

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 guest speaker this month is **Bridget Blair** and her talk is:-

Radio Magic Over the Waves

Bridget Blair a former BBC broadcast journalist - for over 20 years at BBC Radio Leicester.

Bridget thoroughly enjoyed reading the news, reporting from the radio car, making award winning features and presenting gardening and history programmes. Bridget was also commissioned to make features for Radio 4 and also appeared on 5 Live.

Bridget now loves to spend more time in her own garden, and visits other gardens across the country as a member of the Garden Media Guild.

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IMPORTANT NOTICES ON PAGES 2, 3 AND 4

Wycliffe Lutterworth u3a Committee

Membership Records Secretary Required



Dear All,

Our current Membership Records Secretary will be standing down at our next AGM in March 2024. This is now five months away and we are asking for members, who are interested in taking on this vital role, 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

SPECIAL NOTICE

It is intended to call a **Special General Meeting (SGM)** of the Wycliffe Lutterworth u3a at the November monthly meeting - **Thursday 9th November 2023**.

Venue – Wycliffe Memorial Methodist Church, Bitteswell Road, Lutterworth, Leics. LE17 4EL.

Time – 10:15 hrs.

The **SGM** relates to proposed minor changes to our existing constitution. These changes have been requested by The Third Age Trust and relate to our intended charity registration with the Charity Commission.

Full details will be circulated to all members via email within the prescribed time frame ahead of the meeting.

This SGM should not impact upon our normal monthly activities and guest speaker.

Colin Beadle (Chairperson)

Pub Lunches and Ethnic Dining Groups



Please be aware that after October both the **Pub Lunches and Ethnic Dining Groups** will cease unless a new coordinator (or coordinators) can be found.

Thanks are extended to members who have previously fulfilled coordinators roles - most recently Denise and Geoff.

If anyone is interested in taking on a coordinator role for either one or both groups then please do contact Denise or me. It will be unfortunate to see these long established groups close.

The pub lunch and dining event planned / booked for October will go ahead but could well be the last.

Look forward to hearing from you?

Colin (Chairperson & Groups Coordinator)

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Notices

Articles, reports, news items etc. for inclusion in the next bulletin should be sent to the editor: trudyhaddon.rylands@gmail.com

Deadline: last day of the month.

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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

History Group

Our trip to Packwood House - Sept 2023

On September 6th, 19 members of the History and Garden groups enjoyed a joint visit to the National Trust's Packwood House on September 6th. It was a glorious warm day and the gardens were looking spectacular in the sunshine. Packwood is well known for its large, clipped yews which lead you up to a viewing point called a 'snail mound'. There was much more to see in the lovely gardens, including beautifully planned, colourful herbaceous borders, a knot garden, pretty lakeside walks and an impressive walled kitchen garden.

The old house, too, did not disappoint. Originally it was a modest 16thC timber framed farmhouse which was remodelled in the late 17th and 18th centuries, but it was considerably extended in the early 20thC and the old timbered exterior was rendered. The house we see today is a collection of genuine Tudor and Stuart fittings and furniture rather than the original contents. The man responsible for all this was Graham Baron Ash who saved the house from ruin and created a gentleman's residence for himself. Graham Baron Ash enjoyed sourcing genuine artefacts from other houses that were being demolished in the early 20thC to create his vision of a 'Tudor' house. He also added on a 'Tudor' great hall and connecting long gallery, created from an old barn which were next to the original house.

The house once had carved oak galleries all around the entrance hall but today only one remains to act as a connecting corridor across the upper floors. There were many interesting items on show in the rooms, including a delicate 18th wax model of a lady in her silken gown and her little 'blackamoor' servant under a glass dome. Not PC these days but a remarkable survivor. Packwood is very proud of its important and newly restored 16thC Flemish and French tapestries which depict various biblical and classical scenes. Such things were originally needed as insulation in what must have been a draughty house but they were also prestigious possessions. Textiles of this quality are rare survivals outside the grandest stately homes and palaces. However, although the workmanship is obviously very fine, they are sadly faded and must be preserved in very dim light so perhaps their beauty is more appreciated more by scholars than the casual visitor. Upstairs, in the midst of all this 'Tudoriness' was a 1920s bathroom complete with blue and white Delft tiles which told us that Graham Baron Ash only went so far in his adoption of Tudor ways and appreciated his mod cons!

