

Newsletter u3a

aka The LestFest

OCT 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*



What is this rather odd-looking object, what purpose if any does it serve, and whereabouts could you expect to find one like it?

Answers on final page

*Photo copyright Sheryl R Garrison with her kind permission, via EarthSky News email
with thanks to EarthSky's Claudia Crowley for referring the copyright request*

Chairman's Page

- ❖ **Welcome to our October newsletter.** Thank you once again to Colin Lester for producing this.
- ❖ Our **Annual General Meeting** is on Wednesday 18th October at 2pm at the St James Church Hall in Newbold Verdon. *Thank you* to the people who have already volunteered to join the committee including someone to be Chair.
- ❖ **Membership Renewals:** Membership fees are due this month for the year starting from 1st Nov. **It would help us greatly if you could renew ASAP.**



Full membership is £25 (If you are a full member of another u3a then 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 Leicestershire U3A,

Sort Code 089299

Account No 67262030

Reference: Your Surname and 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 Monthly meeting (payable to West Leicestershire U3A).

- ❖ The AGM will be followed by **“Gorillas and Climbing Lions”** when we will joined once again by **Wendy Martin**. Wendy will be telling us about the trek she made to fulfil an ambition to see Ugandan lions, one of only two species that climb trees, and mountain gorillas.



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

We need volunteers in two areas to help the monthly meetings go well:

Assistance in setting up the hall before the meetings; Thank you for the three people who signed up for the next meeting. **We need more going forward!**

Sign-up sheets will be at the next monthly meeting.

Notes on our October Meeting

The Meeting had even more Members than the September one, our first at the new venue of St James Church Hall in Newbold Verdon. This month's was introduced by Sue Meadows, and centred on a talk about garden birds by Kevin Reynolds. No report of the Meeting having been contributed, these notes again take the form of photos and captions.



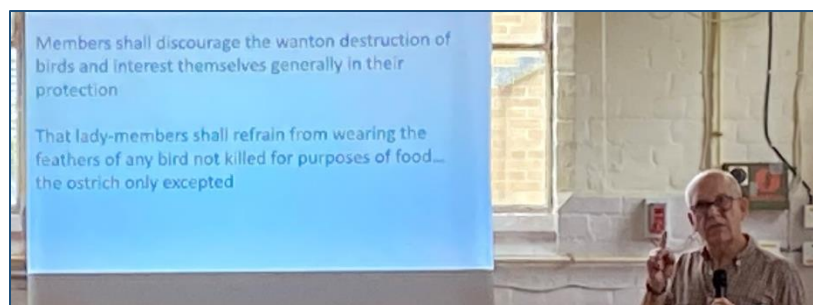
Traditionally the bird most seen was the house sparrow



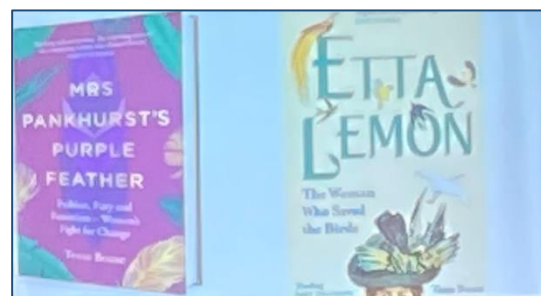
Two images of the speaker: look closely for his photo-taking reflection in the robin's eye



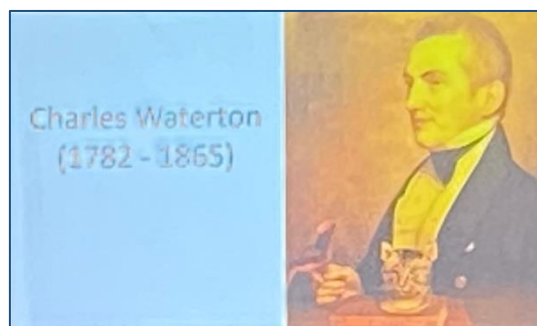
Four & twenty blackbirds (supposedly) baked in a pie, as in the nursery rhyme, illustrated Kevin's point that our forebears used to eat the birds we now feed



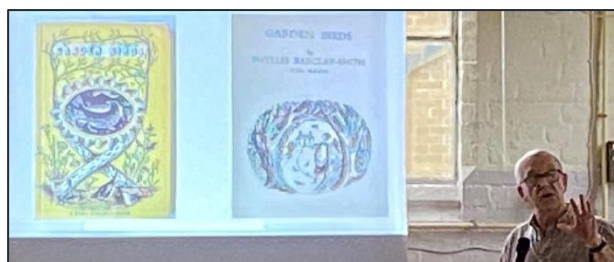
The RSPB was originally a society for women members...



