

Monthly Meetings

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.

Our April Speaker is **Roxanne Dinsdale**

The myths of Middle Eastern dance.

'For this , I unveil the truth behind the myths associated with Belly Dancing and discuss where the myths originated. This talk includes a demonstration of Middle Eastern dance plus a rummage through costumes throughout the ages and how they have developed and what styles they are used for.

A look at different props used during folkloric dances and lots of interesting information about both the origins and future of belly dance.

There is no audience dance participation during this talk.'

"Committee and Contacts"

Greetings to All.

An update following our **Annual General Meeting** last month.

Our Annual General Meeting was well attended with over 70 members present and apologies received from a further six.

We had two members of our former committee not seeking re-election at the AGM - Hamish as Secretary and Andy as the Membership Secretary. Their contributions to our u3a during their periods of office have been very much appreciated by all and thanks are extended to both.

I am delighted to say we have three new members to welcome to our committee - Denise, Linda and Richard. Denise has taken over the role of Secretary, Linda that of Membership Secretary and Richard has joined us as a committee member.

Also we are pleased to welcome Sally and Dave - the new faces at the sign in desk for our monthly meetings.

On behalf of us all - Thank You and welcome.

A full list of committee members and respective positions / roles can be found at the end of this bulletin.

Email Contacts

Our Wycliffe Lutterworth u3a "general contact" email address remains unaltered:-

thewycliffelutterworthu3a@gmail.com

Any mail sent to this mailbox is at present arriving with me.

We do have a new "Secretary" email address should you need to make contact with Denise: wlu3asecretary2024@outlook.com

And don't forget details regarding future events and much more is available on our website: <https://www.wycliffelutterworthu3a.org/>

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Colin Beadle (Chairperson)

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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

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Lively Discussion 11th March 2024

What is the Point of Formal Education?

NELSON MANDELA:

'There can be no contentment for any of us when there are children, millions of children, who do not receive an education that provides them with dignity and honour and allows them to live their lives to the full.'

The group which included several ex-teachers made the following points:

1. Education should prepare people for adulthood not just jobs
2. Education should be free to all
3. Successive Education Ministers should make use of education specialists and respect the professionals in the education system, as well as stop making constant changes for political reasons
4. When capable, parents should choose how their children are educated, which may not be by the formal education system
5. Life skills such as finance and misinformation should be included
6. Our limited experience of home schooling indicated that some children miss out on socialisation
7. Lock down has improved parental home schooling skills, together with parents' respect for teachers' skills
8. Exams don't work, continuous assessment is better. Teaching is usually successful but pupils failing exams because of fear or anxiety means a loss to the country and themselves
9. Apprenticeships and other forms of training are as important as university education
10. Public/private schools succeed for many reasons, perhaps the most important is small class sizes, followed by sports, music facilities etc. which means that the resources are for the few. If they were for everyone the success of the nation is unimaginable!
11. Even those at private/public schools sometimes find the formal system difficult

12. Regulation needs more flexibility for children, parents and teachers. This was sadly demonstrated by the suicide of the head teacher in Reading.
13. Failing our children at school is extremely expensive for society – health care, justice system, unfilled jobs, prosperity
14. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) and for-profit schools are a dangerous diversion from what is needed to deliver education for all.

'If you can read this...thank a teacher. '

Is a quote from Harry S. Truman and was used as a slogan during teacher industrial action in the 1980s.

One member would also add to this, ***'If you can do this... thank a teacher'***.

Below is information on both formal and informal education.

Formal Education is a social institution through which a society's children are taught basic academic knowledge, learning skills, and cultural norms. Every nation in the world is equipped with some form of education system, though those systems vary greatly. The major factors that affect education systems are the resources and money that are used to support them. Sadly, there are some countries, such as Afghanistan, where females are not encouraged/allowed to take part in education. A country's wealth affects the amount of money spent on education; meaning that those who do not have basic amenities, such as running water, are unable to support robust education systems or, in many cases, any formal schooling at all.

The group agreed that we all have a responsibility to educate the next generation of informed citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said, and instilling in them a love of knowledge and culture for their own sake. Education is also about the practical business of ensuring that young people receive the preparation they need to secure a positive future, with the moral character to overcome challenges.

Formal education in England begins at 4/5 depending on when your birthday falls, and ends at 18. From the age of 16 there are options other than school, such as training/apprenticeships.

