u3a Wycliffe Lutterworth

Members Bulletin Jul 2024

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 speakers this month:-

On Thursday July 11th we will be having a return visit by **Dale Osborne** from Watermead Park.

He will be bringing props once again, though this time he will be looking at British wildlife, and talking about his own conservation work and ideas. So if you love nature and walking in the countryside, this one is for you.

We will also be having a visit from **PC James Day** who will be giving us some information about local policing in Lutterworth.

The meeting will start a little earlier to accommodate both speakers.
10.15 **Notices** and **PC James Day** 10.30-11.30 **Dale Osborne**.
Looking forward to seeing you all there.

Andrea

Table of Contents

Lively Discussion 10th June 2024....4

Report for the U3A History Group - May 2024....20

GENTLE CYCLING GROUP....24

FOURTH WEDNESDAY WALKING GROUP....25

Walk Report – 26th June 2024....25

FOURTH WEDNESDAY WALKING GROUP....26

Wednesday 24 July 2024....26

LONG WALK. WEDNESDAY 7TH AUGUST 2024....27

French Cafe....28

Poetry June....28

U3A Snail's Walking Group – June Walk around Lubenham....29

ESTG June event- 'Talk by Derek Briginshaw on the story behind the Plane on the Island Lutterworth ring road'....32

Committee Members....33

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 10th June 2024

To what extent will AI (artificial intelligence) benefit society?

The Lively Discussion Group has been running since January 2010. This topic is one of the most interesting that we have discussed in those 14 years.

We were very surprised to learn that AI has been in existence for the best part of **three quarters of a century e.g. :**

- 1950 – Alan Turing's 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence' - Turing's seminal paper introduced the concept of the Turing Test, a method for determining whether a machine can exhibit intelligent behaviour equivalent to that of a human.
- 1951 – the first game of draughts(checkers) programme developed by Christopher Strachey of Manchester University
- 1961 – the first industrial robot was working on the General Motors assembly line

There are several others from those early days – you can ask ChatGPT!

Considering the understandable concern about robots taking over, it is interesting to compare ChatGPT which has around 86 billion 'neurons' which interconnect, with the human brain which has 100 trillion neurons which interconnect through synapses. This seems to indicate that humans have less to worry about than is sometimes thought. Nevertheless there are significant challenges and risks which will be covered later in this summary, along with information about the BBC's Verify operation and its Disinformation and Social Media correspondent – Marianna Spring.

What is Artificial Intelligence?

A branch of computer science focused on creating systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include learning from experience, recognizing patterns, understanding natural language, solving problems, making decisions, and adapting to new situations.

AI systems achieve their capabilities through various techniques, each playing a crucial role in enabling machines to mimic human intelligence:

a. Machine Learning (ML) involves training algorithms on large datasets to recognize patterns and make decisions. It includes supervised learning (where the model is trained on labelled data), unsupervised learning (where the model finds hidden patterns in unlabelled data), and reinforcement learning (where the model learns by receiving rewards or penalties for its actions).

b. Neural Networks: Inspired by the human brain, neural networks consist of interconnected layers of nodes (neurons) which process data. Deep learning, a type of neural network with many layers, is particularly effective for tasks like image and speech recognition.

c. Natural Language Processing (NLP) enables machines to understand, interpret, and respond to human language. It involves tasks like sentiment analysis, language translation, and conversational agents (chatbots), leveraging techniques such as tokenisation, parsing, and semantic understanding.

d. Robotics: AI in robotics involves creating autonomous machines that can perform physical tasks. This includes perception (using sensors to understand the environment), planning (deciding on the actions to take), and control (executing the actions).

These techniques, often used in combination, allow AI systems to learn from data, identify patterns, understand and generate human language, and interact with the physical world, thus emulating various aspects of human intelligence.

Differences Between Open AI and Google AI

Origins and Missions: **OpenAI,** founded in 2015, aims to ensure AI benefits humanity and emphasizes ethical AI. **Google AI,** part of Google, focuses on advancing AI to solve real-world problems and integrate AI into products.

Research Focus: OpenAI is known for large language models like ChatGPT editions 3 and 4, and reinforcement learning. Google AI's research spans NLP (e.g., BERT), computer vision, healthcare, and robotics.

Openness and Collaboration: OpenAI offers API(Appliance Programming Interface) for its models but is cautious about sharing, whereas Google AI balances open research with proprietary developments, sharing tools like TensorFlow.

Ethics and Safety: Both prioritize AI ethics, with OpenAI focusing on AI safety and alignment, and Google AI adhering to principles of fairness and accountability.

Commercialization: OpenAI uses a capped-profit model, offering products like the OpenAI API. Google AI integrates AI into Google's products and offers services through Google Cloud.

The group identified this month's topic as being particularly interesting because of the comparison with major developments throughout history. We are all familiar with Luddite attitudes which are natural and expected when it takes time to understand innovations and there are perceived threats from these new inventions and developments. Compare innovations in the previous few centuries with what we are facing now:

What our History tells us

18th Century

- Steam Engine (1712): Thomas Newcomen's atmospheric steam engine, improved by James Watt in the 1760s, revolutionized industries by providing a new source of power.
- Electricity Studies: Benjamin Franklin's experiments with electricity, including his famous kite experiment in 1752, contributed to the understanding of electrical phenomena.