Overall, it was a very pleasant day out and I think everyone enjoyed it.





Sadly, this was the last official 'Garden Group' outing as the group has folded although perhaps some of the members will organise the occasional trip out for us next summer.

- The next History Group meeting will be back at Ashby Parva Village Hall on Tuesday October 3rd from 2 'til 4. I would be grateful if could let me know in good time if you can't come.
- The next payment of subs is now due. This will be £12 for 4 months and covers refreshments and room hire. I'd prefer you to pay the U3A online as before but if that's not possible, please give me a cheque at the next meeting with the ref 'HG subs' written on the reverse.

Viv Weller

Garden Group

See 'History Group' for the report for the visit to Packwood House.





'The garden had inserts in the walls for beehives'

Lively Discussion 11th September 2023

Is the Windrush scandal a dark stain on British history?

The subject of this discussion is taken from a recent comment by the CEO of the Notting Hill Carnival organisation when asked to comment on the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the ship HMT Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks. Other commentators including David Lammy MP, when addressing Parliament on 16th April 2016, have referred to events associated with the Windrush Scandal as a ‘day of national shame’.

It’s a scandal that has destroyed lives, torn families apart, forced a Home Secretary to resign and elicited a shamefaced apology from a Prime Minister. It is, however, a scandal that still continues to this day.

A little background about the Windrush Generation

In 1948 the British Nationality Act gave people from the colonies the right to live and work in Britain. The government needed workers to help fill post-War labour shortages and rebuild the economy. Caribbean countries were also struggling economically and job vacancies in the UK offered them and their families an opportunity for a better life. Many of those who came became manual workers, drivers, cleaners, and nurses in the newly established NHS. Indeed, Enoch Powell himself, who was a health minister from 1960 - 1963, was an active part of that recruitment drive.

The ship HMT Empire Windrush - (which was originally a German passenger liner and cruise ship called the MV Monte Rosa, then a German navy troop ship, before being taken by the British as a prize of war and renamed) - was sent to bring people from the Caribbean to Britain. According to the National Archives, which holds the ship's passenger list, there were some 1,027 people on board. More than 800 gave their last country of residence as somewhere in the Caribbean. Many had served in the British armed forces in World War Two. Several hundred passengers were Jamaican, but others arrived from islands including Trinidad, St Lucia, Grenada and Barbados.

The newcomers had no difficulties finding work: of the 233 men who disembarked from the Windrush on 22 June 1948 and travelled on to London, 148 were already in jobs by the 1st of July, with 11 more anticipating immediate placements. By 1958, approximately 125,000 West Indians had come to the UK to work.

In the same period, 55,000 migrants arrived from India and Pakistan, many displaced by Partition. These unanticipatedly high numbers would, by 1961, prompt ever tighter immigration restrictions – but notably, such legislation always turned a wary eye towards the needs of the NHS.

These travellers - and those on other ships which came to the UK until 1971 - became known as the Windrush Generation.

Once settled in the UK, they sent for their children and raised families and despite the racism many of them experienced, they made lives and careers for themselves in the UK.

However, having been given a legal right to come to the UK, they neither needed nor were given any documents upon entry to the UK, or subsequently, following changes to immigration laws in the 1970s.

Many worked or attended schools in the UK without any official documentary records of their having done so, other than the same records as any UK born citizen. In addition, the Immigration and Asylum Act of 1999 specifically protected long-standing residents of the UK from Commonwealth countries from enforced removal. This provision was not transferred to later immigration legislation because, as stated by a Home Office spokesperson, 'Commonwealth citizens, living in the UK before 1st January 1973 were adequately protected from removal'.

What is the Windrush scandal?

The Windrush scandal began to surface in 2017 after it emerged that hundreds of Commonwealth citizens, many of whom were from the 'Windrush Generation', had been wrongly detained, deported and denied legal rights. There was widespread shock and outrage at the fact that so many Black Britons who had lived here for many years, paid taxes, built pensions and become part of communities had had their lives devastated by Britain's deeply flawed and discriminatory immigration system.

Why did the Windrush scandal happen?

Commonwealth citizens were affected by the government's 'Hostile Environment' legislation - a policy announced in 2012 by the then Home Secretary, Theresa May, which tasked the NHS, landlords, banks, employers and many others with enforcing immigration controls. It aimed to make the UK unliveable for undocumented migrants and ultimately push them to leave or be deported.