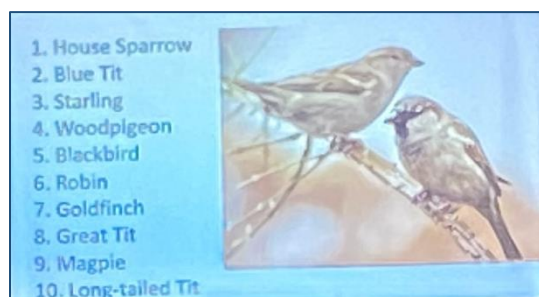
...to dissuade others from wearing hats with feathers the collection of which were decimating some bird populations



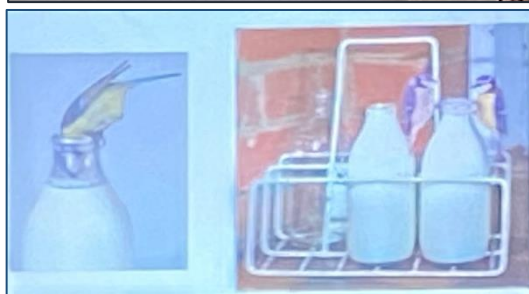
*Protection went further when this man had a wall built round his Walton Hall estate near Wakefield to create 'the world's first nature reserve', introducing the first bird boxes**



Early examples of bird interest and identification books, the one on the right being the first to use the phrase 'Garden Birds'



Regular counts show that the sparrow is still the most common garden bird, though numbers (as of other species) have declined heavily in recent years



Pictures to bring back times past for many of us: blue tits raiding old-style milk bottles by punching their way through foil caps. Kevin said birds can't digest milk – but they can deal with cream



*Climate warming encourages species from further south to settle & breed here (Collared Dove at right, Dreaded Green Alien Invader at left**)*

Footnotes:

*A curiosity: the picture of Charles Waterton is from the cover of a biography of that eccentric landed gentleman, which your Editor edited when he was Editor for the publisher The Lutterworth Press (from whom it's still available to buy – Advtd.)

**Note: this is not the left-hand bird's real name

QUIZ 1

Sports – Answers on final page

1. What's the slalom in skiing called that's marked for speed not technique?
2. What was the unusual double Michael Johnson won in the 1996 Olympics?
3. Who holds the current title for largest number of rugby union test caps?
4. Who has made Premier League scores for Blackburn, Coventry, Liverpool, Manchester City, Newcastle, and West Ham?
5. *The Art of Captaincy* was written in 1985 by which cricketer?
6. Who was 36 when he rode 'Authorized' to his first Derby win in 2007?
7. The film *Chariots of Fire* celebrates which two gold-medal-winning athletes?
8. In the 2006 Adelaide test match, who scored a double century for his losing side?
9. Who was known as 'Pistol Pete' and why?
10. Which 1960s US car was made to challenge Ferrari in GT Sports Car racing?

TOPICAL MATTERS 1 – Scams

iPhone 15: Kaspercy, a cybersecurity firm, says there are some online offers of pre-release low-cost iPhones. Payment has to be made upfront – providing the scammer with bank details. Don't be fooled! ... *Which?* has seen another pre-release iPhone 15 scam worked by an email carrying an advert for entering a competition to win one, but its 'Register Now' link takes the user to a website where personal details must be entered to continue. The advert is headed 'Quiztionnaire', so delete anything like that and/or report it.

Spotify: if you subscribe to the music provider Spotify's Premium offering, you might get an email suggesting your monthly sub hasn't been delivered from your bank, or that your membership has expired. As with any such messages purporting to come from a company or service of which you have membership, the only safe way to respond is to log in to your online account and check your status and/or messages there.

Car Parks: Following last fake parking app's month's item, there are reports of scammers sticking fake QR codes onto parking machines. Avoid using a QR code to contact the parking company or to get a car-parking company's app, but Google the company's name to find their real website and use details shown there.

Fraud Recovery : If you have been a victim of a scam, be careful how you go about reacting. Some fraudsters will impersonate regulators to see if they can catch someone a second time, while others survey social media to identify those most vulnerable to scams, hoping to take advantage of them themselves. *Which?* scam alert email of 14 September has a link to show how they work so you can take avoiding action.

