

West Leicestershire u3a

Wine Appreciation Group – Meeting 26 August 2026

We started the meeting with excuses of 'the dog ate my homework' style – , "I hid the bottle away and can't find it", "husband drank most of our Bosman merlot", one of our number had to attend the hospital and 'was not sure he would make it' – I may have misinterpreted his message, but suffice to say he did 'not make it', another absentee blamed the hot weather which can be debilitating. This, combined with several other absentees, who were all in the 'white wine' group meant we had an imbalance between red and white wines.

This was partly resolved when Bob made a welcome return with a bottle of Stormhoek Shiraz which of course was white. Our theme was South African Wines and, notwithstanding the imbalance, the standard was very high, even the Aldwick Rose an excellent English wine from South Somerset – nearly South African?



The standout wine was an Arabella Reserve while Bob's Stormhoek made an interesting zero alcohol alternative to the generally high ABV of the robust reds. At least one, a Journeys End Spekboom Malbec, was felt to be rather dry. What was left of the Bosman Generation Merlot had a lovely full flavour, no wonder that Bill had taken a liking to it. One comment was that each of the wines sampled definitely tasted noticeably different which illustrates the benefit of our tasting regime.

The loss of Dolly Parton was marked by renditions of some of her music. Fortunately there was no effort to sing all her 3000 songs. Margaret's claim to fame was not her singing, rather that she had once flown over Dollywood!

On a lighter tone there were memories of childhood party games and rounds. Do our younger relatives still share these? We moved on to more adult themes such as drinking games and adult versions of the kid's games, least said....

We were supposed to bring a joke to the meeting but most forgot, however you will need to ask Kate about fuzzy ducks.

Things did get a bit heated when politics and religion combined into a discussion, specifically Israel and Zionism, probably not a good idea. The religious theme continued to memories of Catholic education by nuns. Corporal punishment for not remembering the catechism seemed to loom large in the memory of some. Conversation took a darker turn when the scandal of the Magdalen Laundries was mentioned. However, D Trump and N Farage did bring a consensus to the conversation even though it was not terribly complimentary.

Eventually we moved on to the subject of money, specifically Bitcoin, its uses and benefits. Unfortunately none of us actually knew anything about it, so the conversation rather fizzled out. Gold, however, did catch people's imagination, with the pros and cons of long or short term investment being discussed.

A lot of our time was spent talking about lived experience, from the linguistic difficulties of living in Wales to living and working in a war zone. How much of our character stems from education, experience and expectation? Perhaps the subject for another forum?

Joyce showed her photos of a recently experienced UFO sighting, they were spectacular and a bit spooky. However we were assured she actually observed a fly past of the Starling Satellites – do look it up.

News flash – our December meeting aka Christmas meeting will be on Wednesday 16 December with an extension to 10.30. This is the same day as our official Christmas monthly meeting.

Next wine group meeting is on Wednesday 23rd September with the theme “Something a bit different” – should be interesting.

John Dexter Aug26