Because many of the Windrush Generation arrived as children on their parents' passports and the Home Office had destroyed or lost thousands of landing cards and other records many lacked the evidence to prove their right to remain in the UK. The Home Office also placed the burden of proof on individuals to prove that their residency predated 1973. The Home Office demanded at least one official document

from every year they had lived here. Attempting to find documents from decades ago created a huge, and in many cases, impossible burden on people who had done nothing wrong.

Falsely deemed as ‘illegal immigrants’ or ‘undocumented migrants’ they began to lose their access to housing, healthcare, bank accounts and driving licenses - and consequently, their jobs. Many were placed in immigration detention, prevented from travelling abroad and threatened with forcible removal, while others were deported to countries they hadn’t seen since they were children, or in some cases, had never lived there.

Some examples of how the scandal affected lives

- The BBC presenter Clive Myrie has said he was angry and ashamed of the UK after the Windrush scandal, which affected two of his brothers, who had lived in this country since childhood. One brother was denied benefits and healthcare, while the other – who had prostate cancer – had problems trying to get a British passport, and subsequently died before he was able to get a passport or compensation.
- A maths teacher, who had come to the UK from Jamaica to join his parents when he was nine in 1964, had gone to schools and university in the UK and had subsequently taught for 14 years in schools in Leicester and Northampton, was told he did not have the right immigration status to continue teaching when he attempted to sign up with a teaching agency. He consequently lost his teaching post and had to abandon his career.
- A 61-year-old grandmother, who had spent over 30 years working in the House of Commons, lost her job and was held in a detention centre for a month – her wrongful deportation only halted after intervention by her MP and a charity.

This harmful and unjust treatment provoked widespread condemnation of the government’s failings on the matter, with calls being made for radical reform of the Home Office and the UK’s immigration policy. In response to these demands, the then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, announced in May 2018 that the Home Office would commission a ‘Windrush Lessons Learned Review’.

The Government promised to find the root causes of the Windrush scandal and learn lessons from it. Wendy Williams, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of the Constabulary, was tasked with carrying out an independent review. The review was finally published

on 19 March 2020 - nearly two years since the scandal hit the headlines. The review makes it absolutely clear that the Windrush scandal was not an accident, but the inevitable result of policies designed to make life impossible for those without the right papers. This, coupled with decades of immigration legislation explicitly aimed at reducing non-white immigration from the Commonwealth, destroyed the lives of many black and minority ethnic British people.

In September 2020, the Home Office published an action plan, which the Home Secretary claimed would 'deliver for the Windrush Generation and usher in people-focused policies' at the department. In practice, however, the plan lacked substance, was full of evasive language, and wilfully misinterpreted the recommendations from the Wendy Williams' report. There was a failure to address the most important issues - like the Hostile Environment - head on, and there was a clear determination to maintain the status quo.

As a consequence of this scandal, apart from the more than 5000 claims of individuals that had lost their livelihoods, benefits, homes and access to healthcare, 164 were deported with many more leaving voluntarily following repeated pressure from the Home Office.

A report by the Home Affairs Select Committee, an influential group of MPs, in November 2021, found that only 5.8% of the people who are believed to be eligible for compensation have received a payment. And shockingly, 23 people have now died, never having seen a penny of the compensation they were owed.

After significant pressure from activists and lawyers the Government says that 66% of people affected by the scandal had been compensated. However, many claimants say that they have not been fully compensated for their losses. An independent report in March 2022 warns the department is running the risk of another Windrush-style scandal, if it fails to act now to make meaningful change to its culture, systems and policies.

In January 2023, Suella Braverman indicated that her department is abandoning the plan altogether saying 'it's time to move on'. The Home Office is now backing out of key promises it made to 'right the wrongs' of the scandal.

The group were amazed by the ignorance of government ministers and Home Office civil servants many of whom appeared unaware of the invitation from the British Government to the Windrush Generation and who lost or destroyed the paper work which confirmed this Generations' right to be here. Amber Rudd, Home Secretary at the time, was forced to resign, but Teresa May remained in office until she was challenged for the leadership. We were incensed at the lack of justice and inhumanity shown to these citizens. To us this seems not to be normal human behaviour.

