

[Monthly Meetings](#)

A reminder of the - **April Monthly Meeting - Thursday 13/04/2023**

We are delighted to welcome back **Julie Kinnear** who will be presenting (narrative and visual) on **The Life of Marilyn Monroe**.

Hopefully you can join us in 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.

[A message from your Wycliffe Lutterworth u3a Committee](#)

Greetings All,

As many of you will be aware our constitution requires Executive Committee members fulfilling both Officer and non-Officer roles to stand down after a prescribed term of office. At the March AGM Christine Brady stood down as Chair and likewise Ruth Bones (Treasurer), Nigel Burt (Secretary), and Ann Hetherington (Membership Secretary). A huge thank you must be extended to all of them for their time and dedication in fulfilling their roles over the past four years. Ruth will continue to serve on the committee.

We warmly welcome Sally Wood and Michael Bates as new committee members.

A full list of committee members can be found at the end of this month's bulletin.

In addition to the Executive Committee there are co-opted members who provide invaluable support - to make things happen. Mike Chapman who deals with technical matters including our website and the audio visual for our monthly meetings. Trudy Haddon the editor of our monthly bulletin. Thanks to both for continuing their respective roles.

All the Group Co-ordinators deserve recognition and they also deserve support from all the membership to ensure groups can continue and thrive. Our u3a has in excess of thirty interest groups and there is no reason why this cannot grow.

To quote from a former Chair -

"The interest groups are the life blood of the u3a."

If you have an interest or hobby that you feel could be developed into an interest group - please do discuss with a committee member.

Thank you

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HOLIDAY 2024

Hello everyone,

I am organising the 2024 HF Holiday bookings for next year. How time flies.

HF Holidays have offered us Newfield Hall in Malham in the South Yorkshire Dales National Park for the 13th- 17th May 2024.

This is much earlier in the year than previous years but it will be Spring in the Yorkshire Dales and the days will be over two hours longer. What's not to like?

Newfield Hall is their flagship hotel which I know some of you have visited previously and recommended.

The link below takes you to their website where you can explore at your leisure. It has a heated indoor pool and a ballroom and looks very impressive and in a glorious setting.

As you may know the surrounding landscape inspired Charles Kingsley's "The Water Babies" and a William Wordsworth sonnet, yes another one!

Nearby are the Yorkshire 3 Peaks for those seeking a new challenge?

The market town of Skipton is 8 miles away and has some interesting history and sits on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal.

So something for everyone to explore according to their own tastes.

<https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/country-houses/locations/malham-yorkshire-dailes>

There are a maximum of 72 places but a minimum of 61 for us to have exclusive occupancy. This is quite a bit larger than previously.

They need our group confirmation by the 9th May 2023 so we only have just under 6 weeks notice I'm afraid.

The cost will be approximately £535 per person assuming we reach the minimum number.

Booking

If you would like to attend can you please let me know within a week. First come first served as usually we have more people wanting to go than spaces available. I will keep a waiting list if the numbers go beyond 61.

Once I have sufficient uptake I will let you know and ask you pay a deposit of £75 per person by the 5th May.

I will send BACS transfer details at that time. Please don't try and send any money until I get back to you.

Introduction

For those of you who are new to our holiday arrangements it's full board including a very large packed lunch which you select yourself from a wide range of options.

Activities

There will be two walks on the Tuesday and Thursday led by myself with added guidance from Mike Chapman and Steven Carter to ensure we don't get lost! Generally these are about 8-9 miles but there will shorter options for those who prefer.

The hotel has a selection of local walks with detailed directions and ordnance survey maps if you'd prefer to do your own thing or don't want to risk my navigating.

Walking is very popular but optional. Some members don't walk at all preferring to visit local attractions and site seeing generally. I believe this often leads to tea and cakes.

Evenings are sociable affairs involving quizzes, music and singing.

We may well have dancing, yoga or tai chi in the setting of the grand ballroom.

The more adventurous could arrange waterpolo?

Travel

The journey to the hotel is not included in the cost. We make our own way by cars. Closer to the date I will coordinate car sharing if people would prefer it. Our small contribution to improving the environment and pleasant company on the journey there and back.

Support

I would appreciate your support and ask that you spread the word to other U3A members, including those in Lutterworth U3A.

The minimum number of 61 is quite a bit higher than previously but it will give us the opportunity to stay in a wonderful hotel. I'm optimistic we can reach it.

Hopefully I will get the 61 needed so we can look forward to another great U3A holiday in a beautiful setting.

If you want to know more then please contact me.

Kind regards

Hamish Paterson

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NOTICES

Bulletin Reports

Articles, reports, news items etc. for inclusion in the next bulletin should be sent to the editor:

trudyhaddon.rylands@gmail.com

Deadline for inclusion in the next bulletin: on the last day of the month.

* * * * *

PLEASE BRING ALONG YOUR USED STAMPS AND OLD TONER CARTRIDGES 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 next monthly meeting. Alternatively, you can pop them through her door – 25 Holly Drive, Lutterworth. Sue will then pass them on to Liz.

Also for the **Medical Detection Dogs Charity**, Mary Oldham has a box to collect used inkjet cartridges (but not laser/toner cartridges). Please save these too and bring them along to the next meeting.

Many thanks.



LIVELY DISCUSSION

Lively Discussion 13th March 2023

Early Years Education – a Luxury or a Sound Investment?

Early Years Education (EYE) seems to have become a hot topic recently.

Early Years child care is fragmented and financed by several sources or as UNICEF puts it: There is no national plan in England for early childhood. However OFSTED has made it a focus of their 5 year strategy and Labour has promised to completely reform child care.

There are state and private nurseries and childminders. All have to be OFSTED registered and follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework. This lays out the standards that school and child care providers must meet for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5.

There are also nannies and full time carers, usually the mother, and informal child care, e.g. grandparents and unregistered childminders and 'nurseries'.

