u3a Wycliffe Lutterworth

Members Bulletin **Sep 2026**

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 10 – 10.30am. An opportunity to meet friends old and new, book exchange, information about trips etc.

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On Thursday September 10th 2026, our speakers will be **James and Sam** from 'Silvertime Legal'.

Their presentation will be about Estate Planning.

We all have issues regarding the new tax laws relating to pensions, which come in 2027. It is very confusing to me, so I'm hoping that James and Sam can help with information to make life easier for us.

All welcome. Venue: Methodist Church.
Time:
10 am for Refreshments:
10.25 for Notices,
10.30- 11.30 Speakers.

Looking forward to seeing you all there. Remember it's free coffee and tea.

Andrea.

NOTICES

ESTGroup

The date chosen for the Annual Luncheon in October clashed with the normal ESTG date and we therefore elected to cancel our meeting. We unfortunately then had to alter arrangements for our September meet.

Colin

Dates for your diary

Forthcoming Speakers Wycliffe Lutterworth u3a. .

September 10th James and Sam. 'Silverlink Legal'

October 8th Roxanne Dinsdale 'Snake Charming'

November 12th Martin Lloyd. Passports, Traitors and Spies

December 10th. Richard Hill. Christmas Entertainment

January 14th Alan Coltman. Mexico

February 11th Paul Lille. The Beatles

March 11th AGM. New Commitee members needed.

April 8th. David Hanger. 200 yrs of Railway

Andrea.

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Lively Discussion August 2026

Does good customer service still exist?

Research shows that customer service is generally considered to be acceptable. Interestingly of the 5 UK top companies who are rated good, 4 of them don't have shareholders. Most of us found online and automated systems unsatisfactory or frustrating. This was put down to our generation being used to dealing with people face to face. It was felt that younger generations are used to online and recorded messaging and consider it the norm. Several experiences good and bad were shared, together with reminiscences of being known by local shop keepers and businesses. We can help ourselves by ensuring that we have all the necessary paperwork to hand, and being assertive and not aggressive in our dealings with customer service employees.

We believe that poor customer service is due to budget restrictions and lack of training. Some well-known companies use subcontractors to handle their products and therefore any complaints. This means that people are treated as consumers and not individuals. Examples of this are credit cards which are labelled with the names of reputable companies but administered by others.

Some of us were aware that the person answering the phone has a script and little or no autonomy when dealing with complaints. Companies have moved from people to systems, and the questions listed under FAQs have never related to any queries which we have had! There was also an example of call handlers being expected to handle a minimum number of calls, rather than resolve the customers' problems. We ended with the hope that businesses would deal with customers as individuals rather than the impersonal attitude to consumers.

Dot

History Group: Visit to Drayton House, Northamptonshire, August

Twenty-two members enjoyed a visit to this exceptional medieval country house, which sits in a vast park of 200 acres in the Northamptonshire countryside. The approach to the house is impressive with its towers, battlements and cupolas – more like a palace!

Drayton House has remained in the hands of the same family for centuries, passing only by inheritance since it was last sold in 1361. We were informed

that no government money has ever been received for the upkeep of the house, which is currently owned by the Stopford Sackville family.

Begun in 1328, there have been changes to the house in each century since – including transformation in the Baroque style in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. There is a unique spiral cantilever oak staircase dating from around 1680 and an embroidered State Bed from 1700. King James 1 visited from nearby Apethorpe Palace to enjoy the hunting.

After an informative guided tour, we enjoyed a typical English tea – with a beautiful selection of homemade cakes - in Lowick Village Hall.

The house is not open to the public but is available for prebooked parties.

Mandy.

* * *

Thank you very much to Mandy for organising this excellent trip.

<u>Future meetings</u>

Our September meeting is the trip to Wrest Park on Wednesday September 2nd
We will be back in Dunton Bassett VH on Tuesday October 6th, from 2 'til 4pm.

Viv

GENTLE CYCLING GROUP

Co-ordinator: Sue Creeden

01455 557888

On 5th August, five brave cyclists set off into the unknown aiming to cycle 12 miles from Moretons in Gilmorton. I say brave because I issued a health warning in advance as this area is not that familiar to me. It was a route Sue had taken us on in May. I enjoyed it and wanted to repeat it, if possible! We nearly missed a section out but I checked my map just in time and we successfully completed the route as planned. From Gilmorton we went to Ashby Magna, left and right into Holt Lane. Left and over A426 into Shuttleworth Lane. Through Cosby. Coffee at Attfields before crossing back over A426 to the edge of Countesthorpe, Willoughby Waterleys and right again back to Ashby Magna and Gilmorton.