Benefits of formality in education

Formal learning can be used, regionally and nationally to standardise learning. This means that it can help to refine, regulate, and control education in the interests of efficiency of resources and measurement of what is classed as educational success. Formal curricula can be used to raise the status of certain skills and knowledge that are considered to be important to society.

For example, the curriculum can ensure that certain things are taught in schools, such as social and personal values, in addition to the usual subjects. The specified nature of formal learning also supports the accumulation of shared knowledge, which can enhance social mobility. A formal curriculum, when mandated at a national level, has the opportunity to expose most learners to common ideas and knowledge thereby undermining any inequality of access between different groups in the national population.

Each generation is likely to know more than their predecessors. Access through formal education to this wealth of knowledge, which is based on ability rather than social contacts or status, has the potential to empower learners from disadvantaged or marginal groups.

Also, when compared with other types of learning, formal learning has well established evaluation and assessment methods. These are used to establish future opportunities within both formal and informal settings for the individual and can have a lasting impact on that person's future.

Formal education goes beyond acquiring knowledge or training students to be academically sound, from preschool to university the formal environment is seen as preparing students to thrive in society. It also helps in the building of social skills and confidence. Frequent interaction with fellow pupils from varieties of socio-economic backgrounds exposes students to alternative points of view, which can develop empathy and ability to relate to people in the future, who have different perspectives.

Formal education employs professionally trained and (hopefully) supported teachers, helping to increase a student's confidence in their learning. It also encourages working in collaboration, an immensely useful skill in later life.

Disadvantages of the formality in an education system

Formal education is not the panacea for gathering knowledge, gaining skills and confidence because the formal curriculum does not show everything that teachers do, teach, or create in classrooms; nor does it show the experiences of learners, and how some may not find formal education the most effective way of learning.

There are significant drop out rates in both national and international formal teaching programmes, with formal curricula being sometimes seen as one-way and rigid. There is also research to support formal curricula not having the same outcomes for indigenous and non-indigenous learners. If a curriculum is written in a way that represents one group more than others, it may contain biases towards that group, which in turn could disadvantage or disengage other groups.

After school activities, are often unaffordable.

In addition we need to be aware that education in some countries and cultures, including our own, could be used/seen to be used as ways of controlling societal behaviour.

With this in mind; how can formal education benefit the individual, society as a whole; narrow the gender-gap and embrace equality? And in doing so become very much the point!

UNICEF Report 2019: The Power of Education to Fight Inequality states:

‘Good-quality public education is liberating for individuals. It can also be an equalizer within society. This report shows the unparalleled power of public education to tackle growing inequality and bring us closer together. To achieve this, education must be both of good quality and equitable; it should be free, universal, adequately funded, with well-supported teachers, and accountable to public oversight. Fairer taxation of the wealthiest can help pay for it’.

‘Significant increases in inequality of both income and wealth are leading to larger gaps between rich and poor, men and women, creating serious obstacles to overcoming poverty and exclusion. With women substantially over-represented in the ranks of the poorest, gender inequality is reinforced and blocks progress on women’s rights. But inequality is not inevitable. It is a political choice.’

A child from a poor country is seven times less likely to complete secondary education. Even in rich countries, only 75% of children from the poorest families complete secondary education, compared to 90% of children from the richest families. Inequalities of income are compounded with other inequalities of gender, ethnicity, disability and geography resulting in exclusion.

Educational inequalities are also driven by policies that encourage commercialisation of education and expand private provision of schooling through public-private partnerships, which can deepen segregation in education systems. When good education can only be accessed by families with money, it undermines social mobility; it ensures that if you are born poor, you and your children will die poor, no matter how hard you work. It also undermines our societies, as the children of the wealthy are segregated from the children of ordinary families from an early age.

Education needs to be:

1. **Free.** Government investment in free education is crucial for building equality because it gives every child a fair chance, not just those who can afford to pay. Fees of any kind at pre-primary, primary and secondary level exclude the poorest, and internationally, especially girls.
2. **Public.** When publicly delivered education works, the scale and speed of its impact cannot be matched. Many public education systems face challenges in terms of learning outcomes, but the answer is adequate investment, not turning to the private sector, as donors
3. **Universal.** In recent decades, there has been huge progress. World-wide Primary school enrolment is now almost universal, with nearly as many girls enrolling as boys – a huge challenge only a generation or so ago. Nevertheless, at current rates, it could be another 100 years before all girls in

sub-Saharan Africa have the opportunity to complete a full 12 years of education.