1. Impact on Families.

The joint biggest survey of its kind into the impact child care costs have on families has been conducted by Pregnant Then Screwed and Mumsnet. The survey of 26,962 parents of young children found that 62% say that the cost of childcare is now the same or more than their housing costs. 73% of single parents say the same thing.

So, what help is available? A single site giving all the options doesn't seem to exist, however here are some of the ways help can be accessed, there could well be more:

- 2 year olds from low income families are entitled to 15 weekly hours of free child care.
- 3-4 year olds with 2 working parents, get 30 free hours although recent Sutton Trust research found that 70% of those eligible for the full 30 hours of funded early education are in the top half of earners, while just 20% of eligible families are in the bottom third of the income distribution.
- There is a tax-free child care scheme offering 20% off of child care bills.
- Parents can also access up to £2000 a year per child by paying into an account topped up by the government.

- Working parents on universal credit can get up to 85% of child care costs reimbursed but this is paid in arrears forcing some into a cycle of debt.

The average annual cost of a full-time nursery place for a child under two in Great Britain is now £14,836.

A report by the charity, Coram, says average costs have risen by 5.9% in the past year while the availability of places has dropped.

There are wider repercussions other than merely financial ones for parents. A new UNICEF poll reveals over half of all parents with young children in Britain – over 2 million families – are struggling financially or with their mental health.

2. Educational Attainment

The most comprehensive research by Professor James J. Heckman, an expert in the economics of human development, looked at the effect of high quality Early Years Education on future educational attainment. Heckman oversaw 2 longitudinal studies over 35 years. The programmes analysed the effects of two identical, randomized-controlled preschool experiments conducted in North Carolina in the 1970's. Children were randomly assigned into either the treatment group or the control group that had access to alternatives such as lower quality centre-based care or in-home care. The programmes offered comprehensive developmental resources to disadvantaged African-American children from birth to age five, including nutrition, access to health care and early learning.

Consistent with other research the results varied by gender. However, whilst initially boosting the IQ of all participants, in boys the effect did not last producing no long term educational gain. For females, the programmes had positive effects on high school graduation and years spent in education. These results were noted in similar programmes.

Professor Heckman is a Nobel Prize winner.

3. Health and Societal Benefits

The Institute for Fiscal Studies research, June 2019, reported that Children's centres, which have had their funding cut by two-thirds, significantly reduce the number of hospitalisations among children – especially those in poorer areas. Further research by the IFS suggests opening a children's centre – known as Sure Start – would prevent 5,500 hospital admissions of 11-year-olds each year and were found to halve the gap in hospitalisation rates between the poorest and richest children.

The Heckman research also observed that males on the programme had lower drug use and blood pressure in later life. There were also lasting improvements in character skills by substantially reducing aggressive, antisocial and rule-breaking behaviours, which consequently improved a number of labour market outcomes and health behaviours as well as reduced criminal activity.

Yet in England 1,342 children's centres have closed over the past 10 years and many of those that remain open are now operating part time only.

4. Labour Shortage and Investment

We regularly hear of the need for more people to enter the workforce.

The Centre for Progressive Policy in a new survey of 2000 mothers across the UK, 46% "struggled to find suitable childcare". New analysis estimates that if women had access to adequate childcare services, and were able to work the hours they wanted, they would increase their earnings by between £7.6bn and £10.9bn per annum - generating up to £28.2bn in economic output per annum. This represents only the short-term gains of tackling under-employment.

High quality, affordable childcare is vital social infrastructure. Infrastructure – whether its transport, energy, or education – requires investment. The childcare sector has not been seen as a priority.

It wasn't until December 2022 that child care was considered to be part of economic infrastructure and developers can now be required to pay towards childcare costs outside of educational settings, such as nurseries and holiday schemes.

Only half (48%) of councils in England have sufficient childcare places to meet the demand of parents working full-time, down from 59% in 2022, according to the Coram report.

Staff in early years settings are leaving for higher paid jobs in other sectors. Since 2014, in 116 of 149 English local authorities, the rate of population growth was greater than the growth of the child care sector. This included 15 of the 20 areas with the highest population growth.

A Freedom of Information request from the Early Years Alliance showed that the free entitlement offer is currently being underfunded by an estimated £2.60 per hour per child. This shortfall has created numerous impacts on the sector, threatening its sustainability. It is reported to be causing child care settings to close in record numbers.

Pregnant then Screwed research (using 2014 as reference) shows that if child care workers are paid a salary equivalent to primary school teachers and all 3.2m children offered up to 40 hours a week for 48 weeks a year, the annual gross cost would be 3% of GDP; if pay rates are based on current wage levels by qualification, the

investment is 1.8% of GDP. Employment creation in child care services and elsewhere in the economy through multiplier effects would add up to 1.7m full-time equivalent jobs under such a scenario, raising the overall employment rate by up to 4.3% and the female employment rate by 6.4%. Increased tax revenue from additional earnings and reduced spending on social security benefits, has the potential to recoup between 95% and 89% of this annual investment. This is a direct effect without taking into account the savings made when the children reach adulthood.

5. The Way Forward?

Other countries with similar economies to the UK have recently invested in their child care sectors. Canada has invested \$30 billion in childcare after studies showed that for every dollar they invested in child care they got between \$1.50 and \$2.80 back into the wider economy through increased employment. The Heckman programme reported that for every dollar spent on high-quality, birth-to-five programs for disadvantaged children there was a 13% per annum return on investment. These economically significant returns account for the welfare costs of taxation to finance the program and survive a battery of sensitivity analyses.

When this topic was suggested the person leading it thought she would be singing the praises for high quality EYE and the impact on academic attainment. She now finds herself convinced that not only does high quality EYE provide returns in the future with educational, health and societal benefits the economic argument provides a sound return almost immediately. For once, she finds herself in total agreement with the CBI as to the way forward!