Thanks Fran for leading this one.

It was another bright, sunny morning for ride two. This time there were six of us that again met at Moretons to enjoy one of our favourite rides. The route took us through Kimcote, round Gurney Lane to Walton, through Upper Bruntingthorpe and down to Bruntingthorpe. Then it was up Lutterworth Road towards Arnesby, with a quick water break at the top, followed by the hilly gated road to Peatling Magna. More water was required before pedalling back up to Gilmorton via Peatling Parva. Moretons garden was busy but thankfully the leading ladies managed to grab a table in the shade for coffee.

Kilworth Springs Golf Club was our meeting point for week three. There was a chill on the breeze to start with but it soon developed into another beautiful morning. Jane led us on the ‘left turn ride’ through South Kilworth and left down to Stanford on Avon. Turning left again into the nice quiet lane (Yelvertoft Road) we pedalled up towards Hemplow Hill, a very challenging climb especially for those without

additional power! However, just before the top, another left turn took us back towards Welford and South Kilworth. Coffee was enjoyed in the sunshine at the Golf Club.

You may have seen a similar picture before but this time the sun was shining!

Thank you Jane for a delightful 12-mile ride through beautiful countryside.

The cycle ride on 26th August was led by Paula from Morton's in Gilmorton. The weather forecast was 'heavy to light rain showers' so we kept our fingers crossed and braved it. Fortunately, luck was on our side and the rain held off all morning. We took the Lutterworth Road out of Gilmorton and headed to Walcote. Then turned right on the A4304 and second left towards Swinford Corner and on to Swinford. Here we turned right to Catthorpe and stopped for a cuppa at the Farm Shop. Bearing in mind that rain was forecast, we then headed for home. 3 of the group went to straight home to North Kilworth, another to Lutterworth via Misterton and the remainder back to Gilmorton. The ride was approximately 15 miles so hopefully we are all getting fitter!

Our thanks go to Paula for organising this one.

Weather permitting, the next ride will be on Wednesday 16th September. If you would like to join us, you will be very welcome. We cycle roughly 10 – 13 miles with stops along the way and enjoy a coffee either en route or at the end. All you need is a roadworthy bike and a helmet. Just get in touch.

FOURTH WEDNESDAY WALKING GROUP

August 2026 Walk Report

David Hanger and Stephen Carter led the walk.

Following a period of almost zero rainfall in the preceding months it was actually raining as we arrived at Quorn and Woodhouse station! It did not last long and the air seemed refreshed after it stopped.

Our small group of 7 skirted around Quorn village, though streamside woodland and open fields to reach an old bridge over the Great Central Railway. Shortly afterwards we stopped for refreshment under a very old tree and observed the rail traffic on the nearby line.

Our return journey followed footpaths through arable and pasture fields before joining a track which became a minor road. We went under a recently replaced Great Central Railway bridge and emerged into a lane with highly desirable, prestigious properties, e.g. three garages and electronic gates.

Everyone stayed for lunch at the Butler Henderson cafe which was built to replicate the atmosphere of a typical 1940's station cafe.

Stephen Carter

FOURTH WEDNESDAY WALKING GROUP

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

Date of walk : Wednesday 23 September 2026

Walk Organisers : Alan and Ruth Bilton

Meeting Point For Lifts:- If you require a lift please phone 07771756013 otherwise we will start from Yelvertoft at 10am.

Start Point and Time: Corner of Wards Lane, Yelvertoft (Between Knightley Arms and the Reading Room). Park on Wards Lane or the main road. Toilet is available at the Reading Room from 9.30 to 10 am for a small donation.

Directions to start : From Lutterworth follow the A426 take the first left and next right towards Swinford. Turn right in Swinford towards Stanford on Avon. Continue on that road through Clay Coton to Yelvertoft 8.1 miles.

Route and distance: Approximately 4.6 miles with 3 stiles (one is a bit difficult). We walk up Wards Lane to join a footpath across the fields, eventually joining the canal. Return via the canal towpath to rejoin the road into Yelvertoft. A small section of the canal path is tricky

The Knightley Arms does not open until 2.30pm so we suggest you eat at the Chequers in Swinford or one of the pubs in Crick.

