



**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

*Welcome to the Wycliffe Lutterworth U3A. We meet on second Thursday of each month at the Methodist Church Hall. Tea, coffee and biscuits available from 10am – 10.30am. An opportunity to meet friends old and new, book exchange, information about trips etc.*



## DECEMBER CHRISTMAS MEETING

THURSDAY 14th December 2023

Reminder that our December meeting will start at **10:15 hrs** to accommodate our Special General Meeting (SGM). This will not impact upon our normal programme and our monthly speaker will be starting at approx. 10:30 hrs.

Tea and coffee will be available as usual before the meeting.

Come along and join us for our guest speaker **Melody Flyte** and a musical experience.

Vintage singer Melody Flyte takes you on a journey through the development of the American songbook from the 1920s to the 1950s, taking in the great composers and lyricists of New York, including Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and the Gershwin Brothers.

Illustrated with songs performed in vintage style including Christmas classics performed by Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra.



Look forward to seeing you all.

## Table of Contents

<a href="#"><u>Notices</u></a> .....	5
<a href="#"><u>Lively Discussion - 13th November 2023</u></a> .....	6
<a href="#"><u>Art Appreciation – Casta Paintings</u></a> .....	11
<a href="#"><u>Gentle Bike Ride November 2023</u></a> .....	13
<a href="#"><u>ESTG November Event</u></a> .....	14
<a href="#"><u>20 years of UK High Speed Rail</u></a> .....	14
<a href="#"><u>Poetry Group</u></a> .....	19
<a href="#"><u>4th Wednesday Walking Group – November 2023 Walk Report</u></a> .....	20
<a href="#"><u>History Group report - November 2023</u></a> .....	21
<a href="#"><u>Photography Group - November 2023 report</u></a> .....	24
<a href="#"><u>U3A Snail’s Walking Group</u></a> .....	27
<a href="#"><u>Give it a Go Group - Monthly Report</u></a> .....	28
<a href="#"><u>Committee Members</u></a> .....	30

## Wycliffe Lutterworth u3a Committee

### Membership Records Secretary Required



Dear All,



Our current Membership Records Secretary (a rare image of him has been obtained by the committee) is busy right now but as you all will know he will be standing down at our next AGM in March 2024. He would like to stress the lists he checks for our u3a are nowhere near as long as those he is currently working on for the night of the 24th.

Our AGM is now just THREE months away and we are asking for members, who are interested in taking on this vital role (red suit optional) to contact us now.

The Membership Records Secretary plays an essential role in ensuring the continuity of our u3a by maintaining an accurate membership database. This role primarily involves the recording of annual subscription payments along with changes to contact details of our members.

In addition to managing the membership database, the Membership Records Secretary will occasionally be responsible for disseminating information and newsletters from the Third Age Trust. Consequently, this is an important request that directly impacts the continued existence of the Wycliffe Lutterworth u3a

We understand that taking on a role within the u3a requires time and commitment but the rewards are immense. The role is interesting, enjoyable and a focal point for both our existing and new members.

Our membership database is maintained on “Beacon” - a computer-based system / program developed for the Third Age Trust and used by numerous u3a groups. Training and support for using this system will be provided for as long as is necessary.

If you are interested in becoming the Membership Records Secretary or would like to learn more about the role, please contact me or one of the Committee members. Your willingness to consider this position is vital to the continued existence of the Wycliffe Lutterworth u3a.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Colin Beadle - Chairperson

## Notices

### **Please bring along your used stamps to the next meeting**

As you know, Liz White of Lutterworth U3A is collecting used stamps on behalf of Medical Detection Dogs. They can be any used stamps (even just 1st or 2nd Class) but please could you ensure they have approximately a 1cm (roughly a finger's width) surround.

Please bring them along and give them to Sue Creeden at the monthly meeting. Alternatively, you can pop them through her door – 25 Holly Drive, Lutterworth. Sue will then pass them on to Liz. Many thanks, Sue.



---

### **DUNTON BASSETT VILLAGE HALL AVAILABLE FOR WEEK-DAY BOOKINGS**

The hall can be booked by the hour during the times shown below:

Tuesdays: 10.45am – 5.00pm

Wednesdays: 11.15am – 3.45pm

Thursdays & Fridays: 8.30am – 3.45pm

Please contact Dawn Hnylycia to book

[dawn.hnylycia@hotmail.com](mailto:dawn.hnylycia@hotmail.com)

07919 842120

## Lively Discussion - 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023

### **Are junior doctors responsible for long waiting lists?**

The person leading our discussion this month began by saying her curiosity was peaked when we heard of junior doctors threatening to strike in January 2023. She said the BMA was mentioned which seemed odd as this organisation always seemed to be a major reliable source of information and well thought of in medical circles with their reports on new methods and innovation as published in the British Medical Journal. The BMA is the doctors' professional association and has also been called the doctors' trade union.