Informal education - Not all students engage with and learn effectively in a formal education setting. Formal education settings often do not relate to learners' everyday experiences, which encourages de-motivation and disengagement.

Informal education is education that takes place outside the formal setting, whereby learners (often subconsciously) learn by observing and mimicking, through daily experiences and through interactions with others.

Non-formal learning typically takes place in community settings such as swimming classes for small children, sports clubs of various kinds for all ages, reading groups, debating societies, amateur choirs and orchestras, and so on.

The alternatives to formal education include 'De-schooling' where children are taught outside traditional formal education settings and often have the freedom to choose what they want to learn and how. This is often a term associated with home schoolers, where parents teach their children at home, and following no formal curriculum.

Montessori Schools and Rudolph Steiner Schools also offer alternative settings, curriculum and approaches to formal education.

There is a wide range of education settings, formal, informal, de-schooling, referral units which vary at different life stages. They all have their place. They all have their successes and failures, which can evolve over time. For example, a child succeeding in a formal school setting initially, may well not do so well later for a whole variety of reasons, both educational and personal. So it is apparent that a mixture of education styles is needed to give everyone and society the best chance of a good life.

Visitors welcome, please contact Dot Barnard dot.barnard@uwclub.net

01455 208190. We meet on the second Monday morning of each month at 10.30am.

2023 TOPICS

- 1) February – Aggression and assertion are often confused.
- 2) March – What is the point of formal education?
- 3) April – Danny Kruger, a leading back bencher and founder of the increasingly influential New Conservatives Group, said that the Conservatives risked being ejected from power this year having left the country 'sadder, less united and less conservative' than they found it. Is this true?

Art Appreciation

On Friday, 8th of March our group visited Rugby Museum to see the touring "Quentin Blake" Exhibition, featuring 60 of his book covers. Dawn Clarke from the Museum's Exhibition Team gave us a short, very enjoyable and informative introduction, that made us really curious.

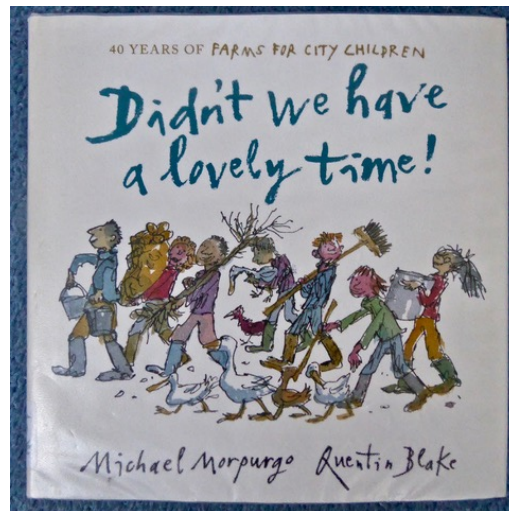


We admired Blake's mid-century, classic Penguin paperbacks, first and special editions, the amazing cover design of his own book "The Green Ship" and reproductions of originals from Blake's archive.



His career, illustrating books began over 60 years ago, and he is still working and designing every day. He describes "drawing book covers is one of the most difficult things", each task presenting a totally new challenge. It is important to him to capture the essence of the story without giving too much away, but inspiring the imagination of the readers. He was the first ever Children's Laureate, promoting children's literature.

We all thoroughly enjoyed this exhibition and discussed our impressions over a light lunch at Bacco's.



April meeting: t.b.a.

May meeting: 10.5. "Graffiti" - Exhibition at New Walk Museum, Leicester and

End of May: "Graffiti - Trail", Leicester

Ursula.

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Gentle Cycling Group

Co-ordinator: Sue Creeden
01455 557888

It was a case of third time lucky when seven members gathered at Moretons in Gilmorton to cycle the route originally planned for early in March. It was rather chilly but thankfully little wind and no rain. We set off through the village and down towards Kimcote – well six of us did, one member took a wrong turn and was heading for Peatling Parva! She soon realised her error and caught up with us again before reaching Kimcote. Cycling through the village we appreciated the smooth new road surface that had prevented us from cycling that way previously. We took the long way round to Walton via Gurney Lane and then crossed over and headed to Upper Bruntingthorpe. The next village was Bruntingthorpe and then we pedalled up towards Arnesby. At the top of the hill, we turned into the gated road and enjoyed a traffic-free ride up and down the hills to Peatling Magna. From here it was uphill more or less all the way through Peatling Parva and back to Gilmorton.