Straying Gnomes : Saga warn that finding a stray gnome in your garden could be dangerous – no, they aren't explosive, but they are one of the signs burglars use to mark potentially vulnerable homes when they notice periods of absence, or lack of movement during the daytime or of lights during darkness. Best report any such stone-faced intrusion to the police and/or Neighbourhood Watch, and post a warning on social media.

Wilko : With the completed or impending closure of most or all of Wilko stores (Hinckley's ending its presence in the Britannia Centre on Thursday 5 October as is the one at Beaumont Leys; Coalville's, already closed, will be converted to a Poundland), some fraudsters have set up fake Wilko websites to cash in on consumers looking for closing-down-sales bargains. The Police have issued a warning and a Hinckley community support officer thought some people may have already been caught by them. The official Wilko website may also have been hacked. Wilko products can only be bought from those stores still open, so don't be tempted by any other offers for them.

Which? have a Facebook page called 'Which? Scam Action and Alerts' that you can join if you subscribe (or agree to) to their free scam alert emails. It aims to build a community of people aware of, concerned about, and wanting to combat electronic-media scams. Find it at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/whichalerts/>

Sources: '*Which?*' scam alert service email 31.8.23 & 14.9.23 & website https://www.which.co.uk/news/article/the-latest-scam-alerts-from-which-aBRLy2b02WkC?utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=supporters&utm_content=Scam+alert+310823+-+Core+-+Live:+scams+tracker ; & Saga 'Exceptional' email newsletter 7.9.23; & Hinckley Times & Leicestershire Mercury 28.9.23 & LeicestershireLive website <https://www.leicesterm Mercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/wilko-closing-dates-remaining-stores-8787010>

QUIZ 2

(with thanks to Jean Johnson)

General (Answers on final page)

1. What does ouzo taste of?
2. Which maths field is called 'The Cossic Art', meaning the art of things?
3. In 1949-56, Crocetti and Levitch made 16 films together under which names?
4. Which UK city has a nearby airport called Crosby?
5. Aldous Huxley set which of his novels in the 7th Century AF ('After Ford')?
6. In 1992 whose 'Ebenezer Goode' was a No.1 hit?
7. Matt Frewer played which android on TV?
8. Why might it be dangerous for you to meet a goonch?
9. At the confluence of which US rivers is the city of Cairo?
10. Which German scientist made major contributions to the US space programme?

How's your balance?

Your Editor had just finished this item when he heard that Jackie Timson had suffered bone breaks & a dislocation from a fall at pickleball; reminding him of Sue Mirams' fall when getting over a stile on one of the old Three Villages walks. Please all take care and maintain good balance as long as you can, and best wishes to Jackie for quickest recovery possible!

The second most common cause of accidental death worldwide is falling over, says Dr Michael Mosley of the BBC Radio 4 podcast 'Just One Thing'. What's more, research has shown that on average one in three people over 65 will fall over once a year, and so will half of those over 80. So your chances of survival into your 90s (or even 100, like Barbara at the Newbold Verdon Baptist Hub community lunch on 27 September whose centenary had just been celebrated by a visit from the Mayor of Hinckley & Bosworth) may well depend on your sense of balance.

Your Editor reckoned he has pretty good balance, standing on one leg (albeit sometimes shakily) to put on & take off shoes, socks and other clothing, til he too had a fall this year (as poetically recorded in an earlier issue of this periodical) after slide-staggering down the side of a steep muddy depression in woods. The lesson is that everyone is vulnerable depending on circumstances as well as fitness, and the more we can maintain or preferably improve our balance the safer we'll be.

It's possible to do this during the course of an ordinary day. Apart from the nether-garments routine, there's washing hands, cleaning teeth, reading, washing up, waiting for tea to mash, checking smart-phone messages all offering the chance to practice standing on one leg. Ten seconds on one leg at a time is recommended by the NHS, or for more formal exercises visit their website <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flexibility-exercises/balance-exercises/>. Those of a somewhat more sedentary lifestyle may be glad to see that they include sitting exercises. There are links to pages with other exercises to improve strength or flexibility, and to help deal with sciatica pain.

Ensure you do any practice somewhere without hard surfaces & sharp edges around to possibly fall onto; but stand on a firm surface – perching on your bed to balance on one leg should not be attempted (and avoid trying to stand on steep slippery slopes or you could end up banging one arm into the bottom of a bomb crater) – and get more stable soon!

