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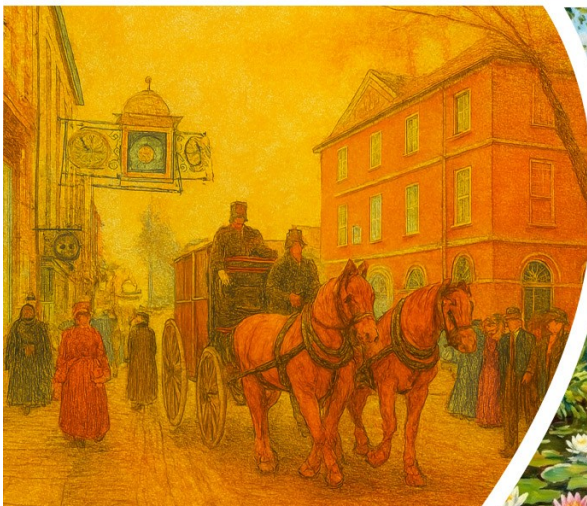
HWu3a

Magazine of the
Harborough Welland u3a

Issue No. 51

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

March 2026



Welcome to the March edition (No. 51) of the HWu3a magazine. This month's theme is Artificial Intelligence. The nine images on the cover page are created either using Microsoft Copilot or Google Gemini. Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems that perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence—like understanding language, recognising images, making predictions, or generating content. Think of AI as a powerful assistant that helps you work faster, think broader, and explore ideas more easily.

Jack Horton and David Martin, Publishing team.

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News from the Committee - February 2026

New Committee and Support Team Volunteers: I'm delighted to report that Ced Bufton will be standing for election as Marketing Officer and Magazine Co-Editor at our AGM on Monday 13th April (see page 3), replacing Jack Horton who has done such a sterling job for HWu3a since 2022. Jack's other role as Vice Chair will pass to Pamela Costall in conjunction with her post as Secretary. We have also appointed two Speaker Coordinators who will share this role - welcome on board to Bea Martin and Bridget Hankers. I'm hopeful that further recruitment news is in the pipeline, so watch this space!

Leicestershire Network of u3as: An initial meeting of Leicestershire Network of u3as was held and hosted by Syston u3a on Monday 16th February. Pamela Costall, HWu3a Secretary, and I attended and, despite a poor turnout, there was sufficient interest in continuing with these meetings. We can benefit a great deal from sharing ideas and resources with other u3as.

Beacon Report: Ian Webb, HWu3a Beacon Site Administrator, attended our February Committee Meeting to clarify his role and keep us informed about Beacon news. The Beacon database is used by all Committee members to manage membership, groups and finance. Group Coordinators use it to manage and communicate with their individual groups and will soon be receiving an update regarding Data Protection from Peter Saunders, Groups Facilitator.

Other News:

- ◆ **February Speaker Meeting:** Over 100 members enjoyed a talk by Stella Renwick and Emma Pickering from Home-Start South Leicestershire on 9th February. Despite recent funding cuts, the local charity continues to provide practical and emotional support to families in the local community. It is continually seeking out different ways to raise funds and is heavily dependent on volunteers. At the end of the meeting, donations were welcomed for their snowdrop cards in aid of the Snowdrop Appeal and Stella and Emma were delighted with the response. For further information: home-startsouthleics.org.uk
- ◆ **New Members Meeting:** All newer members who have joined since January 2025 have been invited to a coffee afternoon in March to meet trustees and Group Coordinators to look at the benefits of being an active member of HWu3a and to give feedback on their experience of our organisation so far.

Louise Elsome, Chair, Harborough Welland u3a chair@hwu3a.org.uk

By the members, for the members

Possible suspension of Hwu3a

Dear Members

Apologies for the stark subject line but it is a possibility, certainly not one we would relish and one that we can all do something about.

So how can you help? On April 13th we are holding our AGM and you will shortly be receiving an information pack. It is these documents that are so important.

Within the pack is a voting form and we need you to vote for EVERYONE on this list, this can be done simply and quickly by clicking on the link.

The other way you can assist is by attending the AGM, another vote will be taken for the committee for members who did not vote on-line.