Despite the needs of the NHS in 1948 right up to the present day one member told us about a black nurse who had to announce her qualifications to the whole ward because of racist comments from a patient. Another said inviting the Windrush Generation was such a good idea and we were all horrified by government actions. Even today there are staff shortages everywhere and denuding the work force even further makes no sense at all.

We agreed that it appears that ministers still have a colonial attitude towards people of non-white ethnic origins. This is unsurprising when, of the 193 countries recognized by the United Nations - during its history, the United Kingdom's forces (or forces with a British mandate) have invaded, had some control over or fought conflicts in 171 of the world's 193 UN member countries – 9 out of 10 of all countries. Just before WWI British colonies covered 23% of the world population and 24% of the earth's total land area.

In conclusion we feel that the Windrush scandal is a stain on British history and the government should put it right without delay.

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. September – Is the Windrush scandal a dark stain on British history?
2. October – Should the State Pension be means tested?
3. November – where are we now with the NHS after recent crises?

Art Appreciation Group

On one of the hottest days of the year six of us drove to the top of Beacon Hill to follow a Sculpture Trail, 34 sculptures placed around a welcomingly shaded circular path. The theme was “Harmony and Healing for Planet and People”. Many of the sculptures were made from woven willow by Nita Rao. Some highlighted environmental damage- Litter Fish, willow fish filled with plastic. Others reflected the geology of the area - large willow leaf shaped charnia, important fossils found on Beacon Hill. Ceramics also featured, although on a much smaller scale, a branch full of stark white slugs, a very small blue tit and several small ceramic men dotted around up in the trees which the keener eyed among us managed to spot. Local schools had been involved, Amazing Ants, made from recycled materials, around 30 large brightly coloured ants marching along a dry stone wall. One of our favourites was another willow piece, by Jo Shepherd, called Wide Open- a fox sleeping with its tail curled around itself, the grass now growing up through parts of it, seeming to root it even more firmly into the landscape. A ramble had left us ready for lunch and the cafe in the lower carpark provided freshly made sandwiches which we enjoyed sitting around a shady picnic table.

Anne Watson







Gentle Cycling Group

Co-ordinator: Sue Creeden 01455 557888

We were so lucky to have another perfect day for our first ride in September. An equal balance of three ladies and three gents set off from Ullesthorpe Garden Centre on one of our favourite 12-mile routes over to Monks Kirby. Monks Kirby is a delightfully quiet little village with lots of interesting properties and it is always pleasant to stop for a short while by the Church. This time the lanes seemed particularly traffic-free which made the outing even more enjoyable.

Unfortunately, a week later our second ride of the month had to be cancelled due to high winds and heavy rain. No two Wednesdays are the same!

The next ride will be on Wednesday 11th October. 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.

Sue

Poetry Group

The topic for September was "Refuge" which was also the theme for National Poetry Day.

Refuge was interpreted in several different ways - we had Auden's "Refugee Blues" and Duffy's "Foreign" where a country is a place of refuge, or is supposed to be. A refuge could also be a safe place in nature, an island, a stage, a garden. It could be religion or a passion.

Nelson Mandela was inspired by and found refuge in the poem "Invictus" by William Henley. You may know the famous lines -

"My head is bloody but unbowed"

"I am the master of my fate"

"I am the captain of my soul"

The next meeting is on October 26th and the topic is "Something Cheerful "

Sylvie

4th Wednesday Walking Group - September 2023 Walk Report

This was Nigel Bone's inaugural walk for the group. We started from the Chequers at Ullesthorpe. Whilst 22 walkers gathered expecting, from the BBC and Met Office weather forecasts, no rain we were blessed with a shower. Fortunately, it soon stopped but the skies remained overcast for the walk. Choosing what clothes to wear was a challenge as it was not that warm but as the morning progressed it got warmer and fleeces and jumpers had to be removed.

We set off down onto the old railway line before leaving it to cross the side of the golf course. Returning to the old railway line we joined the Jubilee Walk, a beautiful and serene walk along the old railway line cutting to Leire. We met a group of volunteers industriously working clearing the undergrowth. They are also tackling the drainage in the cutting as it can get a bit sloshy in the winter.