There were various points of view within the group. Whilst junior doctors' strikes have exacerbated the situation there were long waiting lists before the pandemic which were made worse by lock down and care given to those hospitalised because of Covid. Specifically the waiting list stood at 2.6 million before the pandemic and had risen to 6.2 million by 2022 - before the doctors' strikes. It is currently 7.75 million – expected to rise to 8 million by the end of the year. Rishi Sunak said that strikes are the number one reason for longer waiting lists but from these figures we can see that this is untrue.

During strikes people have taken better care of themselves as they were unsure if they would be treated. Some felt that we should do this all the time by taking responsibility for our own health by how we live - taking exercise and managing what we eat. Diabetes and obesity account for a large cost to the NHS.

It was felt that the public has forgotten about the billions spent by Rishi Sunak, as Chancellor, to keep people paid during lock down. This policy is largely the cause of the government's shortage of cash to fund current requirements. However, the PPE scandal and others were also contributory factors. Perhaps we should expect tax rises but political parties are reluctant to do this. Steve Barclay, the Health Secretary, bears much responsibility for the doctors' strikes continuing because he refused to discuss the situation saying it was in the hands of the pay board. However, the pay board's recommendations are subject to a government cap. It is well known that nothing can be negotiated until the protagonists start talking. Interestingly despite longer waiting lists only 15% of the public blame the junior doctors for the longer waiting lists. And of course you only come off the waiting list when you are discharged.

Doctors, like other graduates, also pay for their education and will end training with a debts from £50,000 to £90,000. This is like having a second mortgage which will take 20 - 25 years to repay, the total repayment being £184,546. Nevertheless we felt that they should be required to work in the NHS for a minimum number of years – say 5 – to ensure that the country benefits from the investment too.

The BMA wants to discuss pay, working conditions and staff retention. The Nuffield Foundation reported that the doctors pay has declined by 15% in real terms and this problem also arose with teachers where pay didn't keep up with the cost of living. The government seems determined to only focus on pay, but these are professionals who want to give good care and more recruitment and retention would help.

Andrew Gilligan was a policy advisor to Boris Johnson both when he was Prime Minister and Mayor of London. He was senior correspondent at The Times and has also served as head of the Capital City Foundation at Policy Exchange, a Conservative think tank. He is currently an advisor to Rishi Sunak's office. He published an article in the Telegraph, where he is London Editor, which can be summarised as follows:

*The BMA began balloting 40,000 members to strive for 30% more pay through strike action. It appears that the BMA has been taken over by a group of "entryists" (dictionary definition is the infiltration of an organisation, such as a trade union with the intention of subverting its policies or objectives) in a planned campaign similar to that in Labour in the time of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership. They also encouraged first year students as they have free/low cost BMA membership. Supportive doctors were advised that they could join for one month just to vote and then end their membership.*

*To choose candidates, Doctors' Vote seats were won with 1600 votes – less than 1% of the BMA's total membership. At the association's annual conference, Doctors' Vote pushed through the most significant change in BMA industrial strategy for a decade. This strategy is two pronged, first a demand for 30% increase in pay and secondly proposals for longer, more comprehensive strikes to achieve almost more than anyone else, then proposing a 72 hours strike, and then potentially a week without any junior doctor emergency care at all.*

*The association has hired a former RMT rail union official, Matt Waddup to organise strikes, and says it is training 300 junior doctors in campaigning. It has issued an "activists guide", which tells doctors to draw up a power map of relationships in each NHS trust and gives them a "messaging triangle" of things to say.*

*Junior doctors make up about a quarter of the BMA's overall membership; most are consultants and GPs.*

## **Junior Doctors Pay Scale**

Scale	£ per annum April 2021	£ per annum April 2023
2	35,155	39,260
3	37,986	42,321
4	39,698	44,171
5	41,763	46,404
6 to 13	66,803	73,477

*Jo Sutton-Klein newly elected to the BMA Council says she sees the junior doctors dispute as a “hugely important ideological-political moment” and the BMA should “situate ourselves in a broader workers struggle”. Their methods – an inner core of hard-left figures (Broad Left) within a large insurgent group (Doctors’ Vote), they now control the BMA’s junior doctor’s committee which is running the current ballot and proposed strike action; 26 of the 55 voting members on the association’s ruling council; and the deputy leadership of the BMA.*

## **Members**

*Members were re-balloted in August to extend their mandate to strike beyond the end of the month – consultants from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> September and junior doctors from 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> September.*

*Certainly, unhappiness with pay and workload for junior doctors has increased since an NHS survey in 2019. With the increase in inflation the latest surveys show that almost 7000 doctors of all grades applied for certificates to work abroad, up from 5,500 in 2021.*

*The Tasmanian Health Service ran an advert on the British Medical Journal site offering base salaries “ranging from \$79,578 to \$138,593 Australian Dollars”, which equates to £42,805 - £74,509, a tempting rise for junior doctors who earn from £29,384 to £58,398. They also promote better life balance and improved weather. Former NHS doctors also say that the Australian system offers better quality and patients are much happier with the care they receive. Some people in their 20’s regard the experience as a working holiday and then return to England. Attitudes are changing. Previously consultants expected a direct line in their careers to eventually reach a specialism such as a cardiology.*

*Today there’s a significant trend towards doctors having portfolio careers, gaining different experiences. There is a shortage of 6.4 million doctors worldwide. Doctors are in demand everywhere and in the past decade there has been a large increase in the proportion of doctors migrating to the UK from middle and lower income countries*

## Management of the NHS

General Sir Gordon Messenger has served in Kosovo, Lebanon, and Afghanistan. 20 years ago, he led the Royal Marines invasion of Iraq.