19th Century

- Telegraph (1837): Samuel Morse developed the telegraph, enabling long-distance communication.
- Photography (1839): Louis Daguerre developed the daguerreotype process, the first practical method of photography.
- Telephone (1876): Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, transforming personal and business communication.
- Electric Light Bulb (1879): Thomas Edison developed the practical incandescent light bulb, changing how people illuminated their homes and streets.
- Automobile (1886): Karl Benz developed the first gasoline-powered automobile, setting the stage for the automotive industry.
- Radio (1895): Marconi developed the first practical radio signalling system.

20th Century

1. Airplane (1903): The Wright brothers achieved the first powered flight, revolutionizing transportation.
2. Antibiotics (1928): Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin, which led to the development of antibiotics and revolutionized medicine.

3. Television (1920s-30s): Development of electronic television by pioneers like Philo Farnsworth and Vladimir Zworykin transformed entertainment and information dissemination.
4. Nuclear Power (1940s): The development of nuclear fission, leading to nuclear reactors and atomic bombs.
5. Transistor (1947): John Bardeen, Walter Brattain, and William Shockley invented the transistor, revolutionizing electronics and computing.
6. Space Exploration (1960s): The Apollo program, culminating in the moon landing in 1969, showcased human space exploration capabilities.
7. Internet (1960s-90s): Developed initially for military and research purposes, it became publicly accessible in the 1990s, transforming global communication and information sharing.
8. Personal Computer (1970s-80s): Development of personal computers by companies like Apple and IBM revolutionized how people use technology in daily life.

21st Century

1. Smartphones (2007): The introduction of the iPhone by Apple popularized smartphones, integrating computing and communication in a handheld device.
2. Genetic Engineering: Allowed for precise editing of DNA, revolutionizing genetic research and biotechnology.
3. Renewable Energy Technologies: Advances in solar panels, wind turbines, and battery storage have significantly improved the efficiency and adoption of renewable energy sources.
4. Artificial Intelligence: Significant advancements in machine learning and AI, such as deep learning, have impacted various industries, from healthcare to finance.
5. Electric Vehicles (EVs): Tesla and other companies have popularized EVs, leading to advancements in battery technology and a shift towards sustainable transportation.

These examples illustrate the continuous progress in technology, science, and innovation over the centuries, each contributing to shaping the modern world.

<u>U3A Members' Experiences with AI:</u>

a. Healthcare: If you mark yourself present on the screen at the surgery, use the blood pressure machine in the health room, wear an alarm or a device which monitors your blood pressure or sugar levels or monitors your heart rate or even have reminder for taking medicines – these are all AI driven.

b. Communication: Voice assistants help with reminders and hands-free calls, while social media and messaging apps use AI for content curation and predictive text. If you ask Alexa or Siri to play your favourite music you are using AI.

c. E-commerce: AI provides personalised shopping recommendations and customer support chatbots, and assists with financial management tools.

d. Entertainment and Learning: Streaming services use AI for content recommendations, and online learning platforms offer personalised learning experiences.

e. Transport: Car-sharing, taxis and navigation apps use AI for booking and route optimisation. If you use Satnav you are using AI.

<u>To what extent will AI benefit society? AI's responses</u>

a. Healthcare:

- Diagnosis and Treatment: AI can assist in diagnosing diseases more accurately and quickly than traditional methods. Machine learning algorithms can analyse medical images, genetic information, and patient records to identify conditions early and recommend personalized treatments.
- Drug Discovery: AI can accelerate drug discovery processes by predicting how different compounds will interact with targets, thus reducing the time and cost involved in bringing new medications to market.
- Patient Care: AI-driven tools like chatbots and virtual health assistants can provide patients with 24/7 access to medical information and support, improving healthcare accessibility and efficiency.

b. Education:

- Personalized Learning: AI can create customized educational experiences for students, adapting lessons to their individual learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses. This can lead to better educational outcomes and more engaging learning experiences.
- Administrative Efficiency: AI can automate administrative tasks such as grading and scheduling, freeing up educators to focus more on teaching and interacting with students.

c. Economic Growth:

- Productivity and Efficiency: AI can enhance productivity by automating repetitive and mundane tasks, allowing human workers to focus on more complex and creative aspects of their jobs.
- Innovation: AI can drive innovation by enabling new business models and technologies, thus creating new markets and economic opportunities.

d. Environmental Protection:

- Climate Change Mitigation: AI can help in monitoring and predicting environmental changes, optimizing energy usage, and managing natural resources more efficiently.
- Conservation Efforts: AI can aid in tracking wildlife populations, detecting illegal activities such as poaching, and managing conservation areas more effectively.

e. Transportation:

- Autonomous Vehicles: AI can power self-driving cars, which have the potential to reduce traffic accidents caused by human error, decrease congestion, and improve mobility for people who cannot drive.
- Logistics and Supply Chain Management: AI can optimize routes, manage inventories, and predict demand more accurately, leading to more efficient and cost-effective transportation systems.

f. Public Safety and Security:

1) Crime Prevention: AI can analyse data to predict and prevent criminal activities, assisting law enforcement in making communities safer.
2) Emergency Response: AI can improve emergency response times and resource allocation during disasters, potentially saving lives and reducing damage.