Reaching the Leire playing fields we headed across fields and crossed the Ashby Parva to Frolesworth road and then more fields to reach the Ullesthorpe Scout Campsite on the Ullesthorpe to Frolesworth road. We then walked down the side of the campsite to join the Leicestershire Round and reach Claybrooke Mill. Leaving the Mill we then took the old Leicestershire Round route to Claybrooke Parva. Crossing the road we made our way to the area known locally as "Bittesby Gallops" (according to Nigel) and onto the little lane leading to Manor Road. There is a "nice" little steep hill at the end of this lane which is most unwelcome at the end of a long walk. We then returned back to the Chequers via Manor Road, Station Road and the Dell.

A very enjoyable walk. Thank you Nigel for organising and leading it and the extra efforts you made to ensure that there were not too many stiles.

Peter Creeden

4th Wednesday Walking Group - Next Walk

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

Wednesday 25 October 2023

Walk Organisers: Mike and Lesley Chapman

Meeting Point For Lifts:- Lutterworth Recreation Ground car park at **09.15am** to leave at **09.25am**.

Start Point and Time:- The Chequers, High Street, Swinford (LE17 6BL). Toilets available. Start of walk 10:00am.

Directions to start:- :- Take the A426 road south out of Lutterworth, over the “aircraft” island and on to the Gibbet Roundabout. Take first left, through Shawell and on to Swinford. Turn right at the T-junction, then right at next T-junction into High Street. The Chequers is on your left. There is very limited parking in the pub car park, but ample street parking in Stanford Road (left after the pub). Distance to walk 6 miles.

Route and Distance:- :- We walk through the village for a short time before taking field paths around Stanford Hall, then a short walk along a very quiet road (Shakespeare’s Avon Way), then, after stopping for coffee we continue on field paths, close to the A14 for a period, before returning to Swinford. Distance: 5.2 miles with 4 stiles (plus one gate, where, at time of writing, we were instructed to climb over as the post had been broken).

Lunch Arrangements: Lunch to be ordered before walk. Mains approx. £11 or lunch specials (main £7.95 or 2 courses £11).

4th Wednesday Walking Group - Christmas 2023 Arrangements

Christmas 2023 Arrangements

We thought we would give some advance information on the date for a December walk so that you can put it in your diaries.

It is planned to fit in a December walk on Wednesday 13 December 2023 which Sue and I will organise and lead. Details to follow in the December Bulletin/Newsletter.

Also, to let you know, that currently there are no plans to organise a Christmas lunch this year.

Sue and Peter Creeden

French Conversation Report

28 September 2023

After sharing our news, we discussed the possibility of a film (Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis?) at Pearl and Tony's in November, and Sue will look into the possibility of a Christmas meal on 14 December. We translated an article on AI.
The next meeting will be on 26 October 2023.

Sue

U3A Snail's Pace Walking Group

September 2023 Walk



There were five of us on this walk – and we really enjoyed ourselves! It was a beautiful late summer's day and the countryside was vibrant: trees and blackberry bushes laden with berries and fruit. A sign of a harsh winter they say....

We called in at the Church of St Margaret of Antioch – restoration all now complete. The beautiful old font from about 1330 is octagonal and finely carved with representations of Saints Nicholas, Margaret and Katharine together with heraldic panels. The Old Chest has the carved initials of the Churchwardens and the date 1636 although it is thought to be older.



Our route took us down the Ashby Canal towpath to the Marina: on our left beyond the marina can be seen the large flat plain which many believe to be the true site of the Battle of Bosworth.

We returned to the George and Dragon, via Crown Hill, for a leisurely lunch - certainly a popular lunchtime destination – only tables outside available in the garden for those who turned up on spec, so a good job we booked!

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Next Walk - Friday 20th October – Broughton Astley and Sutton in the Elms

Jenny and Valerie are organizing the next walk – see below for the details.



Meeting Point

The Snail's Pace Walk on Friday 20th October will be around Broughton Astley and Sutton in the Elms, meeting at 10.45am at the White Horse in Broughton Astley , 32 Station Road, Broughton Astley, LE96PT.

As Broughton Astley is local, no directions have been provided.

Lunch

We will meet at the White Horse pub at 10.45am to pre-order lunch. You can look at the menu on the day or the menu is available on line:

<https://www.whitehorsepubbroughtonastley.co.uk/menus/>

Walking Route

Start at 11am on paths through Broughton Astley to Sutton in the Elms and then we will pass the Sutton Auction House and return through fields and the village to the White Horse.