He was asked by the government to launch a far-reaching review of health and social care leadership in the last 40 years.

He said, “I think there is an assumption – wrongly held, in certain quarters – that if you want to get something done, you get a general in”.

It misses the point that generals get things done because they have a proper system in place. He had already assisted ministers to introduce community testing and hotel quarantine. He found that he “was pulling levers” only to find that there was nothing at the end of them. “Essentially military leadership has a culture of leaders and being led, well understood structures, relationships and very clear hierarchies.

Since his review of leadership last summer, the government has had its own leadership issues, 3 changes of health secretary, the worst winter crisis in NHS history. Sir Gordon suggests it is a mistake to keep bouncing from one crisis to the next without making fundamental changes to bolster the service long term.

He states, “Unless you get the right culture, better leadership, it’s almost like painting the bedrooms without fixing the roof”. In particular, he was perturbed by the lack of team spirit he encountered in many parts of the health and social care system, with wrongdoing unchecked.” The things I found most surprising were the blame culture, the finger pointing and the responsibility avoidance”. “If you feel alone, you don’t feel brave enough. If you see something going wrong, what should happen is a team response - let’s rally around and get it sorted.” He often encountered staff who feared raising issues because they would be criticised or shut down or accused. He found this, at all levels, including senior medicine and management. The Lucy Letby case is a recent example of this.

Among his recommendations are competence standards for NHS managers at key points in their careers, and consistent systems of appraisals, training, and development.

The absence of such systems means that despite being Britain’s largest employer, the NHS does little to attract or develop the best leaders. The report was published June 2022 and the findings were welcomed by the government. However they have only said that it was part of the war on “waste and wokery”.

Unfortunately, the meeting with Steve Barclay, the Health Secretary, earlier this year for formal pay talks with the BMA wasn’t successful. Rishi Sunak offered a “final offer” in July to junior doctors of 6% plus a lump sum of £1,250 each, and other groups including - teachers 6.5%, police and prison officers 7% and between 5 – 6% for the armed forces.

So here we are no further forward apparently 100 days without any discussion and more strikes escalating as both juniors and consultants are striking together.

Some felt that doctors have guaranteed career progression and opportunities to specialise in an area which interests them and a generous pension at the end of it. A job for life in an uncertain world many people who weren't fortunate enough to go to university would be pleased to have their prospects.

In conclusion we felt that junior doctors bear a small amount of blame for longer waiting lists but that underfunding by successive governments, a refusal to actively try to improve all 3 concerns – pay, understaffing and retention – together with an eye on the next election have led to this situation which is terrible for everyone. Talking when all this began may well have prevented many strike days and no additions to already long waiting lists. We also support General Messenger's recommendations that a management structure and competence levels for NHS managers should be introduced immediately.

---

Visitors welcome, please contact Dot Barnard [dot.barnard@uwclub.net](mailto:dot.barnard@uwclub.net)

01455 208190

We meet on the second Monday morning of each month at 10.30am.

### **2023 TOPICS**

1. November – Are junior doctors responsible for long waiting lists?
2. December – Christmas Meeting

[Return to Contents](#)

## Art Appreciation – Casta Paintings

The Art Appreciation Group visited the Leicester New - Walk Museum to see the thought-provoking exhibition ‘Casta: The Origin of Caste’.

Five newly restored paintings from the museum’s collection were on display.

We learnt how to decode art and artefacts as they relate to global majority communities. Exploring themes of caste, class, and classification through the work of Juan Rodriguez (b.1675 :1728).

The Casta painting genre was founded by the Viceroy of Spain, who commissioned artists to paint families to show how different ethnicities in Mexico might be eliminated through inter-racial mixing. They were then presented to the King of Spain to show how his rule dominated local people.