Source: Saga 'Exceptional' email newsletter 19.9.23 & www.exceptional.com webpage

West Leicestershire u3a Wine Appreciation Group

Report of the meeting on Wednesday 27 September by John Dexter, to whom many thanks

Researching appropriate wines to offer our group can be an informative and interesting exercise. One web site, specialising in French wines, offers all sorts of fine wines set in serried rows on the page – £39 per bottle, £97 per bottle etc, obviously none really to the standard expected by us.

One entry did catch my eye – a snip at £450. The catch being the offering was for 300 facing bricks! How did that get there?

In truth the research is more an effort to justify the purchase already made. Is it good enough? Is there a story behind it that we can spin to the group? Was the outrageous price worth it?

Perhaps we should make more effort to give an informed explanation about the selection, as sometimes it feels we do not give enough time (or attention) to justify and describe the wine on offer; even our scoring has been questioned (I think I am totally impartial!)

The entire ethos of our meetings is to appreciate the wines in a convivial atmosphere – the conversations and anecdotes are by far the most enjoyable element, many being unrepeatable and certainly unreportable. Besides, in the real world, who can remember whether the Jurançon Sec '21 was more flavourful than the Costières de Nîme '21 which followed it? Or even which was red and which white?

Roger certainly excelled in this with his tale of memories, as a 9-year-old, of his late mate Les who went on to study marine biology and dolphins in particular, which informed his selection of a fine Côtes du Rhône called Les Dauphins – see the connection? Trouble is, the memory was as accurate as the spiel on some of the bottle labels!

Speaking of the label information we sampled a Picpoul de Pinet 2016 – supposedly a light crisp white wine. This did not receive favourable comments, especially as the label went on to state “best enjoyed within 1 year of purchase”; for once, the label did not lie.

We were offered an interesting selection of French wines, with a preponderance of reds. Some were adjudged to be excellent, others less so, especially when compared with some of the New World wine we have tried previously, so some of us have been paying attention.

For our next meeting, on Wednesday 25 October, 7.30 at Alan's Way, we propose to take **Pot Luck of 'any old wine'** – to allow clearance of some overstocked cellars? Even some forgotten vintages?

TOPICAL MATTERS 2 – The NPC

Have you heard of the National Pensioners Convention? Your Editor came across it by chance and found it an interesting source of possibly pertinent information and activity. Some people might be put off by its origins and affiliations – founded by trade unions leader Jack Jones and with affiliation from many current unions (though individual members are welcomed too); yet few could disagree with the statement from its first national meeting in 1979: “This Convention declares that every pensioner has the right to choice, dignity, independence and security as an integral and valued member of society.”

One of its most useful activities for everyone is its regular newsletters on various topics including Health & Social Care, (digital) Connections for All, Housing Matters (especially regarding older renters), and the Campaign Bulletin. There are also ones on a Women's Network, and Rainbow News. Another potentially helpful activity is the NPC Campaigns covering Pensions, pressure for a National Care Service, the NHS (a current campaign joins other pressure groups against the US firm Palantir taking over NHS data management), Ending Fuel Poverty, Public Transport Accessibility (with an Action Plan ‘to ensure older.. people can access safe, regular, and affordable travel’, and a national conference in London on 18 October, more details from info@npcuk.org), Social & Digital Inclusion, Uniting the Generations, Climate Change Action, and adoption of the NPC's Dignity Code for the elderly. Their current campaign for better buses may be of particular interest to some of our villagers <https://betterbusescampaign.uk/>. There are Working Parties for most of these topics, and regional groups.

They also mentioned the annual International Day of Older Persons (1 October), but your Editor missed it.

Source: <https://www.npcuk.org/> .

Arts & Crafts Group



Items made by members of the Arts & Crafts Group at their most recent meeting

with thanks to Jean Johnson for the photo

Members of this Group, and anyone else with a crafts interest, might like to note the international Creative Crafts Show being held at the National Exhibition Centre, just outside Birmingham, from 2-5 November. Tickets are from £14 but there are discounts for group bookings.

At the same venue there's a Christmas Fair for your seasonal gift purchases from Thursday 16 - Sunday 19 November, with standard ticket prices of £10-12, again with group discounts available.