Please wear footwear suitable for field walking . (Approx. 3 miles)

Contact

If you would like to come please contact Valerie Connelly **before Monday 16th October** on: 07463 797491 or email valerieconnelly@rocketmail.com

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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

Motorcycle Interest Group

You may have noticed that the Great British Summer wasn't great?



That is, July and August were pretty much a washout and pretty cool too. Not ideal conditions for days out by motorcycle.

So when September rolled round with some warm sunny weather I decided to ask at pretty short notice if any members of the Wycliffe U3a Motorcycle group would like to join me for a wee jaunt out.

Through the miracle of electronic communications I managed to bribe a couple of brave souls to put up with me for a ride out to Whitemoors Farm Antiques Centre and Cafe.

Three of us met up at the Leisure Centre car park. Sharon on her 750cc. Moto Guzzi, Peter on his 400cc Suzuki Burgman scooter and myself - Mark on my 300cc. Honda scooter. When it was clear no one so was going to join us we set off on a cross country bumble in warm dry conditions.

After an exhausting 45 min ride we collapsed into the tea rooms for some absolutely unearned refreshments. We then wandered round the Antiques Centre for a while- making sure not to stand still for too long for fear of being labelled and sold! It was now quite hot and sticky in biking gear so we decided to return home the pretty way.

All- in- all we had an enjoyable morning in excellent company.

Mark Smith.

ESTG Meeting talks 'Space' and 'Blackholes'

by Michael Bates and Nigel Bedford

This months event was a **Talk by Nigel Bedford** on 'Blackholes' but before Nigel's talk and to set the scene, **Michael Bate** gave his interpretation of what '**Space**' meant to him....

Michael started by describing the universe as more than HUGE **as it stands, the universe is the largest object that we are aware of, there is nothing larger.....** Michael also explained that this is almost impossible to imagine within our concept of time, just how big our **Milky Way galaxy** is within our universe, it being some **100,000 light years across, OR 1,000,000,000,000,000 km !!**, one light year is how far you could travel in 12 months travelling at a speed of 186,000 miles every second

Scaling down from the Universe through to our Galaxy though to our Solar System and further reducing down in size etc Michael ran through the stars, planets etc until finally stopping at the smallest space object - a meteorite !!

Michael's potted history of Space was a really nice mixture of amusing descriptions to scarcely credible facts about the different area of space in question and made it an entertaining and informative first half.....

After the Coffee break we reconvened for Nigel's Blackholes presentation.

Nigel started his talk by astonishing our audience, saying the phenomenon of **Blackholes or 'Dark Stars' as they where known, where thought to exist in the 1780s** - (100yrs before the UK got an electricity system), !!!

Although a highly technical subject, Nigel proceeded to give the audience a layman's view as far as was possible, of how learned Scientists and Astronomers had discovered the existence of Blackholes over the years thus proving early thoughts and predictions.

Important- Below is Nigel's summary of his talk as he has put forwards for the readers of this bulletin section and make for **really interesting reading as was Nigel's talk to the Group.**

I have to thank both Nigel and Michael for the work they put in to prepare and present this subject to the Group.

Talk to U3A Science/Technology and Engineering Group

Introduction to Black Holes – Summary

The talk began with an explanation of how fast **an object** on the surface of a planet needs to move **to escape its gravity**. In the case of the **earth this is about 11 km/sec**. Next, **the sun** was imagined as **being squashed into a very small volume** and it was shown that, as you get closer, the escape velocity increases until you reach **3km from centre** when the escape velocity equals the speed of light. **This is the point of no return, any closer approaches will mean you can't escape, as you would have to travel faster than light. This point of no return (or horizon) essentially defines a black hole and encapsulates what a black hole is. It is an object that is so heavy that light can't escape.**

Surprisingly the idea of “**dark stars**” was considered as early as 1783 by **John Michell** who realised that light could not escape from heavy objects. Amazingly, he also realised that the existence of these “invisible” objects could be inferred from the motions of neighbouring visible objects. This technique is still used today.