The paintings and graphics depict the variety of interracial mixing resulting from widespread marriage between Spanish settlers, enslaved and indigenous populations. As demonstrated in the chart below:

**Family Portraits**

*Casta paintings are portraits of inter-racial couples and their children in domestic scenes. All paintings include written descriptions of each individual's genetic background. Descriptions that are less than flattering, sometimes using animal terms.*

*These paintings guide to a way of life that the Spanish wanted to portray about their subjects within the colonies.*

*But what messages were they trying to communicate?*

*Look deeply into these paintings to see the hidden messages within them.*

- Who has the light within the paintings?*
- Whose faces are clearer within the paintings?*
- Where are the people placed?*
- What are they doing in the paintings?*

*Who seems to be wealthy and who doesn't?*

**SPANIARDS**  
White individuals born in Spain

**CRIOLLOS**  
Offspring of the Spaniards born in the Americas

**MESTIZOS**  
People of mixed European & Indigenous ancestries

**MULATOS**  
People of mixed European & African ancestries

**ZAMBOS**  
People of mixed Indigenous & African ancestries

**AFRICANS**  
People of African descent

**INDIGENOUS**  
Indigenous Indians who would not convert

**Social Structure in Mexico in the 18th Century**

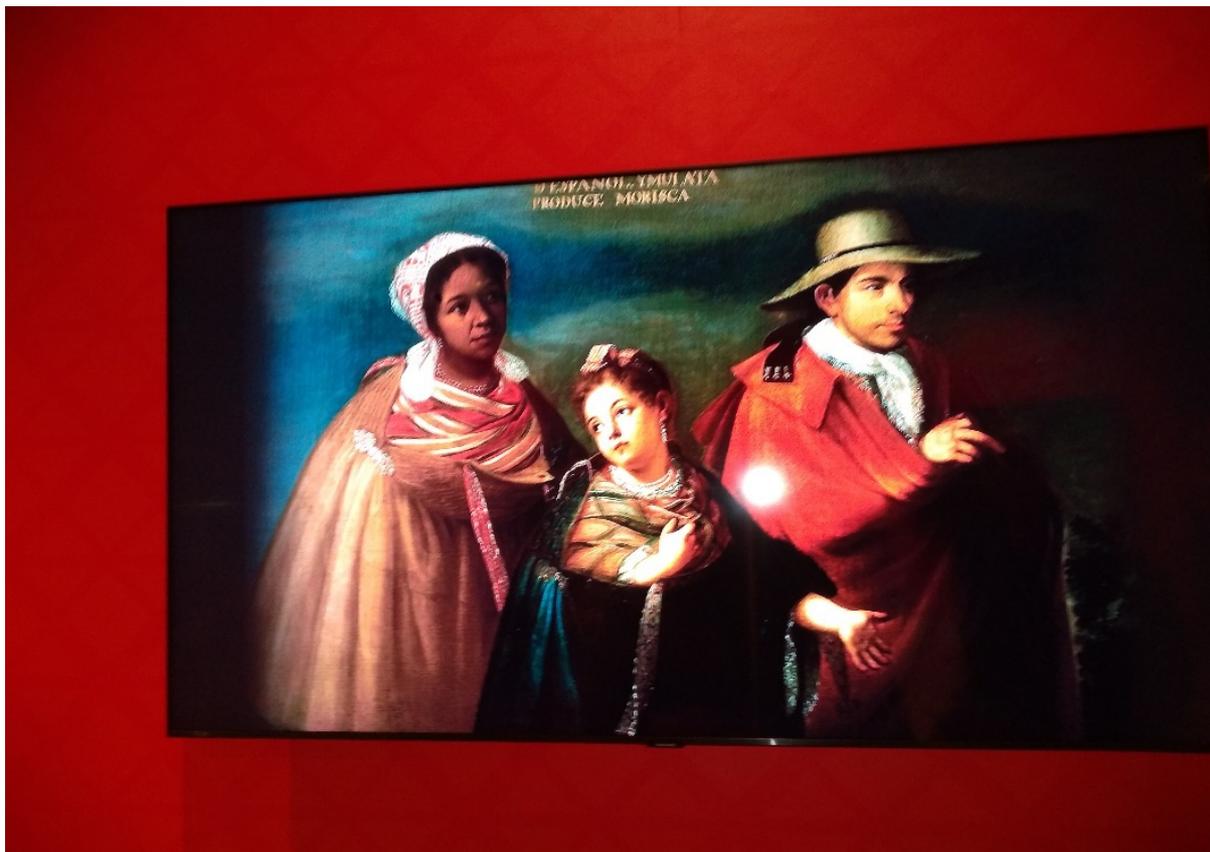
The exhibition looks at the theory of race, how it fits in a modern world and the power required to give meaning.

Tara Munroe the Creative Director at Opal 22 Arts and Edutainment, who curated the exhibition, emphasised “the casta paintings transcend mere visual appeal. They serve as poignant reminders of racial hierarchies during the colonial era in Latin America, perpetuating the dominance of European powers and relegating indigenous and African communities to lower social status.

This exhibition challenges visitors to confront the complex intersections of art, science, and oppression, fostering introspection about personal biases and the uncomfortable legacy of colonialism and racism.

This exhibition serves as a testament to the power of art to stimulate discourse and evoke emotion, prompting critical examination of the historical underpinning of racial categorisation and its persistent implications.”

‘A painting says a thousand words, but who controls the narrative?’



## Gentle Bike Ride November 2023

A bike ride was planned for 8th November starting from Morton's in Gilmorton. Unfortunately the weather was forecast as wet so it was postponed until 15th November instead.