Photography Group

Visit to the Great Central Railway at Loughborough

On Thursday 27 August, 13 members met up at Loughborough Great Central railway station on the wettest day of the summer thus far. We had booked a guided tour to include the Signal Box and the Engine Shed. Attendees drifted in between 10.00 and 10.40 and paid their fees at two different ticket office windows - £5 for a platform ticket and £5 for the tour. Whilst we were waiting for everyone to arrive time was spent on the platform. Many of the members hadn't been to the Great Central Railway for many years.

Phil and Steve provided a very comprehensive history of the Great Central Railway from its earliest days in the 1840s as the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway through to the opening of the London Extension (Between Nottingham and just north of Aylesbury) in 1899. We heard that the preserved Great Central Railway started up in 1969 by leasing the station and trackbed at Loughborough through to operating through to the former Birstall station (now Leicester North). In recent years the line has been working with its northern neighbour with a view to reconnecting to Ruddington, just south of Nottingham.

As we walked through the station the history kept coming and we took the opportunity to photograph the WH Smith's news stall, the trolleys with holiday makers luggage and all the other paraphernalia associated with running a rail service.

We learnt the history of the diesel engines parked up en route to the Engine Shed. Here we were able to see work on a wide variety of steam engines. Some were receiving essential day to day maintenance whilst others were being rebuilt from the wheels up, due to wear and tear through their use on the railway.

From the Engine Shed we headed out into the rain to see the renovated bridge over the canal – the first part of a 500m gap between Loughborough and the line from Nottingham. The bridge over the Midland Mainline was reinstated in 2017. A series of bridges and embankments will complete the link in the future.

Finally we visited the Signal Box and the purpose of each lever and instrument were explained to allow the safe passage of trains over the railway.

We all met up again in the Buffet for lunch before heading home. Massive thanks to our guides Phil and Steve for the history and answering our many questions.

We took many photos over the course of our 2.5 hour visit and I look forward to seeing them at our October meeting.

David Hanger

Poetry Notes

The subject for August was "Family " and we had lots of fun exploring this from all different angles. We kicked off with a reading of lyrics to "Family " by the late great Dolly Parton, then covered mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, children, husbands and wives. Some of the poems were sad, some happy, some philosophical. Dot read Pam Ayres ' hilarious "They should have asked my Husband " which she is also going to read at a future u3a event.

September's topic is "Fantasy " so ghosts, goblins, fairies etc will hopefully feature.

Sylvie

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ESTG - August 2026

Visit to the deHavilland Aircraft Museum

Our August meeting was a visit to the deHavilland Aircraft Museum at Salisbury Hall, London Colney, near St.Albans in Hertfordshire. Originally planned for early 2025 our belated visit was very much worth the wait!

Eighteen of the group enjoyed a very enjoyable day which included refreshments on arrival, a very detailed two hour guided tour and time to explore the various exhibits on the site.

Ready for Take off

The “deHavilland” story is a true epic and pivotal in our - and all - aviation history.

Geoffrey de Havilland (later Sir Geoffrey de Havilland- 1944) was born 27/07/1882. An aviation pioneer and aerospace engineer. Aviation was in its infancy and much of Geoffrey de Havilland’s work was truly pioneering.

After graduating from engineering training de Havilland pursued a career in automotive engineering, building cars and motorcycles. It was during this period he designed his first aero engine and had the prototype made. In 1909 he married and in the same year his career path changed to designing, building and flying aircraft.

With money borrowed from his grandfather he constructed his first aircraft. Its first flight in December 1909 proved to be very short and he crashed the plane. A new biplane was constructed and he successfully flew this in December 1910. Basically he taught himself to fly.

It was in December 1910 he joined HM Balloon Factory at Farnborough (later the Royal Aircraft Factory). Over the next three years de Havilland designed or participated in the design of a number of experimental aircraft.

In May 1914 he was recruited to become the chief designer at Airco in Hendon. He designed many aircraft for Airco – all aircraft designated by his initials DH. Numerous de Havilland designed "DH" aircraft were flown by the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War. De Havilland served in the RFC during the war and in April 1916 was promoted to Captain and a Flight Commander. In 1918 he was awarded the OBE.

In 1920 his employer Airco was bought by the armaments group Birmingham Small Arms. This episode was short lived as BSA shut down Airco in July of that year as not being economically viable.

The deHavilland Aircraft Company was established 25/09/1920 with the help of former Airco owner George Holt Thomas.

In the following decades the aircraft designed and built by deHavilland was truly staggering.

The period witnessed designs moving from bi plane to mono plane. From iconic bi planes like the Gypsy Moth / Tiger Moth to the famous DH98 "Mosquito" and post war the jet age of the "Comet", "Vampire", "Venom" and "Sea Vixen". To mention just a few!!