The talk moved on to how **Einstein (in 1915)** changed the view of how gravity works in that it is a bending of space and time that dictates how objects move. Einstein's mathematical equations were quickly glossed over! Whilst **in the trenches in World War 1 a German Lieutenant, Karl Schwarzschild, was busily solving Einstein's equations** for a specific case of a single body in empty space. His solutions showed mathematical infinities in two places, at the centre of the body (now called the singularity) and at a distance from the body, that we now know as the Schwarzschild radius or event horizon. For many years it was thought that these infinities were mathematical problems and did not correspond to real objects. In **1938 Robert Oppenheimer** (yes, he of the Manhattan project) showed that neutron stars could collapse even further into a completely “gravitationally collapsed object” and John Wheeler coined the term Black Hole in 1967. In the 1970's theories were developed that showed that radiation could be emitted from just outside a black hole (Hawking radiation) and that black holes had a temperature and possessed entropy.

The question of “what happens when you get close to a black hole” was considered. If the sun suddenly became a black hole, the earth would continue to orbit exactly as it does now, although it might be rather dark and cold! If you were to get too close, the strong gravitational field was shown to elongate (or “spaghettify”) you. For small mass black holes, you would “spaghettify” well before you reached the horizon. However, a less well-known fact, for very large black holes it is perfectly possible to

go inside the horizon without any undue effects, although your future would be bleak! You would not escape (or communicate with the outside world) and eventually you would “spaghettify” as you get drawn into the singularity!

Time also shows strange effects. The case of an external observer (Alice) watching someone (Bob) approach the horizon (of a large black hole) showed that Bob’s time would slow down, he would become redder and would never be seen (by Alice) to cross the horizon. Meantime, Bob crosses the horizon, and all is fine, although he will not escape.

Black holes are formed by gravitational collapse of large stars and merging neutron stars. The experimental evidence for black holes is often indirect and inferred from the behaviours of galaxies whose emissions became difficult to explain by other means. Also, at the centre of our own galaxy stars have been observed orbiting at speeds up to 8% the speed of light around an invisible heavy object. Detection of gravitational waves in 2015 from the merger of two black holes is also significant.

In 2019 the first direct image was published of a massive black hole (6 billion times the mass of the sun) in galaxy M87. A second image was released in 2022 of the black hole at the centre of our own galaxy, a mere 4 million solar masses.

The talk concluded with an explanation of the black hole image used in the film “Interstellar” and how one can see the top and bottom of the accretion disk from behind the black hole due to the bending of space



Photography Group September 2023 report

This month's picture topic was "Urban, Suburban and Rural Urban" where we wanted members to find subjects in and around our local towns and submit their pictures in black and white to give it a "street photography" edgy look. However, it seems like the title was a bit pretentious and it would have been easier to have just called it "buildings in black & white".

We had a lot of pictures to view, and it created a lot of discussion which continued without a mid-meeting tea and biscuit break, a cardinal sin for a u3a meeting.

There was a wide variety of buildings from modern architecture in Leicester, Rugby, and London to elegant terraces and in Whitby and back-to-back houses in Plymouth. As a few of the images were sent in, in colour and black & white, by looking at them side by side, we were able to consider how black & white alters the visual impact of the picture. We also had some interesting effects such as a single small object in colour in an otherwise black & white image, some pictures rendered in a sepia to give an antique look and images shown as a negative (whites are black and vice versa) which were really interesting.

There will be samples of all the entries for September, on the gallery page of the Wycliffe Lutterworth website in early in October

As the season is turning, the topic for October is "Autumn Colour" and we hope to see how the countryside is changing from summer green to autumn golds and reds.

Our next will be on Friday 27th October 2023, 10.00 am, in the Ullesthorpe Village Hall.

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

wlu3acamera@outlook.com.

Michael Bates





Ruth Bones



Penny Ross

Singing for Fun - Open to both Lutterworth U3A's

Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd October

We held our second session in the Methodist Church with over 20 people turning up.

We had a very relaxed and enjoyable couple of hours singing a variety of well known songs including:

You Raise Me Up

The Rivers Of Babylon

Hey Jude

Do Re Mi

I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing

Men of Harlech

I Have a Dream

Don't it Make your Brown Eyes Blue

Edelweiss

When the Saints

All Through the Night

Our next session will be on **Tuesday 7th November.**

New members are welcome to join us. Contact Hamish Paterson wlu3asecretary@gmail.com.

We are singing for pleasure with no need to be able to read music. The main requirement is enthusiasm!

We still need more men join the group as I still feel outnumbered!

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

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