Significant challenges and risks associated with AI

- **Job Displacement:** Automation could lead to job losses in certain sectors, necessitating the need for retraining and upskilling programs to help displaced workers transition to new roles. It is likely that there will be enough jobs to go round, but they will be different from those we are used to. Perhaps exciting new fields to explore?

- **Bias and Fairness:** AI systems can perpetuate and even exacerbate existing biases if they are trained on biased data. Ensuring fairness and equity in AI systems is crucial.

- **Privacy and Security:** The widespread use of AI raises concerns about data privacy and security. Robust measures are needed to protect sensitive information.

- **Ethical and Regulatory Issues:** The rapid advancement of AI poses ethical questions and regulatory challenges. How will emotion and empathy be included by machines which are not sentient? Establishing clear guidelines and ethical standards is essential to ensure AI is used responsibly.

Where can you find help?

The BBC has set up BBC Verify. You will hear news readers saying whether or not they have been able to verify information put out during bulletins. You can look online for BBC Verify under the news section.

Disinformation and Social Media Correspondent - Marianna Spring, amongst other things, is charged with exposing fake news as well as examining where Ai is used to sway voters in a particular direction. She has set up characters as under-cover voters in the UK and the US and monitors their social media feeds to uncover the attempts to sway them towards particular parties or actions. It has been reported that first-time UK voters have been targetted by AI to influence their thinking or voting. Reports say that this is emanating from tiktok.

Research by Discussion Group members has highlighted some very valuable uses of AI:

- Checks air content which may attack farmers' crops so that they can spray/treat for that problem rather than blanket spraying.
- 'Vertical' farms for salad and herb production
- Ambulance planning so that the most serious patients or those nearest etc. are responded to in the best manner
- CT Scanners use AI
- Drug development is speeded up, e.g. development of Covid vaccines
- Analysis of patient symptoms is speeded up
- Structures for school lesson plans
- Sensors for climate change

- Parks are used differently by different ethnic groups
- Supply chain and inventories better managed
- The average number of children born to each woman has reduced from 2.4 to 1.79, this may be a blessing in disguise if fewer jobs result from the continued development of AI and we can hand over the repetitive and boring jobs to artificial intelligence
- ChatGPT is not for profit and there are similarities with Sir Tim Berners-Lee not profiting from his invention of the World Wide Web.

It is very clear that robust regulation is needed and we aren't confident that it will be implemented as harm to our children because of the tech giants refusing to set up obviously needed protection from aspects of mobile phones and they may never do so. We are very worried since all governments are way behind the tech curve.

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.

2024 TOPICS

- June – To what extent will AI benefit society?
- July – Is Britain 'great'?
- August – Should we move towards a cashless society?

Below are examples of personalised learning plans when requests were made to AI for each of the topics:

1.TEACH ME TO IMPROVE MY MANDARIN SPEAKING

Create a personalised learning experience for me to improve my mandarin speaking. I live with a native mandarin speaker. I already have a basic knowledge of Pinyin.

Daily Routine

1. Morning Practice (30 minutes)

1. Vocabulary Building: Learn 5-10 new words or phrases each day using flashcards. Use apps like Anki or Pleco to help with spaced repetition.
2. Pronunciation Practice: Spend 10 minutes on pronunciation exercises focusing on tones and difficult sounds. Websites like Yabla or the "Chinese Pronunciation Wiki" can be helpful.

2. Interactive Speaking (Throughout the Day)

1. Conversational Practice: Make a habit of speaking Mandarin with your native speaker room-mate. Set specific times or scenarios where only Mandarin is spoken, such as during meals or while doing household chores.
2. Role-Playing: Engage in role-playing different scenarios (e.g., ordering food, asking for directions, shopping) to practice practical conversational skills.

3. Listening and Imitation (30 minutes)

1. Listening Practice: Listen to Mandarin podcasts, news, or songs. Resources like ChinesePod, Mandarin Corner, or slow Chinese news podcasts are excellent.
2. Shadowing: Repeat sentences after native speakers in audio resources to mimic their pronunciation and intonation. Try app "EchoMobi" or YouTube channels like "Mandarin Corner".

Weekly Activities

1. Language Exchange Sessions (1-2 hours)

1. Formal Sessions: Arrange language exchange sessions where you spend half the time speaking Mandarin and half the time helping your partner with your native language.
2. Feedback Focus: Ask your partner to correct your pronunciation and sentence structures during these sessions.

2. Structured Learning (2 hours)

1. Online Courses: Follow a structured online course for Mandarin learners. Websites like Coursera, edX, or ChineseSkill offer comprehensive lessons from beginner to advanced level

3. Cultural Immersion (1 hour)

2. Media Consumption: Watch Mandarin movies, TV shows, or dramas with subtitles. Try popular shows on platforms like Youku, iQIYI, or Netflix’s Mandarin content.
3. Reading Practice: Read simple Mandarin books, comics, or articles. Websites like The Chairman’s Bao provide news articles graded for different levels.

Monthly Goals

1. Speaking Challenge

- Set a goal to have a 5-minute conversation entirely in Mandarin with your room-mate or a language partner by the end of the first month. Gradually increase the length and complexity of these conversations each month.