15th November was bright sunshine so four of us set off as planned. Our journey went from Gilmorton along the Ullesthorpe Road, turning left onto Bonehams lane. When we met the Leicester Road we joined the cycle path along Bill Crane way and into Bitteswell. We then turned right towards Ullesthorpe and into Ashby Parva. At Ashby Parva we stopped to make sure everyone was ok, then turned left into Dunton Lane and down the hill into Dunton Bassett. We rode through Dunton Bassett crossing the main Leicester road at the traffic lights and into Ashby Magna, then back to Gilmorton.

We made this 10-11 mile journey in record time and had a good chat along the way.

Sue is back from her travels next month and has planned a ride on 6th December starting from Ullesthorpe Garden Centre at 10am. Details will be forwarded.

Paula.

[Return to Contents](#)

## ESTG November Event

This month the ESTG had a brief talk by **Michael Bates** in which Michael showed a video of how **Radio Telescope photographs** are made into a **colour images** in which they not only look fantastic but each colour represents a **sector of the frequency spectrums**, this also finishes off an incomplete section of Michael previous talk to the group in Sept.

Our main talk was by **David Hanger**, no stranger to giving presentations to our group, this time it was on **20 yrs of UK High Speed Rail** and plotted the complicated history of how we finally linked up with Europe's Rail system, **only to end up cancelling our own HS2 links in the UK. !!!!!**

### 20 years of UK High Speed Rail

Question –“when did the UK first have a High Speed Rail system ?”

It came as a surprise to the audience when David gave us the answer

Answer – in **1830** Rainhill trials for the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. (LMR)

Average speed at that time was **15mph max**, however when conveying William Huskisson to hospital for a medical emergency following an accident – (first ever victim of a railway accident!) the Rocket style engine reached **40 mph** and so became **UK first High Speed journey .... Some 193 yrs ago**

Most of the UK's High Speed Rail System (HSRS) has centred on linking the UK with the continent who had early on realised the importance of travelling large distances within a reasonably short time frame and who had embraced HSRSs as the future of rail travel, so it was **important to be able to link up to continental tracks.**

This requirement gave the designers a set of difficult parameters to work to that being, running on existing track, points and curves and gradients, to tight budgets, changes in UK/Europe's political Governments and expanding time frames, however first they had **to get access to Europe** as there was a **major obstacle in the way – The English Channel.....**

Below is a time line showing the treacle like process it took to finally get a tunnel joining the UK to Europe, showing Proposal, agreements, sites chosen, Tunnel designed, checked and passed, Earthworks started and finally linked up...

### **Joining to Europe by Crossing the Channel**

1802 First proposed but problems with funding and politics

1810 disagreement with Napoleon

1834 First tunnel proposed by Joseph Aime de Garrard

1868 Anglo French Tunnel Committee set up

1875 Concession granted

1880 First UK shaft sunk at Abbots Cliff

1882 Political and Military Uncertainty

1956 Channel Tunnel Study Group

1964 Ernest Marples and the French discuss undersea connection

1971 UK Joined EEC

1972 agreement signed

1973 work restarted at Shakespeare Cliff and Sangatte AFTER 90 YRS !

1975 work abandoned by Harold Wilson's Government

1980 Private sector and More alternatives explored but Tunnel still best

1984 Channel Tunnel Group (CTG) formed

1986 Mrs Thatcher and President Mitterand sign Concession Agrmt

1987 Treaty signed

**1990 at 7.30pm 30th October UK ceased to be an island – (albeit by a 2 inch Probe !) Physical Breakthrough by Graham Fagg and Philippe Cozette 1st Dec 1990**

1991 Tunnelling was completed 28 May - ahead of schedule

1993 Works completed in April 1993. 1993

1993 Hand Over 10th Dec

**1994** Officially opened by Queen/President Mitterand 6th May.

1994 1st June- first international freight train

1994 25th July Eurotunnel lorry shuttle 14th Nov Start Commercial Eurostar services

**1994** 22 Dec start Eurotunnel car shuttle

### **The Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) Phase 1**

Now that we had access through the tunnels, the UK had to have rolling stock and higher speed connections to the tunnels to be able to take advantage of the lines to main parts of Europe.

On 29 **Sept 1988** John Prescott announced “if you want to meet the environmental needs of the South and ensure the benefits of the Tunnel reaching the North, there has to be public money”.

The original proposal – was to tunnel between Swanley and Kings Cross. However, Arup consulting engineers came up with the final routing vis East London. London & Continental Railway were announced as winners of a design competition, receiving a 999 year lease and land Gifted at St Pancras and Kings Cross and on to Stratford in London.