We tried to get another ride in on the following two Wednesdays but unfortunately it was not to be. The first attempt was thwarted by the threat of strong winds (which actually turned out to be not as bad) and on the second Wednesday the forecast was for an 80% chance of rain more or less all day. That didn't happen either. Although there were a few spits and spots of rain when we were due to meet, it soon stopped and was dry the rest of the morning. How can the forecasters get it so wrong!

The next ride will be on Wednesday 3rd April

Why not come and join our friendly group? As our name suggests, the rides – of between 10 and 12 miles - are leisurely. The aim is to get some fresh air and a bit of gentle exercise followed by a coffee and a convivial chat afterwards. All you need is a roadworthy bike and a helmet.

Electric bikes welcome.

Just email me: sueandpeter.creeden@talktalk.net

Sue

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Fourth Wednesday Walking Group – March Report

March 2024 Walk Report

In sunny cool weather of 7C, 14 walkers met at the Bell Inn Gumley for a planned 4.75 mile figure of 8 return route to Laughton (last walked in October 2019). However due to recent rainfall it was suggested at the last minute to halve the field walking distance to 1.6 miles and replace it with quiet roads. Since this also eliminated 4 of the 5 stiles it was strangely accepted.

Our walk began by turning left off Main Street and descending through bridle gates and horse meadows (at times facing a strong cold wind) to a waterlogged stile at a small brook. Crossing over and swinging right along a squelchy, part flooded bridle way we passed through a watery bridal gate opposite Gumley Lodge and walked along the drive's grassy verge to its internal fence.

Bearing left we then climbed uphill through more puddled bridle gates and squelchy sheep meadows, and skirted a small copse to arrive at the minor road leading to Laughton's eclectic village. I think our parting thoughts on reaching this point were – just how could anyone be walking uphill and still have surface water underfoot?

Taking our (just-above) half-way" break at the 13th century church of St Luke, picture included to keep you all awake, we then departed for Gumley in a small shower along a quiet previously-gated road. Well it was quiet, except for some mad black-clad cyclist who tried to run us over.



Even in the less than ideal conditions the panoramic views proved to be impressive, especially those from the unfenced section of our road; Saddington reservoir being clearly visible a mile away and 165 feet below. A further bonus was that we had retained most of our elevation from Laughton, and thus avoided the killer hill at the end of the original route.

After reaching the cosy, beamed Bell Inn around 12.10pm and avoiding another small shower, at bang on our 12.30pm target the proprietor Michelle and chef Marie made sure that our 10 diners and 2 later arrivals enjoyed some super home-cooked lunches. Crumble wasn't on the menu this time but delicious apple pie was; of course served the proper way with custard in a jug.

Tony Allen and Paul Butler

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Fourth Wednesday Walking Group – April Walk

Co-ordinators:- Sue and Peter Creeden (Please use your U3A website if you need to contact us)

Wednesday 24 April 2024

Walk Organiser:- Nigel Bones

Meeting Point and Time For Lifts:- Lutterworth Recreation Ground car park at **09.20am** to leave at **09.25am**.

Start Point and Time: Bull's Head, Brinklow (9 Coventry Rd, Brinklow, CV23 0NE). Start of walk at 10.00am. There is plenty of parking but please park at the rear of the car park. Toilets will be available before the walk commences.

Directions to start:- Take the Lutterworth by-pass to A5 roundabout at Magna Park then B4027 to Brinklow. Turn right at T junction in Brinklow, The pub is on the right

Route and Distance:- From the pub we will turn left and walk along the Coventry Road. Crossing over the Rugby Road we continue along the B4455 and then turn left into Rugby Road. At its junction with Cathiron Lane, we pick up a footpath to reach Kings Newnham. We then turn left and walk along the road to pick up a footpath that passes Highfields to reach Cathiron Lane. Walking along Cathiron Lane we leave it to reach the Oxford Canal. Turning left and walking along the canal towpath we leave it at to get back onto Cathirons Lane and return along the road to the pub. It is approx. 4.5miles with approx. 6 stiles.

Lunch Arrangements:-

You will not require to pre-order (and the food is excellent value).

French Cafe

28 March 2024

A good discussion, some computer vocabulary and a translation. The next meeting will be on 25 April 2024.