2. Language Proficiency Test

- Consider taking the HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi) test to track your progress. Start with HSK Level 1 and work your way up.

Tips for Success

Consistent Practice: Consistency is key. Aim for daily practice, even if it's just for a few minutes.

- Use Technology: Leverage language learning apps like HelloTalk, Tandem, or Italki to connect with other Mandarin learners and native speakers.
- Stay Motivated: Set small, achievable goals and celebrate your progress. Keep a journal of your learning journey to reflect on your improvements.
- Immerse Yourself: Surround yourself with the language as much as possible. Label items around your home in Mandarin, think in Mandarin, and try to immerse yourself in the language throughout your daily activities.

By following this customized plan, you should see significant improvements in your Mandarin speaking skills over time. Good luck, and enjoy your learning journey!

2 TEACH ME TO READ MUSIC

Learning to read music is like learning a new language. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you get started:

Step 1: Understanding the Basics

1. The Stave(Staff):

- Five Lines and Four Spaces: The stave consists of five horizontal lines and four spaces.
- Treble and Bass Clefs: The treble clef (G clef) is used for higher-pitched notes, and the bass clef (F clef) is used for lower-pitched notes.

2. Notes:

Line and Space Notes: Each line and space on the staff represents a different pitch.

Treble Clef Notes:

- Lines: E, G, B, D, F (mnemonic: Every Good Boy Deserves Favour)
- Spaces: F, A, C, E (spells "FACE")

Bass Clef Notes:

1. Lines: G, B, D, F, A (mnemonic: Good Boys Deserve Favour Always)
2. Spaces: A, C, E, G (mnemonic: All Cows Eat Grass)

3. Ledger Lines:

1. Notes that extend above or below the stave use ledger lines. For example, the note above the top line of the treble clef stave is G.

Step 2: Note Values and Rhythm

1. Note Durations:

2. Whole Note: 4 beats
3. Half Note: 2 beats
4. Quarter Note: 1 beat
5. Eighth Note: 1/2 beat
6. Sixteenth Note: 1/4 beat

2. Rests:

1. Each note value has a corresponding rest (e.g., a quarter rest also lasts 1 beat).

3. Time Signatures:

2. Top Number: Indicates how many beats are in a measure.
3. Bottom Number: Indicates what type of note gets one beat (e.g., 4 = quarter note, 8 = eighth note).

Step 3: Key Signatures and Scales

1. Key Signatures:

1. Indicate the key of the piece, showing which notes are consistently sharp or flat.
2. Major keys (e.g., C Major has no sharps or flats; G Major has one sharp)

consists of seven notes with a specific pattern of whole and half steps (W-W-H-W-W-W-H).

3. Minor Scale: Has a different pattern and sound, often associated with a more sombre tone.

Step 4: Practice Tools

1. Flashcards:

4. Use flashcards to drill note recognition. Apps like "Music Tutor" or "Tenuto" can be very helpful.

2. Interactive Apps:

5. Apps like "Simply Piano" and "Yousician" provide interactive ways to practice reading music while playing an instrument.

3. Online Resources:

6. Websites like "musictheory.net" offer free lessons and exercises on note reading, rhythm, and music theory.

Step 5: Practical Application

1. Sight-Reading Practice:

7. Use beginner sight-reading books or websites like "sightreadingfactory.com" to practice reading music in real-time.

2. Simple Songs:

8. Start with simple songs and gradually increase difficulty as you become more comfortable.

3. Regular Practice:

9. Consistent, daily practice is key. Even 15-20 minutes a day can lead to significant improvement.

Step 6: Additional Concepts

1. Dynamics:

10. Indicate the volume of the music (e.g., "p" for piano/soft, "f" for forte/loud).

2. Articulations:

11. Indicate how notes should be played or sung (e.g., staccato, legato).

3. Tempo Markings:

12. Indicate the speed of the music (e.g., Allegro for fast, Adagio for slow).

Suggested Resources

13. Books: "Alfred's Essentials of Music Theory," "Sight Reading for the Classical Guitar" (adapted for any instrument).

14. Apps: "Tenuto," "Music Tutor," "Simply Piano," "Yousician."

15. Websites: "musictheory.net" for theory lessons and exercises, "sightreadingfactory.com" for sight-reading practice.

By following this guide, you'll develop a solid foundation in reading music. Happy practising!

3 TEACH ME THE DIFFERENT VOTING SYSTEMS USED IN MODERN DEMOCRACIES

Modern democracies use a variety of voting systems to elect representatives and make decisions. Each system has its own method for translating votes into political power, with unique advantages and drawbacks. Here are some of the most common voting systems:

1. **First-Past-The-Post (FPTP)**

How It Works:

- Voters cast a single vote for a candidate in their constituency.
- The candidate with the most votes in the constituency wins.

Example: Used in the United Kingdom, Canada, and India.

Advantages:

- Simple and easy to understand.
- Often leads to a clear winner and stable governments.

Disadvantages:

- Can lead to disproportionate representation.
- Minor parties may struggle to win seats.

2. Proportional Representation (PR)

How It Works:

Seats are allocated to parties based on the proportion of votes they receive.