- 1) Announce an independent review of the UK's child care system – looking to reduce cost for parents, maintain high quality provision and create a sustainable funding and employment model.
- 2) Increase funding to the existing system so it reflects the true cost of service provision.
- 3) Extend existing provision for 3- and 4-year-olds to all 1- and 2-year-olds, taking into account their specific needs.
- 4) Change the Universal Credit system, so that childcare support is paid up front rather than in arrears to address the way that prohibitive childcare costs prevent parents from working or taking on more hours.

Hunt and Sunak are perhaps reflecting on a new survey by Pregnant then Screwed - 96% of families with a child under three years old said they are likely to vote for the political party with the best childcare pledge in the next election.

We await the budget with interest.

In the early 1970s Sweden, Scotland and England formed an alliance to improve early years education in their respective countries. Sadly in England this seems to have fallen by the wayside. Meanwhile Sweden has stepped up its investment and by the age of two 89% of all children attend pre-school and for 5 year olds this is 95%, and primary school entry age is 6. Sweden is in the top 10 for reading in international rankings and has one of the most egalitarian education systems with pupils' chances of succeeding being more equal than elsewhere.

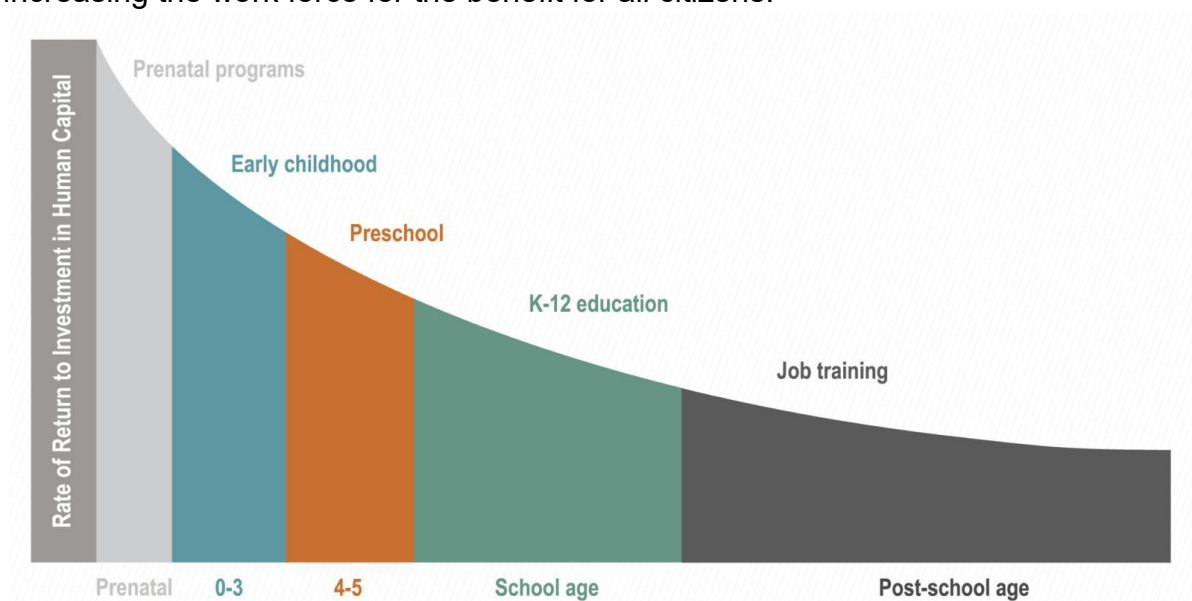
Finland is rated as having the best education system in the world.

Child care costs £15 per week in Estonia, and Germany has affordable child care which varies according to the local state regulations.

We all agreed with the member who proposed that the government should see affordable child care as part of levelling up as the information above and graphs below confirm.

One member is a volunteer who hears children read in a local primary school where it is obvious if the pupils have had early years' education - not only in reading ability but in confidence and their interest in learning.

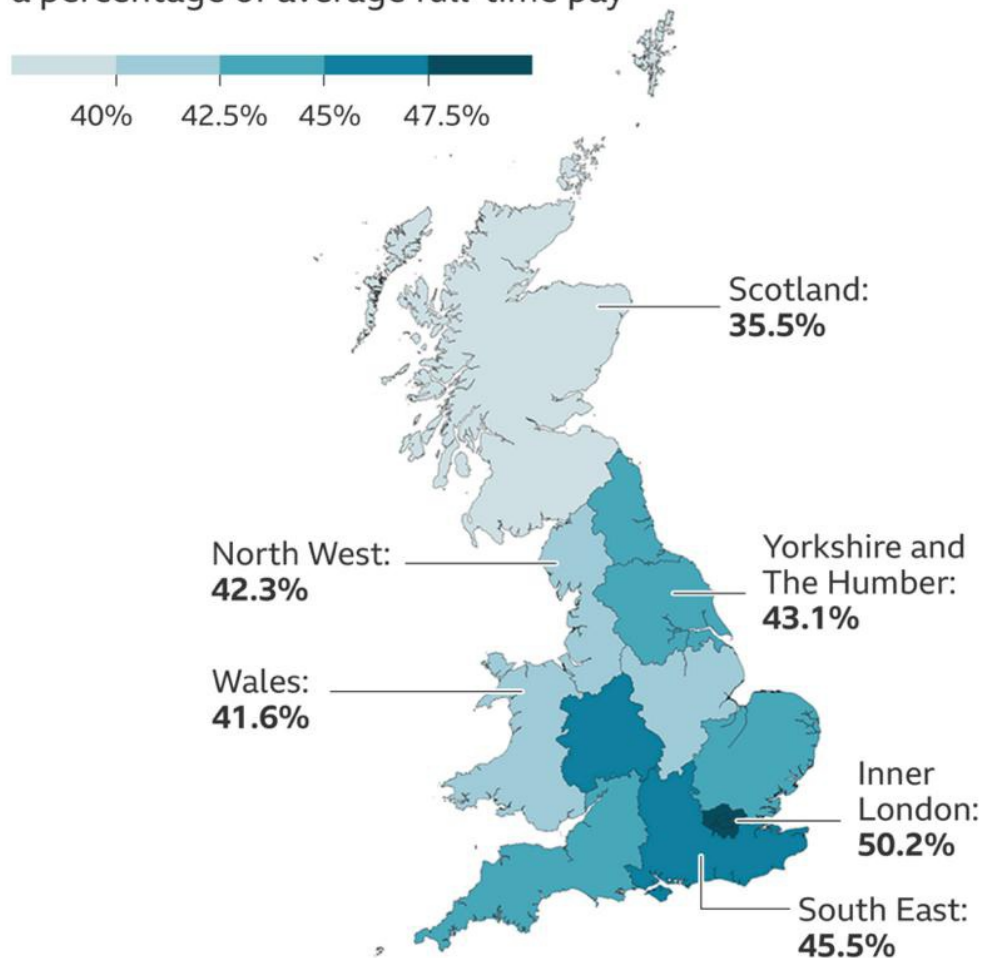
One member's daughter has experience of a children's centre in Manchester where young dis- advantaged mothers were taught to parent which prevents the cycle of poorly educated and unsuccessful adults from being perpetuated. But as has already been mentioned so many centres have been closed despite the financial benefits to the whole of society to providing support and education as early as possible and increasing the work force for the benefit for all citizens.



