

West Leicestershire u3a Wine Appreciation Group

Meeting 24 June 2026

On what may have been the hottest June day since some time ago we met to feel deep guilt for being part of the exacerbation of global climate change. So hair shirts everyone for your contribution to the 1% of global something contributed by the UK towards a global variation, for which you are all blamed, not to say heavily taxed.

OK, rant over. We met on a pleasantly warm evening to celebrate viniculture with good friends. Well seven of us plus one random dog. As a bonus we got to celebrate Jon's birthday, slightly disingenuously the official birthday pork pie only had 1 candle, come on Jon, who do you think you are kidding?

The excuses for non-attendance varied from being unwell, being in foreign parts or watering the garden. Speaking of which, Margaret did attend having prepared her garden for the Newbold Open Gardens Day on Saturday. That she may have been practicing with the Pimms was glossed over. On the subject of Newbold, congratulations Greedy Fish on achieving a national award for their fish and chips.

In our traditional dive into nostalgia, how many of us remembered the series 'The Dustbin Men' ? Not many considering it rivalled Coronation Street for viewers back in the day. However we all remembered the Kleeneze man and the Betterware man coming round with his suitcase and samples. Joyce admitted having been a Tupperware party planner and indeed still uses some of the products some 60 years later! Some of our members still have a regular milkman, although the days of 'milk tokens or checks' are long gone. We remembered all sorts of house deliveries – Davenports Beer At Home, the butcher, baker and greengrocer and even a local one-armed coalman! I suppose most predated the rise of the supermarket and car ownership. However the internet has enabled us to arrange home delivery of goods and food within seemingly unfeasible time scales.

Once we started to talk about travel we remember railway porters, who would, for a suitable tip, transport your luggage to nearby accommodation or onward transport. Of course there was always the option to send your trunk and other luggage on ahead, or was that just me? Just kidding.

The thorny issue of traditional industrial holidays arose, with Leicestershire having a different 'fortnight' to Leicester 'fortnight' and different again to adjacent areas such as Coventry or Nottingham. This could result in confusion, not to say differences in costs. Depending which area you were and which destination you chose and the timing this often amounted to a significant sum. Nowadays, if you have children in tow it is usually cheaper to pay the fine at the children's school than wait for an official holiday week. It was noted these cost differences are still very noticeable today – only it is now called 'dynamic pricing'.

Although we try not to stray into politics a brief chat about the current state of affairs, including the BBC's outrageous coverage of a random train between Manchester and London (19 minutes late) was criticised.

Reminiscent of the screen saver films on early satellite TV. Anyway, who would want the role of PM when it can appear a poison chalice – answer pretty well every MP, although this confirms the view that most are just very well-paid chancers.

We did briefly revisit the 'who is illest' question by enquiring who takes the most pills in a day. It would seem most of us take a bit of a cocktail – must be an age thing. Seems to average out at about 5 with a few achieving double figures. On the subject of health, weight loss was addressed, one of our number embraces the 'breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, supper like a pauper' with some success. Another has switched to a largely fruit based diet with fermented grapes featuring as a major item. Reportedly this also works well. Don't really understand it – we are told obesity 'is a disease' and Ely Lilly will sell you a magic pill to counteract it, perhaps.

Other subject covered included air conditioning, solar panels, pigeons, Turkish barbers, weedkiller, T&C planning, airport parking and holiday cottages. All of the above in just 2 hours!

Oh, the wine? Yes we did sample some, mostly from Italy with an almost equal spread of red and white. Some were outstanding, others perhaps less so, but there was so much going on your reporter rather lost the detail of which was which.

Next meeting on Wednesday July 22nd at 7.30pm Allans Way. Theme, Portuguese wines.

John Dexter 25/06/26