There are various methods of PR, including:

- Party-List PR: Voters select a party, and parties receive seats in proportion to their share of the vote. Used in Israel and Sweden.
- Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP): Combines FPTP and party-list PR. Voters have two votes: one for a candidate and one for a party. Used in Germany and New Zealand.

Advantages:

- More accurate reflection of voter preferences.
- Minor parties have better chances of representation.

Disadvantages:

- Can lead to coalition governments, which may be less stable.
- More complex than FPTP.

3. Single Transferable Vote (STV)

How It Works:

- Voters rank candidates in order of preference.
- A candidate needs a certain number of votes to be elected (quota).
- Votes are counted in rounds. If a candidate exceeds the quota, their surplus votes are transferred to other candidates based on voter preferences. If no one meets the quota, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes are transferred.

Example: Used in Ireland and Malta.

Advantages:

1. Voter preferences are better represented.
2. Reduces wasted votes.

Disadvantages:

- Complex and time-consuming to count.
- Voters may find it difficult to understand.

4. Alternative Vote (AV) / Instant-Runoff Voting (IRV)

How It Works:

- Voters rank candidates in order of preference.
- If a candidate receives a majority of first-preference votes, they win.
- If no candidate has a majority, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed based on the next preferences. This process continues until a candidate has a majority.

Example: Used in Australia for House of Representatives elections.

Advantages:

- Ensures the winner has broad support.

- Reduces the need for tactical voting.

Disadvantages:

- More complex than FPTP
- Can still produce disproportional results

5. Two-Round System

How It Works:

- If no candidate wins a majority in the first round, a second round is held between the top two candidates.
- The candidate with the most votes in the second round wins.

Example: Used in France for presidential elections.

Advantages:

- Ensures the winner has a majority.
- Simple for voters to understand.

Disadvantages:

- More expensive and time-consuming than single-round systems.
- Can discourage voter turnout in the second round.

6. Borda Count

How It Works:

- Voters rank candidates.
- Points are assigned based on rankings (e.g., 1st place = 4 points, 2nd place = 3 points, etc.).
- The candidate with the most points wins.

Example: Rarely used in political elections but sometimes used in organizational elections.

Advantages:

- Reflects broader voter preferences.
- Reduces the impact of tactical voting.

Disadvantages:

- Can be complex to count.
- May not always reflect a majority preference.

7. Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV)

How It Works:

- Voters cast a single vote in multi-member districts.
- The candidates with the most votes win the seats.

Example: Used in some Japanese and Taiwanese elections.

Advantages:

- Simple to understand.
- Allows for minority representation.

Disadvantages:

- Can lead to fragmented representation.
- Encourages tactical voting and vote splitting.

Each voting system has its own implications for representation, governance, and voter engagement. The choice of system can significantly influence political outcomes and the nature of democracy in a country.

Table of Contents

Report for the U3A History Group - May 2024

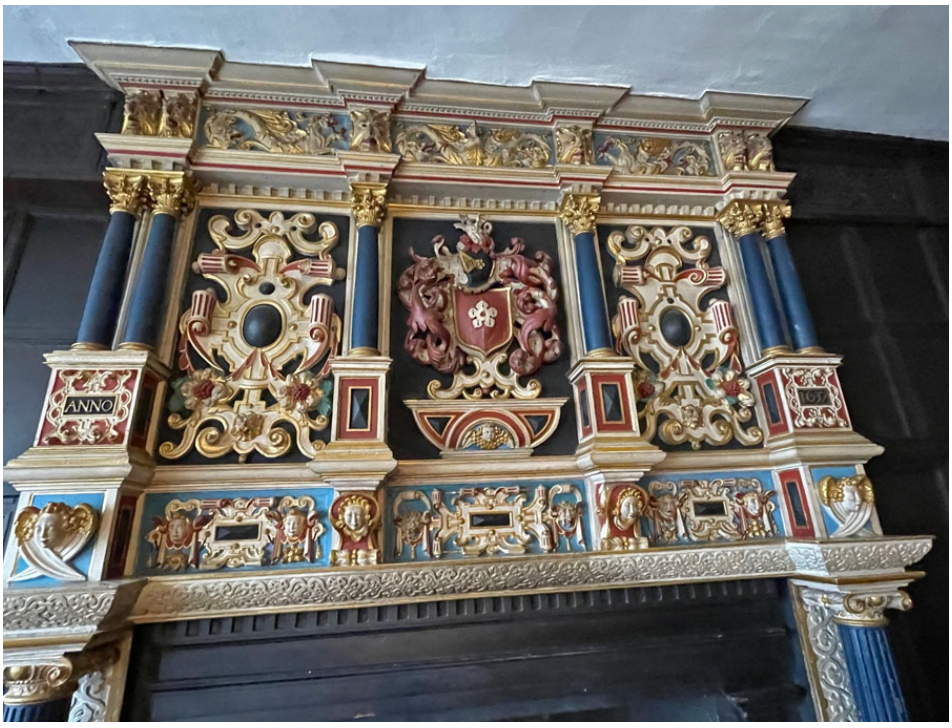
Our meeting this month was an interesting visit to Leicester's beautiful medieval Guildhall. We assembled in the courtyard on a blustery damp day for a guided tour. Our guide was knowledgeable and engaging and she took us round the various rooms in this venerable old building, highlighting some of the more dramatic aspects of its history over the centuries. One story told of the townspeople throwing stones, slates and anything they could find down on marauding soldiers during the notoriously violent attack on Leicester in the Civil War as the Mayor and townsmen discussed how to handle the crisis in the Great Hall.

