members. They have set up a provisional Council of Regional Trustees "and a few other key individuals" to decide what changes to recommend to the Third Age Trust board. They're asking for feedback and ideas not just from regional group committees but from individual members too – that means you and all others in West Leicestershire u3a.

So far these proposals have been formulated: 1. Reduction in size of the main board and increase in management skills therein; 2. Regional Trustees to be members of the Council but not necessarily of the main board; 3. Council would represent the views of members nationally on how to meet their needs; 4. Changes in the role of Regional Trustees to reduce undue pressure on them.

It is accepted that any structural changes agreed are likely to take some time to implement, given the oversight or involvement of statutory bodies like the Charities Commission and HMRC. Members are encouraged to air their views to council@u3a.org.uk or to Leicestershire & Rutland u3a Network Co-Ordinator Roger Prescott landru3acoordinator@gmail.com. PDFs of notes from the Pilot Council Meeting on 20 September and of a Presentation thereat are available by email from Your Editor.

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		

**On p.2 of the October issue, your Editor said he'd edited a biography whose cover was shown there, but then used the subject's wrong forename in a p.8 Footnote. Email him if you noticed, as it would encourage him to know that you do read these Newsletters.*

TBC – Vice Chair

Quiz 2 answers:

1. True
2. 0-14
3. T S Eliot
4. Ken Kercheval
5. One tenth
6. Silkworms
7. High Anxiety
8. 1968
9. Miller
10. John Schlesinger

Quiz 1 answers:

1. 1882
2. Mario Balotelli (2011-12 season)
3. Jimmy Connors
4. Zab Judah
5. Ellery Hanley (from Bradford)
6. Derby winners ridden by Lester Piggott
7. Peter Reid
8. Leicester Tigers (they won three)
9. Mary Decker
10. Payne Stewart (killed in a plane crash)



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The object shown here and on p.1 is NASA's Parker Solar Probe, skimming close to the Sun's surface as it has been doing for some time. Its name is a bit of a misnomer, as it isn't actually probing the sun, just gathering new data that can only be discovered from this close to an almost 1,370° C body.

One of the records, from its 27 September to 3 October close encounter, was for proximity. Just 4.51 million miles from the Sun's plasma layer (considered its surface), it was closer than any other man-made object has been. Protecting it from the fierce heat is 4.5inch carbon-composite shield.

Its second record was for speed – already the fastest man-made thing, it broke its own record by achieving 394,736mph. The acceleration lifting it to this level was provided by a gravity-assist slingshot round Venus. The Probe has been gathering data on the origin and evolution of solar winds that may affect the flares (coronal mass ejections or CMEs) irregularly emitted by the Sun which could disrupt our electronic communications, as well as changes in space environments that might also have effects on life here. It has already shown that CMEs react with interplanetary dust.

The Parker Probe's own life-expectancy is limited. After another seven fly-bys of the Sun in 2024, it's expected to vaporise with the resultant particles probably swept into space by the solar wind.

Original Source: Nature Briefing email 12.10.23 via its senior editor Flora Graham; NASA's Popular Science website

https://www.popsci.com/technology/parker-solar-probe-speed-record/?utm_source=Live+Audience&utm_campaign=8a0bd7af86-briefing-dy-20231012&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b27a691814-8a0bd7af86-49175239
<https://sherylrgarrisonphotography.com/>

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