Poetry

The topic for March was simply "Springtime " and on a dark and soggy afternoon we injected some cheer with poems about daffodils, primroses, lambs, hares, yellowhammer, thrushes, blackbirds, skylarks, cuckoos and many other symbols of spring.

Colour was another theme, the watery greens featured in Laurie Lee's "April Rise" and the fiery greens of D H Lawrence's "An Enkindled Spring".

There was also poignancy, especially Clive James' poems written towards the end of his life, and we had Henry Reed's "Naming of Parts" with the sharp almost shocking contrast between the beauty of nature and the hard mechanism of the gun.

April's topic is "England and the English" and the venue is Anne's house.

Sylvie

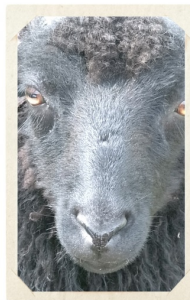
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Snail's Pace April Walk



Nineteen of us completed a circular walk around the conservation area of Monks Kirby on a beautiful spring morning. Viv's route took us to hidden parts of the village and we also learned more about its ancient history.

St Edith's church was founded in the 11th century. There is a nationally famous ring of 8 bells with the oldest bell currently surviving dating from 1390!



Trinity College retains the benefice today and so is still involved in appointing the vicar.

Newnham Paddox, seat of the family of the Earls of Denbigh, since the 15th century, was demolished in 1952 after receiving water damage. The estate can be visited on Daffodil Sunday – 14th April 2024.

The relatively new owners of The Denbigh Arms made us welcome, and we enjoyed a hearty lunch.

Thank you, Viv.

Next Walk: Friday 19th April



Denise has kindly volunteered to organize this walk and has invested much effort – so I hope you will join us. Here are Denise’s details.

A walk at Market Bosworth

The walk on 19th April will be around Market

Bosworth Country Park and Bosworth Hall Gardens. Parking is possible at Ye Olde Red Lion, but there is street parking as well.



Meet at Ye Olde Red Lion, Market Bosworth, at 10.45am for a 11.00am start.

Lunch

Lunch at Ye Olde Red Lion, 1 Park Road, Market Bosworth, Nuneaton, CV13 0LL.

The pub is in the process of changing to a summer menu but has not yet finalised the details! We have been asked to pre-order a few days before.



Please could you let me know if you will be walking and if you will be having lunch?

I will then come back to you with the new menu.

Many thanks and look forward to seeing you, Denise.

Contact

Email: denisetaylor551@gmail.com or text: 07711086927.

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

Report for the History Group - March 2024

Aspects of the Northern Renaissance.

This topic examined how the development of Northern European Art in the Early Modern period shed light on how people's lives were changing between the mid 15th C to the 17th C. In particular, a more secular approach by artists like Pieter Brueghel show us how ordinary people lived and worked for the first time. There was a rising middle class of wealthy merchants which created a host of patrons, eager to invest in Art and have personal portraits. Through these images we can discover so much more about everyday life, from houses, architecture, town centres to fashions and clothing. Attitudes and behaviour and even jokes emerge.

Therefore, in this period, Art becomes a valuable resource for Historians as it departed from its medieval focus as a vehicle to express religious beliefs. Religious art still flourished, of course, but even this can illustrate much more about landscapes and a new emphasis on the humanities as religious figures were depicted more realistically. Viv's presentation offered a glimpse into some of the brilliant artworks from this period from Masters such as Jan Van Eyck, Pieter Breughel the Elder and Albrecht Durer. Durer's versatility embraced all types of artistic media but particularly he became the master of engraving, using the new technology of the printing press which started a revolution in illustrative arts.

Within many of these artworks there are hidden messages and meanings which were a code people at the time could 'read' but we find less easy to access. To illustrate this, we looked at two masterpieces in more detail. Jan Van Eyck's 'Arnolfini Portrait' which records a betrothal, is packed with meaning. Everything from the colours of the couples clothing to a bowl of oranges and the single lighted candle to discarded shoes on the carpet. 'The Ambassadors' by Hans Holbein the Younger (1533) shows us two powerful men surrounded by trappings of their wealth and power telling the viewer how educated and cultured they are but other artefacts, like the lute with a broken string, hinting of the extreme political and religious turmoil of the time. A sober but powerful message of mortality in the

shape of a hidden skull is very direct indeed. The massive shift from the dominant structured religious art of previous centuries to a more secular approach spilled over into a new demand for portraiture. The royal and noble leaders of European society, such as the Emperor Charles V, King Francis I of France and King Henry VIII of England all employed court artists to act, not just as a recorder of the appearance of the monarchs, but as propagandists for their power.