The Guildhall was originally built by the Guild of Corpus Christi as a base for its charitable and religious activities and a meeting place for the members of the Guild. As its name implies, this was a religious guild not a trade guild and it had a guild chapel in St Martin's church next door (now the Cathedral). Such guilds were powerful and wealthy organisations and every town had at least one. Their members drawn from the more prosperous merchants of medieval towns and it was important for business success to be a member, especially for what we today might call networking. Such guilds also played a significant role in social welfare for poorer people with organised charity and almsgiving feast days and some wealthier members set up endowments to sponsor young people in their careers. Members also left considerable sums in their wills for the Poor. However, it was their religious function that brought about their downfall as one of their main roles was to employ priests to pray for the souls of the dead in Purgatory and this Doctrine was dismissed by the new reformed Protestantism that emerged under King Edward VI. Like the monasteries a few years earlier, their assets were seized by the Crown after a new Statute outlawed them in 1547. The Town Council was able to purchase the now redundant property in Leicester and so it became Leicester's Town Hall for many years. In 1836, a new use was found for some of the buildings on the site when a new police force was set up. Evidence of this can be seen in the old police cells and constable's house that survive today.

Over time the building was extended and extensions added creating an enclosed courtyard. The main hall shows evidence of its medieval origins with its timber framed structure. A great fireplace was added in Hall in the 16thC and various murals dating from the 17th and 18th centuries still survive. It's an imposing space, Most of us had seen this hall before but not the other rooms which turned out to be also remarkably interesting and considerably more extensive that we expected. The other rooms were equally grand in different ways and they included an early library, a room for visiting circuit judges or lawyers to stay when the building was used as a court in the 18th and 19th centuries and a slightly more 'modern' 19thC meeting room which is now the base of the prestigious Leicester Archaeological and Historical Society. By Victoria's reign, the Guildhall was becoming impractical as a town hall and Leicester's Civic pride demanded a new one so it ceased to be the town hall in 1876

when the new purpose-built Town Hall on the Horsefair was opened. By the end of the 19thC its old buildings had been in decline for many years and becoming ramshackle. They might even have been demolished until a far-sighted council in the 1920s decided to preserve and restore them. How lucky for Leicester that they succeeded.

Viv



Future meetings

THURSDAY July 4th Visit to the Charterhouse in Coventry, (Viv). The minibus leaves from the Leisure Centre Car Park at 12.30. We should be back by 4.30

WEDNESDAY July 24th Visit to the Courteenhall Estate. (Mandy)

GENTLE CYCLING GROUP

Co-ordinator: Sue Creeden
01455 557888.

We welcomed two new members to our group on our first ride of the month. They ride a three-wheeled tandem called 'The Chariot'. We set off in a breeze with a chill on it down to Ashby Parva and then whizzed down Dunton Lane – fortunately no cars - to Dunton Bassett. Turning left we headed for Leire and at the church turned right down (yes, more down!) to the junction with the Frolesworth/Broughton Road. Here we cycled straight across up the farm lane. At the top it becomes a gravel track which seemed to have got a bit more rutted since we last did it! We then followed the old Roman Road to Fosse Meadows where enjoyed a coffee break in the warm sunshine. Back in the saddle we cycled up to Frolesworth and on to the big hill into Ullesthorpe. From here we, again took the longer but gentler route back to the Garden Centre via Ashby Parva.

Week two saw a large turnout of 9 members and a guest, so we split into two groups. This week we set off from Moretons in Gilmorton and pedalled down to Kimcote. At the end of the village we turned right up Gurney Lane and back round to Walton. We then headed for Upper Bruntingthorpe and round to Bruntingthorpe. The plan was to take a break and our leading group found a suitable field entrance just after the village. However, we had just grabbed our water bottles when a mini farm vehicle arrived wanting access to the field. They were about to herd a large flock of sheep down the road in the direction we were heading. Time to quickly move on! Turning right up towards Arnesby, we took a left at the top and down and up the gated road to Peatling Magna. (Only one car to spoil the fun!) The route back was through Peatling Parva and up to Gilmorton. It was surprisingly warm for the short time we sat outside for coffee.

For the first time ever, we managed to get a record third ride in this month. On a lovely morning six of us set off from the Elms, Lutterworth, riding across the motorway, down the lane to Misterton, and along the footpath to Walcote. We crossed the A4304 and headed to South Kilworth. From here with we whizzed down and puffed up the hills to Stanford. Continuing on, we journeyed through Swinford and on to Shawell. We then turned right and pedalled back up to Swinford Corner and took Swinford Road back to the Elms – a downhill finish for a change! The lanes were quiet and the countryside is so lush and green at this time of year. A very pleasant 13 ½ miles, topped off with coffee outside again.

The next ride will be on Wednesday 10th July.