Since the research is so clear about the benefits to investment in pre-schoolers across the NHS, prison service, courts, employment, drug use etc. and happy and settled lives - we cannot understand why successive governments have cut back so severely and allowed costs to soar. It is so clearly a sound investment.

Nursery costs across Great Britain

Average cost of full-time nursery for children under two as a percentage of average full-time pay



Note: Coram does not collect childcare costs for Northern Ireland

Source: Coram, ONS

B B C

- Government Investment in Early Years Education



Area	% of children's centres that have closed (2010 - 2021)	Change in children's service funding (2010 - 2020)
East Midlands	-20	4
East of England	-18	1
London	-20	-10
North East	-12	-7
North West	-11	1
South East	-13	10
South West	-20	0
West Midlands	-13	-1
Yorkshire and The Humber	-13	1

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

- March – Early years' education, a luxury or a sound investment?
- April - Has the green lobby gone too far, e.g. on asking us to restrict travel?
- May – No Meeting

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GENTLE CYCLING GROUP

Co-ordinator: Sue Creeden
01455 557888

Yet again, we were not able to ride on our first scheduled day in March, this time due to snow! And we thought March was the start of Spring!

However, five of us did get out for a ride the following Wednesday. Fortunately, the early morning frost cleared quickly and the sun came out. We just had to contend with a biting wind!

We chose a route we have done several times before as we never seem to encounter much traffic. Starting from Ullesthorpe Garden Centre, we headed off down to Ashby Parva and turned left for Ullesthorpe. Cycling through the village we whizzed down the hill to Claybrooke Parva and then turned left and up to the A5. Crossing over the route went along Penn Lane, down Green Lane and crossed over Coalpit Lane into Brokenhurst Lane taking us to Monks Kirby. We took a short breather by the church. Our return ride was via Monks Kirby Lane, back across Coalpit Lane into Penn Lane to reach the A5. We retraced our route back to Ullesthorpe but the hill we whizzed down on the way out, was a challenge to climb back up on the way back! We finished off the morning with a much needed coffee at the Garden Centre.

The next ride will be on Wednesday 12th April. If you fancy joining us, we will be very pleased to see you. Electric bikes welcome. Just email me - sueandpeter.creeden@taltalk.net or call me on 01455 557888.

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FOURTH WEDNESDAY WALKING GROUP

March 2023 Walk Report

We met at The Elms car park in Lutterworth. It was a lovely sunny morning, no rain. but there was a strong westerly wind.

A magnificent total of 23 walkers arrived some expecting an easy walk as they were going to the Wycliffe U3A barn dance in the afternoon.

Leaving the car park we headed up to Misterton Way to go through the old railway line tunnel into Rye Fields. After crossing the motorway we had to negotiate three quite muddy fields as we headed towards Misterton Marshes. This is one of the largest areas of unimproved wetland in the county; Once passed them we started to turn to go around Oback Farm and then headed towards Walcote crossing grass fields, one quite soggy, and along edges of ploughed fields which the farmer, considerably, had left sufficient space to walk fairly easily.

We then had to cross an extremely boggy area where, fortunately, they had put walking boards down but there was still mud to cross and the kissing gate we were supposed to use was flooded in about 9 inches of water so we had to climb over a fence (well, most of us did until someone found an alternative, but it involved mud). I think some walkers, at this point, were getting desperate for a break and fortunately it came as we arrived at the playground at Misterton. Nobody had a go on the zip wire.

Refreshed we set off down the footpath to Chapel Lane and on reaching Saint Leonard's Church we picked up the public footpath that goes through the churchyard and then across several fields, now head on into the strong wind, back to the motorway. We then retraced our outgoing route back to the pub

I enjoyed the walk but some of it was quite heavy going and I was glad that I wasn't going to a barn dance in the afternoon. Thank you Mike and Lesley for organizing and leading the walk.

Peter Creeden

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FOURTH WEDNESDAY WALKING GROUP

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

Wednesday 26 April 2023

Walk Organiser:- George Robertson. 07986827270

Meeting Point:- Meet at the walk departure point. If you require a lift then please contact the Walk Organiser. The toilets will be accessible at the start.

Start Point and Time:- The Bull's Head Brinklow CV23 0NE. The walk will start at 10am.