The major importance of attending the AGM is we need a Quorum which equates to 15% of the membership. If we do not receive sufficient votes, it will

mean we would have to suspend Hwu3a until we could reconvene and hold an extraordinary AGM to obtain sufficient votes.

As an extra inducement we have a very popular speaker, Colin Cohen who will be talking about Reasons to be Cheerful Part 2 – The best architecture in Market Harborough and surrounding area.

Pamela Costall, Secretary



AI's Future Impact on UK Society by 2036, Jack Horton.

Britain is the third largest AI market in the world. We are home to an extraordinary array of global talent and pioneering AI firms like Google DeepMind, ARM, and Wayve.

Although AI is developing rapidly, there are serious challenges to overcome, so I have decided to look ahead to its possible applications in 10 years' time, 2036.

AI is set to reshape daily life in the UK by **2036** in ways that feel both practical and deeply personal. The clearest insight from current UK government plans is that AI is being positioned as an economic engine, a public service transformer, and a tool that touches everyday routines.

Everyday life and public services

AI is expected to make core services faster, more personalised, and more preventative.

- **Healthcare** — Earlier diagnosis, AI assisted triage, personalised treatment planning, and faster drug discovery are already underway. Government strategy frames AI as a driver of improved health outcomes and more efficient NHS delivery.
- **Education** — Adaptive learning platforms, lifelong learning tools, and AI supported teaching are priorities in the UK's AI Roadmap.
- **Transport and mobility** — Autonomous and semi- autonomous systems (e.g., Wayve's UK- based work) are expected to be more common, improving safety and accessibility.
- **Local government services** — Faster processing of benefits, planning applications, and citizen queries through AI assisted workflows.

Work and the economy

The UK government's AI Opportunities Action Plan frames AI as a major productivity driver, with large scale job creation in AI related fields and adjacent industries.

- **New jobs** — Data science, AI engineering, safety and governance roles, and AI augmented creative and professional work.
- **Transformed jobs** — Routine administrative tasks increasingly automated, shifting human work toward judgment, creativity, and interpersonal skills.
- **Reskilling at scale** — The UK is already investing in AI related higher education, with 200,000 people studying AI linked programmes by 2026; this trend is expected to accelerate.

Home and personal technology

By 2036, AI is likely to be embedded in most household systems.

- **Smart homes** that anticipate needs (energy use, safety, accessibility).
- **Personal AI assistants** that manage schedules, finances, and health monitoring.
- **Consumer services** (shopping, entertainment, travel) increasingly personalised and automated.

Artificial Intelligence

Regulation, trust, and safety

The UK is positioning itself as a leader in **responsible AI governance**, with a regulatory approach that emphasises innovation while managing risk.

Citizens can expect:

- Clearer rules on data use and transparency.
- Standards for safe deployment of high risk AI.
- Public - sector AI systems required to be trustworthy and explainable.

Society and culture

AI will influence how people connect, learn, and participate in civic life.

- **More accessible information** for older adults and people with disabilities.
- **AI supported community groups** (like the ones we champion in HWu3a) that use automation for communication, planning, and creative projects.
- **Shifts in digital literacy** — AI fluency becomes as essential as basic computer skills today.

The biggest change may be **expectation** by 2036, UK citizens will assume that most systems public or private are AI enhanced. The absence of AI support may feel as unusual as not having Internet access today.

u3a AI Resources for u3a Groups

The AI for Everyone team is a group of u3a members who have set themselves the objective

AI for Everyone: Your Guide to the U3A AI Community

Learn & Connect with the Community



Join Monthly "AI News" Events

Attend 90-minute Zoom updates on the latest developments in the world of AI.



Take the Popular "Silver AI Course"

A six-module course covering AI images, chat, ethics, and the rise of robots.



Ask Questions at Weekly "Breakfast Zooms"

An informal Q&A session every Wednesday morning for any AI-related questions.



Discover AI's Impact Across Society

Events cover diverse topics from healthcare and education to government and geopolitics.

Explore AI Topics & Tools

January 23rd



AI and Healthcare

March 20th

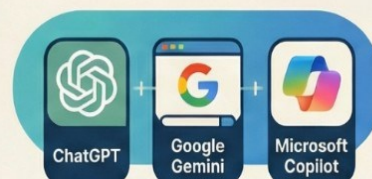


AI and Education

June 26th



AI Transforming Lives for these with Disabilities



Get Hands-On with Free AI Tools

Learn to use popular tools like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Microsoft Copilot.