Why not come and join our friendly group? As our name suggests, the rides – of between 10 and 14 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

FOURTH WEDNESDAY WALKING GROUP

Walk Report – 26th June 2024

We started from Fosse Meadows. It was very warm so it was decided to make the walk a little shorter. Stephen Carter and Rawdon Bottom were the leaders and we set off on the road along the Fosse Way to reach a footpath that went across fields planted with rape to Frolesworth. These fields were challenging as the farmer had allowed the rape to fall across the footpath which meant progress was extremely slow. Once at Frolesworth we joined the Leicestershire Round where walking was easier. Reaching Claybrooke Mill we took advantage of the shade to have a break. Leaving the mill we again encountered another rape field where the farmer had let the rape fall over the footpath. Fortunately, it was only a small field. We then crossed another field which is a good example of the ancient ridge and furrow ploughing. Reaching Claybrooke Magna we walked up Bell Street and leaving the Leicestershire Round got onto Main Road to then drop down to the Pig in Muck. Taking Manor Road we returned to the fields. Crossing several of them (no rape fields, thankfully) we reached the drive of Claybrook Lodge Farm. At the end of the drive we got onto the Fosse Way (and the Leicestershire Round again) to walk back to the car park at Fosse Meadows.

Thank you Stephen and Rawdon for leading an enjoyable, if perhaps a little challenging, walk.

Peter Creeden

FOURTH WEDNESDAY WALKING GROUP

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

Wednesday 24 July 2024

Walk Organiser:- Ruth and Alan Bilton

Meeting Point and Time For Lifts:- Lutterworth Recreation Ground car park at **09.15am** to leave at **09.20am**.

Start Point and Time: The meeting point is the **car park of the Welford and Sulby Reservoir** (parking free). Start of walk at 10.00am.

Toilets are available from 09:45 at the Wharf Inn (NN6 6JQ) where lunches can also be pre-ordered. FYI- it is approximately a 500yard walk to the start.

Directions to start:- Leave Lutterworth on Market Harborough road A4304. Turn right onto Station Road after North Kilworth Marina. At the next junction turn right towards Welford. After the Wharf Inn take the left hand turn to Naseby, the reservoir car park is very shortly on the left after the turn. Distance: 8.6 miles

Route and Distance:- Route takes in Sulby Abbey, goes through woods - could be muddy after rain, and then via quiet roads to join Reservoir Walk ending in the car park. Distance approx 5 miles with three stiles.

Lunch Arrangements:- Drop in at the Wharf Inn to pre-order before making your way to the start.

LONG WALK. WEDNESDAY 7TH AUGUST 2024

WALK LEADER George Robertson. Mobile No. 07986827270

This is an all day walk of **10 miles** and I intend to book lunch at a pub half way round so need to know names of those joining the walk at least a week ahead of the day.

START POINT:- Lyddington Village. Walk will start at **10am**
Meet near the village green which is opposite The Old White Hart inn. Park on Main St. but leave gaps for passing traffic.
Use The Old White Hart post code **LE15 9LR** for sat nav purposes. Various routes are possible, I used A14, A43, A6003 then B672. 32 miles 50 minutes
If you approach through Caldecott on the A6003 take care when turning onto the B672 as this is on a sharp bend in the village. A mile or so further on the road does a sharp left then shortly after **a sharp right. You leave this road by going straight on to the minor road at the sharp right.**

WALK INFO.
We leave Lyddington along field tracks to reach the village of Seaton where we will have a coffee stop in the church yard. We continue mostly across sheep pastures, through the pretty village of Bisbrooke and on into the historic town of Uppingham where we stop for lunch. For those who join us but would prefer to do their own thing at lunchtime there are plenty of tearooms, takeaways and a Co-Op supermarket. It is an interesting town to wander around while the pub lunch group eat. I'm expecting to be in Uppingham for about an hour. Suitably refreshed we complete the walk by returning via the Eyebrook Reservoir. If you still have a little coffee left in your flask we could have a short stop and admire the reservoir views.
The walking is mostly good under foot across undulating countryside (yes there are hills!). There are approximately 10 stiles, 8 of these are to avoid walking along roads so you have the option of staying on the tarmac if you prefer. I expect to be back at our cars around 4 pm.

In view of the distance to the start, car sharing makes sense. I am happy to offer two spaces. If you can offer or need a lift let me know and I will try to match people up.

I'm happy to send a GPX file of the walk for anyone interested.

George

French Cafe

27 June 2024

We had a pleasant exchange of news. We remembered Françoise Hardy who died recently, and then started a new crossword.

The next meeting will be on 25 July 2024.

Sue

Poetry June

The topic for June was "The Necessities of Life", an easy topic embracing food, water, clothing and shelter , and, as it turned out, many other things.

Water featured in poems by Larkin, Duffy and in Shelley's delightful "The Cloud". Several poems were dedicated to food - delicious poetry about strawberries, blackberries, oysters, apples, vegetables and chamomile tea. Shelter was the theme of Gillian Clarke's "Coming Home" and Miroslav Holub's deeply moving "Five Minutes after the Air Raid".

There was an interesting variety of other things considered to be necessities. So we also had poems about education, love, sense of identity, music, love, and alcohol.

A lovely session and outside in the sunshine.

July's topic will be "Science and Technology ".

Sylvie

U3A Snail's Walking Group – June Walk around Lubenham

I think we all had a lovely time in Lubenham on Friday 21st June. The weather was beautiful - finally a taste of summer! And the heritage trail made for an interesting and leisurely stroll around this quintessentially English village. Thank you for coming along.