After tea, to complement this presentation and think about items placed in paintings by artists, we had a little quiz identifying defunct everyday artefacts from the 19thC and 20thC to consider how these everyday objects might have a story to tell. If included in a painting. Items included Victorian candle snuffers, Goss china souvenir from the 1920s, a gas mantle, Edwardian hat pins and a 1940s darning mushroom.

FUTURE MEETINGS

There is NO MEETING in April

We have 2 meetings in MAY.

Thursday May 2nd A visit to Stamford followed by a boat trip on Rutland Water.

Tuesday May 7th, Our usual meeting at Ashby VH 2pm. The topic will be *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas More.* We will need to finalise the arrangements for the Guildhall visit at this meeting. Please let me know if you can't attend.

This is the last meeting at Ashby until the Autumn as we have some trips arranged.

Tuesday June 2nd visit to the Guildhall in Leicester.

Thursday July 4th Charterhouse trip

Wednesday July 24th Courteenhall trip

August **NO MEETING**

Thursday Sept 5th Broughton Hall trip

If you have booked on any these trips, please make sure you send your payment in good time. VW

Singing for Fun

Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd April 2024

We held our April session at the Methodist Church with 23 people turning up, including a few newcomers. It lived up to our group's title, it was great fun.

In a relaxed atmosphere we sang a variety of well known songs including:

Oh What a Beautiful Morning
English Country Garden
The Lambeth Walk
Some Enchanted Evening
Alexander's Ragtime Band
I'd Like to teach the World to Sing

And several others!

Our next meeting will be held at 10.00 am on **Tuesday 7th May 2024**.

Newcomers are welcome to join us and, as usual, we are particularly short of men!

Happy Singing to everyone.

Hamish



ESTG March Event - Unusual Aircraft

For our March event we had **3 separate talks by 3 of our members**, each picking an unique and decidedly unusual Aircraft to describe and tell the story behind the idea to our assembled audience.

First Talk was by myself;

The Bristol Brabazon,

(an aircraft I had witnessed flying when I was about 6yrs old in Liverpool. !!!)

Chosen by the government in **1943** to build a **luxury airliner** for the future of Britain's Trans Atlantic air travel, the **Bristol Aircraft Company** set to and **designed a very unusual 8 Radial engined plane which weighed 130 tons, had a wingspan of 230ft (33 ft BIGGER than today Boeing Dreamliner !)**

Although the **1st Prototype 167 finally flew in Sept 1949**, it was already behind the competition with DeHavelland's Comet on the drawing board which used 4 Jet engine and would cruise at twice the speed of that of the Brabazon at 500 mph, the 2nd Brabazon Prototype would now have 4 turbo Jets for power rather than the complex eight engines into 4 Propeller mountings, but was only part completed before project stop.

Having spent nearly £12m by 1951 and plagued with the usual development teething problems like stress cracks in the propeller mounts, the project was **finally cancelled in June 1953** and **sold as scrap for £10,000 (equiv £250k today)** a sad end for what was a **technically advanced aircraft for 1943**, with Hydraulic powered controls, fly by wire electric Engine controls, 2 engines driving two 3 bladed contra rotating propellers on one engine mount etc

The legacy for Bristol Aircraft Company however, was advantageous being left with a gigantic Hanger, 1.75 mile runway and a revamped production areas, all of which went on to help produce Concord and others for BAE Systems current owners.

* I would encourage the reader to look on web site 'Key-Aero' where there are some fantastic photographs of the Brabazon aeroplane in development, key people involved and some of the best flying shot...also a sad picture of it being torn apart and scrapped.

[Bristol Brabazon: Britain's biggest aircraft flopKey Aerohttps://www.key.aero › article › bristol-brabazon-britain...](https://www.key.aero › article › bristol-brabazon-britain...)