Directions to start:- 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:- Walk starts through Brinklow to canal towpath. We leave towpath and walk past Brinklow Marina and head for Kings Newnham where we return to Brinklow via field paths. Four stiles, 5 miles.

Lunch Arrangements: We will eat in the pub and choose our meals before setting off.

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FRENCH CONVERSATION GROUP

23 March 2023

We had a record attendance this month. As promised, we revised some of last month's vocabulary. We divided into smaller groups to talk about moving house (or anything else), then tackled a translation about possible causes of Beethoven's deafness. I had downloaded some French café accordion music for ambiance, but this and the heating made it hard for people to hear, so both were turned off. The next meeting will be on 27 April 2023.

Sue

POETRY GROUP

March's topic was "Marching into Spring ", so plenty of lovely Spring poems, and as a contrast, several war poems.

One of the first poems to be read was "Miracle on St David's Day" by Gillian Clarke, a poem which has been chosen several times by the poetry group.

It is a poignant and beautiful poem, a true story set against a backdrop of daffodils, where the author reads poetry to patients in a psychiatric hospital. This leads to one man, who has been mute for years, suddenly finding his voice and reciting from Wordsworth's "Daffodils ".

"he has remembered there was a music
of speech and that once he had something to say".
Well worth a read.

April's topic is "Food and Drink", 2pm 27th April.

Sylvie

ENGINEERING, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Co-ordinator: Chris

ESTG March Event - Kinetic Energy and Ball Bearing Run

My Initial statement to the room:-

"This months event will be somewhat different to our normal meeting format!!!"

Chris.

Following a descriptive introduction into Kinetic Energy in the first half by myself on what Kinetic Energy is, how it differs from other forms of energy and common forms of it found in everyday life, Members were then shown various videos on what artists had designed as art forms using kinetic energy to power Art Wall Sculptures and fantastic **'Machines' (made of plastic tubing and tie wraps) that 'walked' using wind power and who's designer Theo Jansen's aim is to have these 'Animals' live on the beach !!** <https://youtu.be/Bxlwn5zqdmk>

We finished off the 1st half of the meeting by showing a video of an advert by **The Honda Motor Corp** that was commissioned and graced our screens **12 yrs ago** which showed a series of mechanical Honda car parts initially started with a Gear Cog rolling and knocking into each other parts in turn to form a kinetic run (similar to a line of Dominoes falling on to each other but with individual car parts !) culminating in the car key fob being activated

The ad was **2 minuets long, cost \$1m to make and took 606 takes to get it to complete all the way through in ONE take !!!!!** it really is worth a look on Youtube entitled "The Cog"

Members were invited after a refreshment break, to take part in constructing our own kinetic energy "Run" using bits of wood, cable ties, G clamps, sticky tape and water bottles to see if we could Set off a Party Popper just by using a Ball Bearing....!

Starting with a rolling Ball Bearing at height, we had a rough plan of **8 separate stage elements** in the run with some elements being part-made and some requiring construction from various materials, which the members then assemble together in rough order on table tops in the hall.

In some cases the elements needed modifying in order to make them continue working in the line using basic hand and wood working tools, workmate etc.

After some early failures and subsequent modifications and re testing, the members were thrilled to have the ball bearings **complete the run right through each stage and finally activate the Party Popper with 'bang'!**.

This was re-set up and repeated again this time for the benefit of video on the whole run and which can be seen on the [link below which Mike Chapman has kindly created for the U3A members to view.](#)

There are also some photos below of the construction of the run in various stages.....in the last photo the 'Popper' can be seen inside the circle just after ignition !! having been set off by the Popper string attached to the falling Milk bottle.....

Despite costing a "Nano fraction" of the Honda Advert and only 2 takes, the enthusiasm and enjoyment of our members tackling this challenge to get this run to work was clearly no less than that of the Honda Ad engineers after 606 takes..

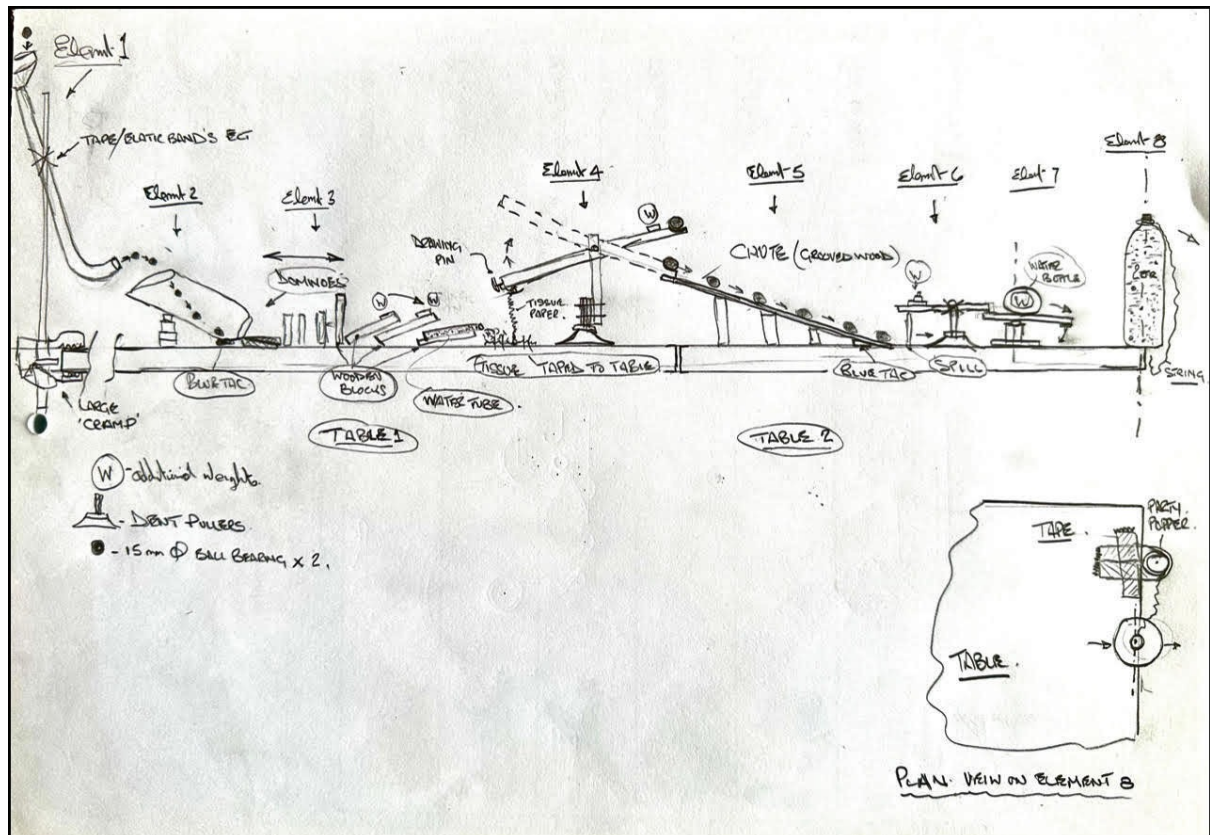
My thanks go to all the members attending on the day and their support and enthusiasm in joining in the spirit of our meeting, also thanks to Michael Bates, Colin Beadle for providing backup, support, equipment and tools, and of course Mike Chapman for producing a great Video of the challenge.