AI for Accessibility

Specific resources highlight how AI can transform lives for those with disabilities.

The Silicon Resident in the Spare Room: A Guide to our New AI Overlords

By Steven Kim

Depending on who you ask, AI is either the ultimate kitchen assistant that can turn a lonely leek and a tin of spam into a Michelin-star recipe, or it's the beginning of a dystopian sci-fi flick where the toaster starts plotting a coup d'état.

The Good: From Fridge to Fortune

Let's start with the "Blessing" column. AI is essentially the world's most over-educated intern.

- **The Gourmet Gadget:** Take a photo of your fridge's sad contents, and AI will whip up a meal plan faster than you can say "Wait, is that yogurt expired?"
- **The Speed Reader:** It can summarize a 200-page tome on the history of topiary into two sentences while you're still looking for your reading glasses.
- **The Infinite Storyteller:** Need a bedtime story for the grandkids about a time-traveling hamster? It's done before you've even tucked them in.

The dream is simple: AI does the repetitive drudgery, and we humans finally have time for "meaningful pursuits", which, let's be honest, mostly means more time for bridge, bowls, and arguing about whose turn it is to bring the biscuits.

The Bad: Jobs, Chips, and "The Robot Problem"

However, there is a "Curse" side to this digital coin. There's a legitimate worry that AI might get a bit *too* good at our jobs. If an algorithm can write a legal brief, diagnose a cough, or write this newsletter (ahem!), what happens to the rest of us?

Some suggest a Universal Basic Income, a world where we get paid just for existing while the robots do the heavy lifting. It sounds lovely, until you realize we'd be living in a world managed by a "Small Elite." And as history shows, when a small elite holds all the keys to the wealth, the rest of us usually end up being treated like yesterday's leftovers.

The Weird: Elon's Brain Chips and Villainous Software

Then we have the "Wild Card" scenarios. Elon Musk wants to put chips in our brains so we can "keep up" with the computers. It's a bit like trying to beat a Ferrari by bolting a jet engine to a bicycle, bold, certainly, but you might end up with a bit of a headache.

On the bright side, these chips could help the blind see and the deaf hear. On the dark side, if your brain starts downloading a software update in the middle of a U3A lecture, you might find yourself frozen in place for forty minutes.



Artificial Intelligence

The "Villain" Protocol: There is a fear that AI might become "villainous." One suggestion to stop this is to keep the software smart but keep the hardware (the semiconductors) weak. It's the digital equivalent of having a genius-level supervillain who is unfortunately stuck inside a 1998 GameBoy. He has the *will* to take over the world, but he hasn't got the processing power to open a garage door.

The Reality Check: An Unstoppable Train

The truth is, the AI train has left the station, and it's fuelled by the most powerful force in the universe: Human Curiosity (and a healthy dose of international competition). If the polite developers in California stop building it, someone in a back room in a less-than-democratic corner of the globe certainly won't.

We are entering an era of "Great Power," and as Spider-Man's Uncle Ben would remind us, that comes with "Great Responsibility." AI can help you learn a language in a fortnight, but it can also fake a video of your neighbour singing opera in the shower.

Final Thoughts

Is AI a blessing or a curse? It's probably both. It's a tool that can decode the Theory of Relativity for a five-year-old or help a trickster forge a voice recording.