Second talk was by Michael Bates

Lun Class Ekranoplan MD160 (A very unusual flying machine)

Project 903

This is not really an aircraft but classified as a Warship as its a combination of part boat, part hovercraft with a bit of Aircraft technology thrown in, Russian made, it is strictly a military machine called **Lun-class ekranoplan Project 903**) and is the only **ground effect vehicle (GEV) to ever be operationally deployed as a warship.**

It was designed by [Rostislav Alexeyev](#) in 1975 and used by the Soviet /Russian Navies from 1987 until sometime in the late 1990s,

Powered by 10 Turbofan Jet engines 8 on top of the **short stubby 'wings'** with 2 on the tail, it rode on a cushion of Air and **once 'up on the cushion' could cruise at 340mph skimming the surface of the sea at a height of just 1.5-3.0 metres (10ft), however it could only operate in dead calm water with no real waves.**

It was armed with missiles which sat in pods on top of the fuselage but its main advantage was that due to the ultra low operating height it could evade all radar and so act in stealth mod ferrying Troops and equipment to shore bases.

Finally Project 903 was killed off after the fall of the Soviet Union and it was being towed to a base at Derbent on the Caspian Sea where it was planned be put on public display in a new mariner complex, when it broke loose and got beached on seashore sand.

stuck on the shore line it created lots of interest with people traipsing to see this 'Monster of a machine 'and hence got the nickname of "Caspian Monster".

As of 2022 it has now been relocated ashore where it will be the main attraction at a new public maritime museum complex.

Convair B36 Peacemaker

The Convair B-36 "Peacemaker" was a strategic bomber that was built by Convair and operated by the United States Air Force from 1948 to 1959.

Main feature apart from the size was the fact it used 6 conventional radial piston engines in a "pusher" – reverse configuration.

From 1949 the radial engine were supplemented by 4 turbo jets - two turbo jets on each wing tip. The turbo jets provided additional take off power plus increased operational speed over target areas. Early production models were retro fitted with the turbo jet engines.

The B36 had a wing span of 70 mtrs and a length of 49 mtrs and could carry a maximum payload of some 85,000 lbs weight (38 tons !).

Original specification issued in April 1941 was for a 450mph top speed, 45,000 ft ceiling (out of range of any anti aircraft guns) and a range of 12,000 miles making it able to reach targets in Europe from the US. Conceived as a aircraft to carry conventional bombs the B36 was capable and did indeed carry the first mass produced Mark17 and Mark 24 hydrogen (atomic) bombs.

First flight was in August 1946. The first variant (B36A) intended for normal operation did not arrive until 1948.

The aircraft was not without teething problems especially engine reliability issues. This included maintenance nightmares such as regular changing the 336 spark plugs in the 6 radial engines. The aircraft often experienced fires in the engines due to restricted cooling airflow through apertures in the leading edge of the wing sections just in front of the radials which led to Pilots often when reporting the engines operating conditions back to base, not always give the expected reply of ;

"Six turning, Four burning" - often it was more like;

" Two turning, Two burning, Two smoking, Two choking — Two unaccounted for

Although 382 aircraft were built, bizarrely two thirds of available flying aircraft of Strategic Air Command were damaged in one day due to a Tornado which ripped

through the base in Arizona 1st Sept 1952. Already tied down as precaution against forecast wind of 60mph the weather equipment recorded 90 mph before being torn away resulting in 77 planes being damaged or destroyed in one go ...

There was a Nuclear powered option explored which used a Mini reactor of 1 Megawatt and meant the crew cabin weighed 11 tons due to Lead shielding. The aircraft completed 47 flights between 1955 and 1957 before the project was abandoned and the aircraft scrapped.

The last flight of a B36 was on the 30th April 1959 when the aircraft shown below (B36J) was flown to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tuscon Arizona to be on permanent display. Pictures taken by Colin when he visited the Airbase while on holiday in the US



Comparisons between the Lancaster and a Convair B36

Avro Lancaster / Convair B36

Avro Lancaster

- Wingspan 31m (102ft).
- Length 21.11m (69ft 4")
- Range 2530 miles.
- Max Speed 282 MPH.

Convair B36

- Wingspan 70m (230ft).
- Length 43.37m (162ft)
- Range 10,000 miles
- Max Speed 435 MPH (230)

Avro Lancaster / Convair B36

Avro Lancaster

- Bombs – 4000 / 22,000 lb.
- Engines – 4 x Rolls Royce Merlin.
- Propellers – 13ft.
- Crew – Typically 7.

Convair B36

- Bombs – 87,200 lb
- Engines - 6 x Pratt and Witney R4360. Plus 4 x GE J47.
- Propellers – 19ft.
- Crew – Typically 15.

Committee Members

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Secretary	Denise Taylor
Treasurer.....	Nigel Bones
Speaker Finder.....	Andrea Nichol
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