View the video on link - <http://www.ashbyparva.net/estg>

Chris

Note: - Next event 20th April - Visit to Gunpowder Mills, Waltham Abbey, Essex

Rough Idea - 8 Stage Elements Plan













ART APPRECIATION

Co-ordinator: Ursula

Report for the Art Appreciation Group March 2023

The first part of our meeting was about the Northern Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries. Viv's presentation gave 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. Perhaps the most famous early piece is the Ghent Altarpiece from c.1432 by Hubert and Jan Van Eyck. This colourful medieval 'storyboard' tells the story of the Christian faith in brilliantly executed oil paintings and it is one of the glorious survivors of the age. Albrecht Durer, working mostly in the 16thC, also had a huge influence and his skills were wide ranging. His art embraced all types of media but particularly he became the master of engraving, using the new technology of the printing press to start a revolution in illustrative arts. Durer was a brilliant realistic artist and he was also unusual for introducing new secular subjects including his famous drawings of animals which had only had a tiny side role in Art previously. Pieter Breughel (and later his son, also called Pieter), gave us an amazing vibrant record of everyday life in the Netherlands. From hunting and cooking to celebrations and parties, to the passing of the seasons and even proverbs and jokes, his range was vast. Through his work we see children playing for the first time and ordinary people engaged in ordinary tasks. There was much less emphasis on Bible stories or the classical myths which we see so much in the work of the Italian Renaissance artists.

It was a massive shift for the dominant structured religious art of previous centuries. 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. Lesser nobles soon followed this trend but significantly it also shows us more ordinary people from what we might regard as those of the middling classes, especially wealthy merchants who made a fortune in trade and who also wanted to record their own lives and success. The expansion in trade in the Netherlands and in Germany in the 16th C created a wealthy urban social elite who all quickly saw the advantages of becoming patrons of Art, exactly as the Medici and other leaders of Italian cities did.

There were differences though. For example, A comparison a series of 15th C frescos in the Medici Chapel in Florence, depicts 'The Procession of the Magi'/. This colourful scene illustrates the story from the Bible of the journey of the Three Kings on the way to see the Christ child. However this is actually a political statement as each person in the procession was actually a portrait of the Medici family members

and other key members of their entourage, all gorgeously portrayed as religious figures in an imagined idealised landscape. By contrast, Northern Renaissance portraits rarely hid within a religious image although their political messages were similar. 'The Ambassadors' by Hans Holbein the Younger (1533) also shows us powerful men similarly surrounded by trappings of their wealth and power but the message is far more direct and not presented hidden within a Biblical framework.

For the first time since Roman times, portraits began to be created which showed what people really looked like and how they dressed and even the houses they inhabited. We see some of this in the Italian Renaissance, as the Mona Lisa shows but far more in the North. We have little idea what our medieval Kings looked like but from the 15th C onwards we can recognise them all. There was more to this than merely catching a likeness and within them there was much complex imagery and symbolism designed to convey messages about themselves for posterity. Interpreting these portraits is quite challenging to us today but it was really an adaptation of established religious symbolism which many people would understand automatically. Examples such as Jan Van Eyck's 'Arnolfini Portrait' which records a betrothal, are packed with meaning. Everything from the colours of the couples clothing to the single lighted candle and discarded shoes on the carpet had meaning.

Viv also touched on the origins of the Renaissance in Italy to give some context to the Artwork. For many years, the Northern Renaissance (so called) was regarded as a poor relation of the glorious flowering of Art we all know in the Italian Renaissance in the 15th C. Although it is certainly true there was cross-pollination of the artistic movements the Art of the North is now given its due as an important movement with its own identity. We can see that changes in Art to more realistic imagery were starting in the North roughly at the same time in Italy in the early 15th C. The fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 was a major stimulus for changes in thought and philosophy in Italy at first but this spread across Europe in the following century. That crisis led to the influx of old lost Classical works, especially those by Plato into the West. These ideas challenged and ultimately upset the established medieval philosophies and new ways thinking spread North quickly via the trading links that existed. A new way of portraying people and ideas began across Europe.

Certain factors in the North also encouraged new directions compared to the progress in Italy. The Protestant Reformation was a seismic shift in religion and the shock waves brought wider change intellectually, socially and economically across Northern Europe, but the Reformation did not reach Italy. The Catholic Church no longer had the same dominance over Art that it had held in the North although this continued in Italy. The new emphasis of Christ as a 'Man' rather than simply divine and the intellectual movement of Humanism it created certainly affect both regions but particularly so in the North and amongst urban Protestant communities. Not least, the

important invention of the printing press in Germany brought in new applications of Art as engravings and woodcuts in publications and these disseminated the new ideas to a wider audience. By the 16thC there were also major centres of printing in the Netherlands.