Estimated cost of this project **was £3.4bn in 1998**, in Oct that year John Prescott inaugurated the project beside the River Medway and resulted in the **First Public Eurostar on Sunday 28 September 2003.**

### **CTRL Phase 2**

Routed through the Thames Gateway at a budget **£1.9bn plus £1.4bn** for other developments, it would have one intermediate station at Stratford, and **starting in 2001 it was biggest civil engineering project in UK (possibly Europe)**

Last train out of St Pancras ran on 9 April 2004 and Eurostar installed 14th November 2007 (SE Local services started December 2009)

## **HS2**

HS2 is an economic project first considered at the turn of the century following a huge growth in passengers as a result of privatisation with concerns that lines would reach over capacity by 2025.....

**The Government formed HS2 Ltd in 2009 Phase 1** being 140 miles between London and W Midlands with works started in 2019

**Phase 2A** to Crewe and Manchester Received Royal Assent Feb 2021  
Target Date 2029-2033

**Phase 2B** to East Midlands/ Leeds  
Awaiting Approval Target date 2040-45 - now abandoned

**4 October 2023 Govt announced HS2 would be abandoned north of Birmingham due to an extrapolated Project cost approaching £114 Billion !**

There are 4 main reasons which resulted in the cancellation of the project;

1. Cost – £24.8b to date, original costings based on flawed 2019 predictions exacerbated by Global inflation/political unrest.
2. Political decisions.....
3. Poor Project Management resulting a projected massive over spend due to extended time line and gold plated overdesign
4. Lack of Strategic thinking and long-term planning of UK's overall transport networks including both rail and road infrastructures requirements.

### **! One Final Thought**

**So far HS2 has taken 14 Years, 5 of which has been on Construction and is currently Circa 40% complete at an ESTIMATED FINAL SPEND of £33 billion !**

## **Completion of Phase 2 cancelled**

My thanks go to David for taking time putting this highly informative and enjoyable talk together for the group and for the information he has supplied in order for me to complete this report.

Chris Ridley / David Hanger

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Future events**

### **ESTG December event**

***Our joint Christmas Party with the Photographic group on the 21st Dec at Ullesthorpe Village Hall at 10.15 am - 12.30pm and will feature;***

Welcome Drinks on arrival

Brief look at the both groups 2023 highlights

Hot and Cold buffet

Live entertainment,

Slot Car Challenge (where the current champion will be defending his crown ! ) ,

One of George Robinson famous Quizzes

Both Groups will be covering most the cost of the event, but to help cover the extended hire of the hall, heating and the externally provided buffet, we are asking for a contribution of **£5.00 per member, this contribution *includes for Members Partner.***

***Member couples (both in the groups ) will just be £5.00 per couple....***

**As we have a capacity limit, extra guests (at £5.00) will be welcome but subject to the number of our members planning to attend**

Please see my email sent previously for further details

Chris Ridley.

---

## Poetry Group

The topic for November was "Places" - a very easy subject which gave us several funny poems by Roger McGough and several less funny (but brilliant) poems by Philip Larkin, among others. War poems also emerged as a theme -a war cemetery- a bombed house - a Christmas truce on the battlefield, and Rupert Brooke's poem of yearning for Grantchester, including the immortal lines

*"Stands the church clock at ten to three ?  
And is there honey still for tea ?"*

The next meeting will be in January, the topic "Politics in Poetry"

## 4th Wednesday Walking Group – November 2023 Walk Report

A combination of factors resulted in the choice for this month's walk. It was November, so try to find a walk avoiding too much mud. Find a pub that serves food on a Wednesday lunchtime and is not too expensive. Stay fairly close to home for the start. A bonus would be a coffee stop point with some seating.

Setting off from The Elms in Lutterworth ticked a couple of boxes and the walk itself was fairly good under foot for the most part. We set off in grey but dry weather and it remained fine for the entire walk. 16 of us plus dog headed for Walcote via Misterton Church and had a break in the playground at Walcote where we all found somewhere to sit, another box ticked. We had a bit of retracing our steps on the second leg of the walk but no one seemed to mind and the views can look quite different when facing the other way.

12 of us went into The Elms for lunch where a long table had been reserved for us. Several of us had received money off vouchers in the post for meals at The Elms so they were put to good use. The carvery proved a popular choice.

Not done much group walking for a while or maybe not at all? Come along and give it a try it's a very sociable uplifting pursuit.

George Robertson.

[Return to Contents](#)

## History Group report - November 2023

### BLACK HISTORY

This month's topic was presented by one of our members, Sheila Eggleton. It's a wide and complex subject so Sheila concentrated on one particular group in Britain: people of African or Caribbean descent. Sheila gave us a lively and thought-provoking afternoon and the theme generated a lot of discussion in the group. Initially we were asked to consider our own identity. When filling an official form, how would we describe ourselves for the ethnicity question? Our answers were quite varied. Some of us were firmly 'British', others broke it down more and felt they were English, Welsh, or Scottish. There was some debate about regional affinities, such as Yorkshire or Midlands.