There was incredible innovation -

The "Queen Bee" – developed from the Tiger Moth and recognised as the first mass produced radio controlled target drone. Queen Bee was controlled using a standard rotary telephone dial. Each number dialled sent a specific audio radio tone instruction to the aircraft for engine / flight control. This was in 1935!

The incredible DH98 "Mosquito" – more on that later.

The Comet 1a – the first commercial passenger jet. First flight was in 1949 and introduced into service by BOAC in May 1952. Tragically a number of aircraft crashed with significant loss of life. Crashes were due to metal fatigue in the pressurised fuselage a phenomenon not fully appreciated at the time.

The revised Comet 4 series - debuted in 1958 - remained in commercial service until 1981. Military variants of the comet continued in service until 2011.

The DH -121 “Trident” airliner. Known as the Hawker Sidley HS -121 Trident by the time it entered service in 1964. Advanced avionics allowed the “Trident” to be the first airliner in revenue service to make blind landings in poor visibility.

The DH 98 “Mosquito” W4050

In 1936 with war clouds looming attention was drawn to designs for a twin engine medium bomber.

In September 1936 the British Air Ministry issued a specification setting out parameters for such an aircraft. Geoffrey de Havilland had ideas – building on his own existing aircraft designs and construction techniques.

By 1938 the ministry was considering designs using “non-strategic” materials. In July 1938 Geoffrey de Havilland wrote to Air Marshal Wilfrid Freeman expounding the use of timber (regarded as a non-strategic material) in an airframe to meet the Ministry Specification. Air Marshall Freeman was supportive of the design concept but Lord Beaverbrook – Minister of Aircraft Production – dismissed such and labelled the concept as “Freemans Folly”. Geoffrey de Havilland was ordered to scrap the project and concentrate on other “war works”.

Over the period of two years there were numerous changes in Ministry specification etc. Whilst all this was going on Geoffrey deHavilland moved the design team to the relative secrecy of Salisbury Hall (site of museum) to work on what became known as the DH98 “The Mosquito”.

War production priorities caused delays and cancellation in the project but deHavilland was committed to the DH98. The first contract for the aircraft was issued 1st March 1940 by Air Marshal Roderic Hill. The prototype first flew 25th November 1940. One pivotal moment in development was during aircraft trials in January 1941 when the prototype DH98 W4050 outpaced a Spitfire by over 40mph.

When the Mosquito entered service – 20th September 1941 - it was one of the fastest operational aircraft in the world.

And there was a lot more to come.

The twin engine, two seater DH98 “Mosquito” went on to become arguably the first and finest multi role combat aircraft of its time.

A total of 7781 “Mosquitos” were built. (In context to 7277 Lancaster bombers).

The DH98 “Mosquito” was used in numerous roles - photo reconnaissance, fighter, night fighter, pathfinder, precision bombing, anti -submarine, development of the Highball bouncing bomb and more. Also in the livery of “BOAC” it flew high speed blockade running flights to neutral Sweden - and carried the occasional passenger in the bomb bay!!

The aircraft / crew loss rate was remarkably low in relation to other aircraft of WWII

A DH98 Mosquito could carry a similar bomb load of an American B17 (4,000 lb) to Berlin.

Not bad for an aircraft made almost entirely of wood – spruce / balsa and plywood! Plus - two incredibly powerful Rolls Royce Merlin engines.

All from an aircraft originally regarded by the Ministry as a “Folly”

We learnt about the development of wood adhesives (and Norman de Bruyne) plus the involvement of a cigarette vending machine manufacturer (Molins) in respect of armaments.

Sadly due to their wood construction very few examples exist today but we were privileged to view three aircraft – including the prototype W4050 that was built just a few yards away from where it is now exhibited.

The prototype W4050 was ordered to be destroyed – but the airframe ended up being dismantled and hidden for decades. - The story just goes on!

The museum has some incredible exhibits - walking through the fuselage of the only remaining deHavilland Comet 1a is a surreal experience.

In 1960 deHavilland was acquired by the Hawker Siddeley Group.

In 1977 operations became part of British Aerospace (BAe). In the mid 1990's aircraft production ceased at BAe Hatfield.

Geoffrey de Havilland received many honours through his life.

Knighted in 1944 New Year Honours. – Sir Geoffrey de Havilland.

Salisbury Hall dates from 1507.