It is a wonderful period for exciting art. Many examples of Renaissance art from both Italy and the North can be seen in the UK in the National gallery and there are also superb examples of portraits in the National Portrait Gallery.

Go to <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/> and take a virtual tour!

* * *

U3A Art Appreciation

The second part of our meeting was given over to small group discussion of several, diverse artistic images. The artists featured ranged from the classical, Vermeer to the contemporary, for instance Banksy and Angela Edwards. The discussion centred on the composition, structure and colour (or lack of) in each image. The deciding factor was, “would you hang this image on your wall”? There was a distinct lack of consensus on the painting of dancers, by David Remfry. Remfry is well known for this genre, in addition to his landscapes. Rugby Art Gallery now possess one of his paintings of dancers and it is currently on display. There was equally a difference of opinion on the Angela Edwards image, “Light of the Day”, one of a series based on the photographic effect that happens when an image is out of focus. It was felt this had a greater impact if viewed from a distance. The Banksy (“Pledge Allegiance to the Flag”) and Picasso (“Las Meninas”) images were easily identifiable, although it was felt the latter was not something one would want on their wall. The Vermeer painting of “The Milkmaid” has stood the test of time and is an image some of the group would hang in their home, given it’s structure, composition and use of colour.

Sheila Eggleton

SNAIL'S PACE WALKING GROUP

March 2023 Walk



Twelve of us went along to Brandon Marsh Nature Reserve and enjoyed walking around the Woodpecker and Kingfisher Trails. It was a beautiful spring morning and we stopped off at the Wright Hide, where we spotted a couple of cormorants in the tranquil setting.

To finish, we crossed Mouse Manor, and wandered down to the River Meadow, skirting the Avon before returning through Horsetail Glade. En route we

spotted a very early yellow Brimstone butterfly. There is a view that the word 'butterfly' originates from the yellow colour of male Brimstones.

Many thanks to Mary for organizing this walk.

April 2023 Walk: Friday 21st April

Denise is organizing this walk and here are the details.

The walk for Friday 21st April is planned from the lovely village of **Bitteswell**, across well marked arable fields, and a quiet country lane.

There are 2 starting points – one with 2 stiles at the beginning, which takes you across well marked fields and one without, down a quiet country lane. There is also an opportunity to take a car most of the way and have a short walk.

(Please note that the pictures were taken on Sunday 26th March, following an horrendous downpour onto already wet ground. It usually dries up pretty quickly in our experience, but I will keep you posted nearer the time).

The walk is approximately 3 miles and can be conveniently cut in half as the country lane meets the top of the fields at the 1.5 miles point. If you choose the fields. you will have a circular walk. If the country lane is your preference, it will be a turnaround at the top I'm afraid, but a walk with lovely views, nonetheless. Steps or miles – you will not miss out whichever you choose.



To do the Round Walk – it will be necessary to go over 2 stiles. These are at the very beginning of the walk. The picture below is of the first one; you then walk along the ginnel, over the easier 2nd stile and from there will see the path through the fields. The gate at the bottom of the first field can be opened for easy access.



To access the Round Walk we will go through the lovely village of Bitteswell, walking **past the Royal Oak pub, and the first Public Footpath and Stile on the left**. Keep on walking until the road becomes driveways and you will see, almost in front of you, the first stile.

Providing it is dry, it is a nice easy walk across the fields, through 3 more gates. As you enter the 4th field, you will see the tarmac lane in front of you – and hopefully other members of the group who have taken the country lane route!

If you prefer not to go over the stiles; we will walk out of the village past the Man at Arms pub, taking care by keeping on the left hand grass verge, the road takes a sharp right, and we are going left up Woodby Lane. There is the occasional vehicle, but it is rare for a meander up this lane to anything other than peaceful. When you get to the top; you will see pedestrian access to Magna Park, but we will follow Woodby Lane to the left and continue to walk down to the halfway point. Hopefully here, you will see some of the walkers making their way across the last field.

As we meet in at the 1.5-mile point, there is an opportunity to extend the walk, by taking a turn around the lake – adding about a further 20 minutes. There is

no formal path around the lake; but is popular in the summer and with dog walkers all year round.



This is the point we should all meet up and be able to walk back to the pub as one group! Except perhaps, for those who want to walk around the lake.

Finally, for those who just want a short bibble; you can park at the top of the lane, there is plenty of space, where the road veers sharp left; then walk along the tarmac lane with the fields to your left.

We anticipate the walk taking about 1.5 hours, not including the lake.

Meeting Place

The Royal Oak pub in Bitteswell. You can park there and the pub, which doesn't open until 12, will be available from 10.45am for a comfort break, before we set off at 11.00am.

Lunch

Lunch will be at The Royal Oak in Bitteswell.
I have said we will be back between 12.30 – 1pm.

See the attachment for the lunch menus.

Please let me have your lunch order by SUNDAY 16TH APRIL, so I can pre-order on Monday 17th.

I can be contacted by email at:

denisetaylor551@gmail.com or leave me a message on 07711 086927.

Contact

Please let Denise know if you are coming by **Sunday 16th April** by email at:

denisetaylor551@gmail.com or leave me a message on 07711 086927.

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 01455 251809.

Best wishes,

Mandy Cutler

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ETHNIC DINING GROUP

Coordinators : Peter and Penny Ross

We choose restaurants serving food from around the world, some familiar, some more unusual. Everyone is welcome to join us, regularly or occasionally.

In May we will be visiting a Mexican restaurant.