Sheila then progressed to considering some aspects of the experiences of Black people across the centuries. There have been black residents in Britain for centuries and, although perhaps their presence was notable as the numbers were low until the later 20thC, there has been a continuous presence. For example, we know there were black soldiers in the Roman occupying army 2000 years ago and certainly black businessmen and merchants lived in London across the centuries. There was at least one black sailor on the Mary Rose and there are many stories of soldiers in the armies of Europe throughout the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. These were independent and often educated people but sadly, from the late 16<sup>th</sup>C and right on to the late 18<sup>th</sup>C, Black people became inevitably linked to the Slave Trade.

Slavery is a major aspect of British History and it was a lucrative business from the late 16<sup>th</sup>C. For many years, the wealth of our country depended on it and the families that invested in it made fortunes. The so called 'Triangle of Trade', which eventually emerged, saw ships from England carrying cargoes of manufactured goods to West Africa, then collecting a 'cargo' of African captives and transporting them to the Caribbean and Southern states of America. The same ships then filled their holds with sugar and tobacco and brought it back to Britain. The Black Africans were sold as 'commodities' to service the plantations and were not regarded as human beings so were treated with appalling inhumanity. Life expectancy for the slaves was shockingly low so the demand for importing new slaves to the colonies remained high. Although many other countries, such as Portugal, the Netherlands and Denmark. were involved in the Slave Trade, Britain was a leading player. However, some Africans also colluded with the trade and many of those transported were prisoners captured in the frequent inter-tribal wars and then sold on to the Europeans.

By the mid 18<sup>th</sup>C opinion was shifting and some people in the USA and Britain were beginning to criticise the slave trade. A campaign to abolish Slavery and end the Slave Trade began, opposed by an equally powerful economic lobby to keep it.



*Josiah Wedgwood's Anti Slavery medallion. 1787*

The Abolitionist campaign was spearheaded by William Wilberforce and supported by influential men like Josiah Wedgwood who produced a medallion with the famous slogan, 'Am I not a Man and a Brother?' The Quakers were also involved. It was a long campaign. The British Slave Trade was abolished in 1807 but slavery itself continued in the colonies and it was not until 1833 that Parliament abolished Slavery.

The main part of Sheila's talk focused on recent history in Britain, particularly the experiences Black immigrants faced on arrival and especially how they were received. More immigrants came from the 1950s onwards, as was their right as citizens in the British Empire. It meant that these people held British passports and regarded Britain as the mother country. However, as we have seen from TV and films recently, the 'Windrush' generation who were invited to come here met with prejudice and hostility and they were faced with racism on all levels. Sadly, prejudice continued even against those of the second and third generations who were born here. It's not a comfortable subject but we all know this continues in some ways today. This led to quite a lot of discussion and anecdotes in the group.

To finish her presentation, Sheila talked about the 'invisibility' of black people in History, even though they were there and how this problem persists into modern times. We were set a task to identify a few famous black people, such as Diane Abbot. We knew some but not all.

As Sheila pointed out, many people in Britain know the story of Florence Nightingale, the 'Lady of the Lamp' but fewer people would recognise Mary Seacole who was an equally brilliant pioneer in nursing and later, a successful businesswoman. We have all heard of Charles Darwin but not his black tutor at Edinburgh University, John Edmondstone. Later, in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, writers like the award-winning Andrea Levy, found it hard to get published as it was felt there was a limited audience for books by a black woman.

Even today, the much-admired composer, Daniel Kildane has said how hard it was break into his field. The latent prejudice, which may well be unconscious for many people, haunts our society even today.

I know that everyone present enjoyed Sheila's excellent talk and we had some lively debate. It was certainly an interesting and thought-provoking meeting.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday December 5<sup>th</sup> at Ashby Parva Village Hall from 2 'til 4.

This will include a look back with Mike Bates at some of the various outings we've enjoyed.

Please note there is NO MEETING in January.

The first meeting in 2024 is on February 6<sup>th</sup>.

Viv.

[Return to Contents](#)

## Photography Group - November 2023 report

If you read these reports, you will often note that I am upbeat about our meetings, and I think our members generally enjoy their monthly Friday meetings. If they don't, they still keep coming back each month. However, our November meeting was a really memorable meeting for the great atmosphere participation and friendly banter our monthly topic "Before and after" created. It was an unlikely subject, photographing an object or scene that changed over a period of time. The point of the topic was to see how members would interpret the description and we had some really inventive ideas.

It is difficult to interpret, in words, what we were presented with, and I urge you to look on our u3a picture gallery next month. I hope you find the pictures of interest and that they may bring a smile to your face.

Our featured photographer this month was Vivian Maier. She was an American "street photographer" who was completely unknown publicly during her life. Vivian Maier died in poverty in 2009 and prior to her death all her belongings were in a self-storage facility. To pay the outstanding storage charge her personal possessions were sold at a public auction. There were many boxes of photographic images which were bought by different people. Later in 2009 some of her images were posted on the internet and interest in them went viral. The boxes contained photographic prints, un-processed roll film, 35 mm colour transparencies and some Kodak Super 8 movie film. Eventually her pictures were acquired by a single person, and it is estimated that there are over 150,000 images, many as yet unprocessed.