Geology Group

The WL u3a Geology Group has now completed 15 sessions – a total of 30 hours – and is continuing this Autumn from Monday 25 September 10.00-12.00, at the Newbold Verdon Baptist Church. Geology is a very big subject area and we have only just begun to scratch the surface. As a group we feel that it would be easy for new members to join, including anyone with little or no knowledge of geology but interested in it.

We are starting this time from the beginning of Geological Time, which we have not really visited before. We will try to work our way forward towards the present day over the sessions, but as usual we could get diverted if someone prompts this. We have plenty to go at: 4,500 million years of geological history and fossils. If you want more information contact paulpittham@ntlworld.com, or if you know a geology group member – there are 14 of us – talk to them.

TOPICAL MATTERS 3 – Security Cameras

Do you have a door or other security camera? If not carefully placed, it could be breaking the law. Smart doorbells, for instance, are often on a front door, with a high likelihood they will record the street ahead.

If your device points at your private driveway or back garden, then you probably won't be videoing any other private individuals than yourselves (though it's worth telling guests they'll be captured on your video storage system). If the camera records outside those boundaries, though, for example onto the street or nextdoor homes or gardens, then you have responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Under data protection legislation, anyone captured on footage from your camera has the right to ask for a copy; to have it erased; or to request for them not to be filmed in the future. In 2021, a judge ruled that an Oxfordshire man had broken data laws with multiple smart doorbells and security cameras that also covered a neighbour's home; it wasn't just the videos that broke the law, but also audio capture up to c.60 feet away.

There are ways to ensure that your cameras don't capture outside your property, such as adjusting the field of recording or setting 'privacy zones', though it's often hard to do in closely-build neighbourhoods. You might consider: device placement; any privacy features the device incorporates; consult neighbours and be reasonable; put up a warning sign; and delete unused recordings.

Police might ask to see recordings made by your device at times of suspected criminal or anti-social activity nearby, and if not provided then a court may demand their disclosure. You might need their help, in any case, should your property be damaged or your security device be hacked – to avoid the latter threat, see <https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/smart-video-doorbells/article/video-doorbell-security-how-to-stop-your-smart-doorbell-from-being-hacked-aCklb4Y4rZnw>.

Source: 'Which?' email 25.8.23

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

Quiz 2 answers:

1. Aniseed
2. Algebra
3. Martin and Lewis
4. Carlisle
5. *Brave New World*
6. The Shamen
7. Max Headroom
8. It's a man-killing Asian catfish
9. The Mississippi and The Ohio
10. Werner von Braun

Quiz 1 answers:

1. Super G
2. 200 metres and 400 metres
3. Alun Wyn Jones with 170
4. Craig Bellamy
5. Mike Brearley
6. Frankie Dettori
7. Eric Liddell (400 metres) & Harold Abrahams (100 metres)
8. Paul Collingwood
9. Pete Sampras for his very fast tennis serve
10. Shelby Daytona Cobra Coupe, 1st US international winner



Does the full photo of the object on p.1 give any clue as to its location? Well, it's actually below water in a part of Waterton Lakes National Park,* Alberta, Canada. But you might find one in any stream of a country in which caddis flies breed.

Trout love the tiny caddis fly larvae, so each larva constructs this sort of casing by selecting and sticking together suitable small stones from the stream bed. To do this they exude a gooey thread from a gland under their chins. Those who study the creatures call this thread 'silk', and it acts like double-sided sticky tape – though like

none we dumb humans produce because we can't make one that works under water (yet).

Scientists think that if we can work out how to make this stuff then there could be some uses for it in medical applications (and maybe elsewhere too – your Editor's water butts & downpipes would find it handy in very rainy weather). It's certainly useful for the larva, who leaves its head & legs out of the entrance to drag its home about like a hermit crab, until it's ready to crawl to the edge of the water to pupate and ultimately mature into another adult caddis fly.

There are nearly 200 species of the insects (also called sedges) in the UK, especially in garden ponds. You can see a fascinating YouTube video of a larva constructing its shell on <https://youtu.be/Z3BHzDHoYo>.

Source: EarthSky News email 26.9.23, and Sheryl Garrison's blog <https://sherylrgarrisonphotography.com/> & helpful emails.

**Footnote – Another curiosity: Waterton Lakes were named by Lt Thomas Blakiston, a member of an 1858 Royal Geographical Society expedition to the area, in memory of celebrated naturalist John Waterton (see footnote on p.3 – coincidence rules OK)*

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