The details are as follows:

Wednesday 10th May at 7.30pm

La Casa Loco

7 Little Church St,

Rugby

CV21 3AW

If you wish to join us please contact us by 27TH April at the latest.

Penny & Peter Ross

email: penelopeross.ross@gmail.com

Tel: 01455 272797

PUB LUNCHES GROUP

Coordinators : Peter and Penny Ross

Meeting friends, old and new, to enjoy lunch at a variety of pubs in local villages, many of which we are visiting for the first time. Everyone is welcome to join us, regularly or occasionally.

In May we will be visiting The Brew Hall at Everards Meadows

The details are as follows on next page:-

Wednesday 3rd May April 2023 at 12.30pm

The Brew Hall

Everards Meadows

Cooper Way, Leicester LE19 2AN

If you wish to join us please contact us by 27TH April at the latest.

Penny & Peter Ross

email: penelopeross.ross@gmail.com

Tel: 01455 272797

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1st WEDNESDAY WALKING GROUP

Co-ordinators :- Peter Moore and Kay Bliss.

Bluebell Walk

Date of Walk :- Wednesday 3rd May 2023.

Driving distance:- 9 Miles each way.

Walk Leader :- Peter Moore

Meeting Point and Time : Lutterworth Recreation Ground car park at 9.15am to leave at 9.20am.

Start Point : Friendly Inn, Frankton, SE of Rugby, Warwickshire. CV23 9NY. Leave 10.00am.

Toilets available.

Directions to Start :- Take A426 into Rugby, at the T- junction after the large bridge turn right, signed Princethorpe, after the large offset Island filter left towards Princethorpe, at T-junction turn left (opposite Garden Centre) after 1 mile on straight road ,turn left to Bourton and Frankton, turn right into Frankton. Pub at far end of village on right. Car park at rear of Pub.

Route and Distance.

Exit the car park onto the main road, turn left, after ¼ mile turn right onto footpath, at road turn left, after ¼ mile turn right onto farm road and left towards (Old Railway) exit at bridge, turn left at road and right and left onto footpath (Old Railway) exit at bridge, take footpath towards Hill Farm turn left, Bluebell Wood on Left and return to Pub via footpaths and road.

Distance. 4.85 Miles 1 stile.

Lunch deal: 2 for £16.00p - **Order before Walk**

Good and varied choice of Food , extensive Lunch time menu. Gluten Free Food available.

Summary. Varied Walk , mostly field paths, some quiet road walking , mostly on hard standing. Fairly flat walk.

Next Walk. Shilton, Northants's. 5 miles. 1 Stile.

Peter Moore and Kay Bliss.

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HISTORY GROUP

Co-ordinator: Viv

Our topic for March was Family History. Like many people, we find it interesting to delve into our family's past. Five group members, Cynthia, Dot, Viv, Judith and Derek each gave a presentation about an aspect of their own family history which they have researched. It proved to be an interesting afternoon, full of diverse stories and anecdotes. These ranged across the centuries, from a glimpse into the lifestyle one family lived at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries, wartime bravery in both world wars, post war work as a River Thames policeman, the important role one family played in the advance of electrical engineering in the early 20thC and aspects of life in the Black Country. Old photos and documents were used to illustrate the talks and even included a wartime diary worthy of the collection in the Imperial War Museum. Our topic shows that we all have a wealth of history behind us and there is much more out there! We hope to return to this topic later to hear some more.

Many thanks to the contributors for a fascinating afternoon.

1. Our April meeting is on Tuesday April 4th at Ashby Village Hall. 2 til 4.

The topic will be the Early Police Force in England

2. Our first trip out this year will be the following month on TUESDAY May 2nd to Earls Barton. As we are sharing lifts for this, please make sure you have arranged a lift with someone. Final arrangements can be made in the April meeting.

Finally, if you have booked the minibus, please can I remind you that payments for that for Belgrave Hall and Packwood House are now due. VW



PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

march 2023 report

Our March meeting was all about creativity both in our monthly picture topic and the monthly presentation. The monthly topic was “In and Out of Focus” where only one part of the image was sharp and in focus with other areas purposely blurred.

In photography this effect is known as Depth of Field (DOF), and it is the position and control of the DOF that was the point of this month’s topic. Choosing where and how to use the effect is the creativity bit and a blurred background, or foreground, often enhances the main subject.

We had a lot of submissions, and it was clear that everyone understood the principle and provided some excellent pictures. As usual, a selection of the pictures will be added to the galleries section of our U3A website.

One thing that did emerge was that adding creativity to an image is quite difficult using compact cameras and phones. But as some of our members demonstrated it can be done with a bit of ingenuity if you hunt down the settings in the camera or phone menu, so well done to them.

Keeping going with the creativity theme the presentation was about Abstract Photography. We looked at a few examples of abstract art from well-known painters and abstract pictures from not so well-known photographers. We considered that abstract paintings are unencumbered by the physical world, but abstract photography is connected to the “real world” via the camera recording a “real world” images. These images then have to be manipulated into something abstract. However, from some of the pictures we viewed, the photographer often leaves a clue as to the origin of the image.

With everyone now buzzing with creativity the task for April is to create an abstract picture in whatever way suits the taker. The topic is called “Abstract or Not” and just in case it is all too much, there is the option to submit a favourite picture, preferably taken in April.

Maybe, creativity will come from an Easter Egg or bonnet.

Our next meeting will be on Friday 28th April 2023, 10.00 am, in the Ullesthorpe Village Hall.

As usual, our meetings are open to all U3A members as a regular or as a guest. If you would like more information, e-mail us at the address below.

wlu3acamera@outlook.com.

Michael Bates





Committee Members

<u>Office</u>	<u>Name</u>
Chairperson	Colin Beadle
Membership Secretary.....	Andy Hetherington
Secretary	Hamish Paterson
Treasurer.....	Nigel Bones
Groups Co-ordinator.....	Peter Ross
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

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