Vivian Maier worked for most of her life as a children's nanny, but she was probably what we called a little eccentric and driven by her obsession, photography. Her work was mainly in Chicago and New York where she was quite fearless about recording all parts of society many in very close contact. In the 1950's cameras were not as compact as they are today, and it was very obvious that the subject knew she was there. As part of her duties, she would take the children in her care, all from rich families, on outings to all areas of the city exposing the children to life as it is, even to a stockyard to watch animals being slaughtered. However, in later life one of the girls she looked after described her as a Mary Poppins type character, but from herself portraits, nothing like Julie Andrews.

There have been two or three documentary films on her life, one being produced by the BBC in 2015, and many exhibitions touring the world. In September last year one exhibition came to a gallery in Milton Keynes. So, Vivian Maier, a brilliant, fearless photographer with a story that is almost as interesting as the pictures she took. If you "Google" her name, you will see some impressive photography which is also a priceless historical story of life in 1950's American cities.

Stephen Carter gave us a quick insight into a current exhibition of Black and White photography currently exhibited in the Harborough Museum which is in the council's

Symington Building in Market Harborough. The exhibition is called “Getting into the Zone – Magnificent Monochrome” and it displays work by the East Midlands Monochrome Group. If you are in Market Harborough it is well worth a visit The exhibition is on until the 6<sup>th</sup> January and open on Tuesday to Friday, 10.00am to 6.00pm and 10am to 4.00pm on Saturdays.

There is no photography group meeting in December as we will be sharing a social morning with the Engineering, Science and Technology group on the 21<sup>st</sup> December in the Ullesthorpe Village Hall.

**Our next photography group meeting will be on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2024, 10.00 am, in the Ullesthorpe Village Hall.**

As usual, our photography group meetings are open to all Wycliffe Lutterworth U3A members and other U3A members as guests. If you would like more information, e-mail us at the address below.

[wlu3acamera@outlook.com](mailto:wlu3acamera@outlook.com).

As this is our last report for 2023 our group members would like to wish everyone, a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year. - Michael Bates

Before



Lesley Chapman

After



Before



After



Stephen Carter

Before



After



Sue Sloman

## U3A Snail's Walking Group

### November 2023 Walk



We welcomed new member, Josie, to our group and nine of us enjoyed the walk on a beautiful, sunny autumnal day. We walked along paths through Broughton Astley to Sutton in the Elms and then passed the Sutton Auction House, returning through fields and the village to the White Horse.

Sheila Eggleton joined us at the White Horse for lunch - and we had much laughter! What a way to end our walking season for 2023! Thanks to Valerie and Jen for organizing this time.

We don't usually walk in December, so I will include the details of the [Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January walk](#) in the January bulletin and email them out to you. Best wishes, Mandy.

### Snail's Pace Walking Group - New Walkers Welcome

We are a very friendly group of people who enjoy a bit of exercise, the opportunity to socialise and a pub lunch afterwards - optional, of course!

**Our walks take place on the third Friday of the month, starting at 11.00am.** The walks are 3 miles or under, as a guide, and we try to avoid stiles that require a climb!

If you want to come along, you will be most welcome. Just get in touch with me on 07724 124094.

Best wishes, Mandy Cutler.

## Give it a Go Group - Monthly Report

We had 2 activities this month African Drumming and Making Traditional Chinese Dumplings

### African Drumming:

Six of us tried our **hands** at African Drumming. It was great fun and after a while we sounded reasonably rhythmic!

As you can see from the photo some of us had to concentrate on the rhythm and hand co-ordination!

Their group leader was very encouraging and shows us some rudimentary sequences.

If anyone is interested in having a go then the African Drumming meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 7pm in Bitteswell Village Hall.

They are not a u3a group and are keen to attract new members.



### **Chinese Dumplings:**

A week later 4 people had a go at making Chinese Dumplings.

It can be a bit messy but everyone was instructed to wear an apron!

At the end of the session people got to taste their efforts. Everyone took home some samples for their family.

We are holding another session after the New Year on the 20th January. If anyone wants to have a go then please contact Hamish on the email below.

Contact: [wlu3asecretary@gmail.com](mailto:wlu3asecretary@gmail.com)



## Committee Members

<u>Office</u>	<u>Name</u>
Chairperson .....	Colin Beadle
Membership Secretary.....	Andy Hetherington
Secretary .....	Hamish Paterson
Treasurer.....	Nigel Bones
Groups Co-ordinator.....	Colin Beadle
Speaker Finder.....	Andrea Nichol
Minutes Secretary.....	Anne Dean
Beacon Administrator.....	Andy Hetherington
Committee Member.....	Ruth Bones
Committee Member.....	Sue Poulter
Committee Member.....	Michael Bates
Committee Member .....	Sally Wood

Note: Any committee member can be contacted via our email address:  
thewycliffelutterworthu3a@gmail.com

[Return to Contents](#)