Next Walk: Friday 19th July

We will meet at the Glen Parva Manor,
The Ford, Glen Parva, Leicester, LE2 9TL.

Please meet at 10.45am to order lunch and the walk will start at 11am.

The walk goes along a quiet country lane to South Wigston and back along the canal, with the option of including a walk on paths around Bouskell Park in Blaby. It is about 3 miles and a little further if we include the Park. There are no stiles.

Directions from Lutterworth to Glen Parva Manor, The Ford, Glen Parva, Leicester, LE2 9TL

1. Take the A426 towards Blaby
2. Stay on the A426/Blaby bypass around Blaby
3. At the 4th roundabout take the 1st exit onto the A426/Leicester Road
4. At the traffic lights turn right onto Little Glen Road/B582
5. After 0.6 mi, and just before a mini roundabout, turn right onto The Ford and follow it round to the car park

Lunch

We will have lunch at Glen Parva Manor. Phone: 0116 2477604
You can see the menu at:

https://www.glenparvamanorpub.co.uk/menus/

We will meet at 10.45am to order lunch.

Contact

Please let me know by **Monday 15th July** if you would like to join us and whether you are having lunch.

Email: daryl.graham@btinternet.com Phone: 07722904977

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.

ESTG June event- 'Talk by Derek Briginshaw on the story behind the Plane on the Island Lutterworth ring road'

This event held at Lutterworth Cricket club, was a request by ESTG members, some of which had heard Derek's talk previously some 4 years ago, but many members have since joined Wycliffe U3a and the ESTG, so it was the right time for Derek who was involved throughout the Project to give another presentation of this interesting story including his own involvement and inside experience in the construction, assembly and erection of this full sized aeroplane in its prominent sited position.

Many people living in Lutterworth and visiting the town have been fascinated by this iconic full sized replica aeroplane situated on the island at the entrance to Lutterworth on the ring road from M1 junction 20 but the story behind it's inception is just a fascinating, in fact more so.

I will not be giving chapter and verse here on Dereks talk, as apart from there being too many twists and turns in the story, it needs Derek to tell this in his own words which held everyone's interest throughout the 2 hour presentation ….however below is a time line of the story starting with the main inspiration- Sir Frank Whittle firing of his first Jet Engine and the flying testbed Gloucester E28/39…

Time Line for the making of the Replica Gloucester E28/39

1. **April 1937** - **First Whittle engine run** at British Thomson Houston works Rugby

2. **1938 - Power Jets**, (Sir Frank Whittles Company) **move to Ladywood works Lutterworth.**

3. **May 1941 - E28 /39 first flight** RAF at Cranwell

4. **1942 - Power Jets** Ltd move to **Whetstone site**

5. **Circa1995** Frank Whittle Commemorative group formed.

6. **1997** Idea formulated to build & erect a full size E28/39 profile sculpture on roundabout, M1- J20 link Rd

   Fibre glass panels supported by an internal steel structure of circa 5 tons. Steelwork design qualified by 'Ove Arup' Consulting Engs.

7. **1999 Formal approval** to build received from H.D.Council.

   Agreement reached to **produce 2nd aircraft** for Rushmore district council at Farnborough.

   Farnborough group to design their own mounting arrangement.

8. **2000, Build of panel patterns commenced** in a barn at Grange farm Claybrooke and 'Torclad Ltd of Blaby contracted to produce all glass Fibre moulded panels.

9. **Sept 2001**, **Project moved to Rolls Royce Anstey** for assembly of both aircraft after Grange Farm required barn for potato harvest.

10. **2002** Lutterworth & Farnborough groups join to become 'Frank Whittle Commemorative Trust'

11. **2003 Erection** of finished Replica Aircraft **scheduled for 27th April** on roundabout. The whole tripod structure to be anchored to a 70 ton concrete foundation block on Traffic Island.

12. **2003 18th May Official unveiling of Lutterworth's Replica E28/39** aircraft by Ian Whittle (Frank Whittle's son)

13. **Official unveiling of Farnborough aircraft** by Sir Ralph Robins MD Rolls Royce **28th Aug 2003**

* * * * *

I would like to extend on behalf of the Engineering group our thanks to Derek for his extremely interesting talk and to anyone who gets a chance to hear Derek's story on the manufacture of this wonderful replica in the future, I can highly recommend it, not a talk to be missed…..

Just a reminder that we have no ESTG meeting in July or August but start back in September with a visit to the Canal Museum, boat trip and lunch……..more info to follow.

Chris

Committee Members

Office	Name
Chairperson ….....	Colin Beadle
Secretary ….....	Denise Taylor
Treasurer.....	Nigel Bones
Speaker Finder.....	Andrea Nichol
Minutes Secretary.....	Anne Dean
Membership Secretary ….....	Linda Teague
Co-opted Committee Member …	Mike Chapman
Committee Member.....	Ruth Bones
Committee Member.....	Sue Poulter
Committee Member.....	Michael Bates
Committee Member ….....	Sally Wood
Committee Member ….....	Richard Hill

Note: Any committee member can be contacted via our email address:

thewycliffelutterworthu3a@gmail.com

Table of Contents