Winston Churchill used the quiet of the estate to write speeches. His mother Lady Randolph Churchill moved to the Hall in 1905.

In the 1930's Sir Nigel Gresley lived in Salisbury Hall – here he designed legendary steam locomotives such as the A4 "Mallard".

The deHavilland Aircraft Company moved to the Hall in October 1939. The hall is now occupied as residential apartments and business premises.

A truly fascinating location and story.

Colin Beadle

Motorcycle Interest Group

August has been a busy month.

Early in the month we had an outing to the Cotswolds and The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway – visiting the station at Toddington. The weather was very favourable to us – not a hint of rain to worry about. Our route took us down the Fosse Way to Halford and then approximately 20 miles of twisty lanes through picturesque villages to our destination. We even witnessed a Brass Band playing on a village green on part of our route.

Due to the hot weather no steam hauled services were operating however we were able to see a fine selection of diesel locomotives. We had not pre booked a site tour and unfortunately both sessions were fully booked. There is plenty to see however without a guided tour.

A visit to the East Midlands Aeropark was our next outing with nine of us heading out towards Barwell and along the A447 to Coalville then Peggs Green and up to Castle Donnington. The weather was once again excellent. The Aeropark was very well attended – motorcycle parking certainly easier than finding space for a car. The aeropark has an excellent display of aircraft along with hangers housing museum items. Plus a good café for refreshments. The runway of East Midlands airport is immediately adjacent to view modern aircraft coming and going.

On Sunday August 16th five of our number left our Lutterworth rendezvous for Middle Aston, Oxfordshire & a meeting of the Brough Superior Owners' Club.
The weather was mercifully cooler than of late & we enjoyed Mark's chosen route via Rugby, Southam & Banbury, roughly 50 miles each way.

Middle Aston is a beautiful venue with views over a sizeable lake & many mature trees. Ideal surroundings then for these superb historic machines; 'The Rolls Royce of Motorcycles. Also on show was an example of a Brough Superior motor car - still rarer than his motorcycles.

Thanks to John of the Owners' Club for the invite.

An outing was planned to the BMF bike night at Mallory Park on the Friday before the Bank Holiday weekend. Lets just say our members decided it had been "Rained Off". Not one of us owns a jet ski.

Thanks to Mark and Andy for planning the rides and to Andy for the report on the Brough Superior outing.

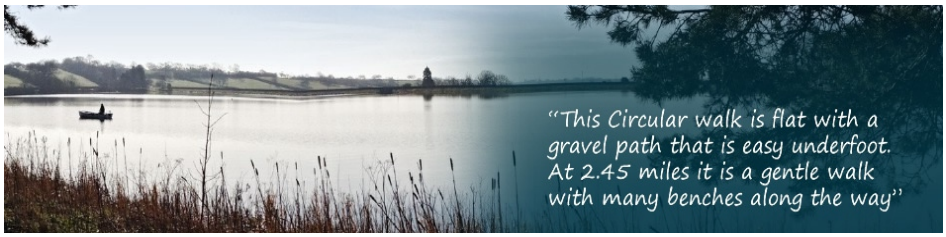
Regards Colin

U3A Snail's Walking Group

Unfortunately, there is nothing to share this month, as the August Walk was cancelled due to illness, a great start to my tenure!! I would like to thank the group for their understanding.

The next walk is on Friday 18th September and, due to popular demand (5 group members!) – we are going to

THORNTON RESERVOIR!



Followed by lunch at the Bricklayer's Arms. Details to follow!

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.

It is worth saying that we encourage and enjoy members who walk part of the way; and then find a place to rest or have a pre-lunch cuppa; others also who come along for the lunch and a chat. All are very welcome, and we hope that you will join us.

If you are interested, please contact me on:

Email; foggers165@gmail.com or 07711086927.

I hope to hear from you!

Best wishes, Denise Taylor

Committee Members

Office	**Name**
Chair ….....	Andrea Nichol
Treasurer.....	Nigel Burt
Secretary ….....	Denise Taylor
Membership Secretary ….....	Linda Teague
Minutes Secretary & Welcome Desk ….....	Sally Wood
Refreshments Coordinator and Rota ….....	Sue Poulter
Group Coordinator and Facebook Editor ….....	Nigel Bones
Welfare Rep and Sound Operator.....	Ruth Bones
Speaker Secretary….....	Sue Hanger
Social Secretary ….....	Peter Maddock
Set up Team ….....	Mark Smith Peter Maddock

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

thewycliffelutterworthu3a@gmail.com