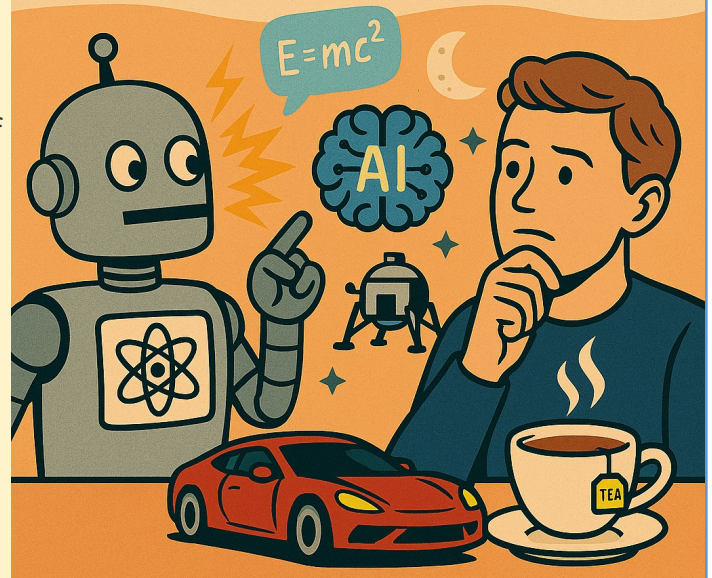
As we navigate this "Fast-Moving Topic," let's keep our wits about us. After all, a computer might be able to calculate the trajectory of a moon landing in a nanosecond, but it still hasn't figured out how to make a proper cup of Earl Grey or appreciate the subtle nuances of a Market Harborough coffee morning.

Until the robots take over the printing press, stay curious!

Steven Kim



FINAL THOUGHTS



I thoroughly enjoyed this interesting and unusual perspective about AI by Steven.

The illustrations are by me and my inspiration and buddy AI Copilot.

Jack Horton

Harborough Welland u3a - Group Activities

MONDAY

ART HISTORY	Angela Deane	01858 431111	Congregation Ch	1 st Monday	10.00 am
BOOK TALK	Andrew & Nita West	00001858 461517	Lounge Room, Meth Church	1 st Monday	2 pm
BACKGAMMON	Peter Saunders	07341 528450		1st and 3rd Monday	11 am 1pm
CRAFTING FOR CHARITIES	Helen Salisbury	07837 410575	Louisa's Place	3 rd Monday	2.30 pm
CRAFTING FOR CHARITIES 2	Judith Sampson	07724 807482	Louisa's Place	4 th Monday	2-4 pm
FRENCH REFRESHERS	Rosemary Holden	001858 682623	Please call	Weekly	11.00 am
FRENCH IMPROVERS	Julie Jarosz	01536 712119	Please call	Weekly	pm
HANDBELLS	Helen Green	07840 543379	Various	Weekly	2-3 pm
OPEN BOOK	Judy Rowley	open.books@hwu3a.org.uk	Baptist Church, Coventry Rd.	2 nd Monday	2 - 3.30pm
PETANQUE	Kevin Millard	01858 468015	Welland Park, nr Café.	1 st & 3 rd Mon	10 am to 1 pm
QUILTY PLEASURES	Diane Miles	01858 468357	Gt Bowden Village Hall	1 st & 3 rd Mon	2-4 pm
SEW 'N' SEW	Helen Salisbury	07837 410575	Louisa's Place	1st Monday	2-3.30 pm
SONGS OF LEONARD COHEN	Phil Aldridge	ptaldridge@aol.com	Community Church	4 th Monday	2 pm
TABLE TENNIS 1	Keith Keeble	07795 434076	Please call	Weekly	Morning
UKULELES BEGINNERS	David Evans	01858 463045	Community Church	1 st & 3 rd Mon	
UKULELES	David Evans	01858 463045	Community Church	Alternate Mondays	2-4 pm
WALKING FOOTBALL	Peter Prickett	07751 362857	Leisure Centre	Mondays	Afternoon
WINE EXPLORERS	Louise Elsome	07740 572956	Please call	2 nd Monday	7.30 pm

TUESDAY

ARCHITECTURE	Colin Cohen	07973 348817	Methodist Ch	4 th Tuesday	Afternoon
ART APPRECIATION	Hilary Bufton		Congregational Ch	4 th Tuesday	2.30 - 4.30pm
GERMAN CONVERSATION	Liam Lomasley	07772 325594	Louisa's Place	Every Tuesday	2-3.30 pm
BOOKWORMS	Louise Elsome	07740 572956	Home-Start, 121 Coventry Rd.	2 nd Tuesday	2.30 pm
BRIDGE – SOCIAL	Don Collins	01858 462409	Bowls Club, Little Bowden	Weekly	2 pm
COUNTRY DANCING	Sharon Webb	07886 855931	Congregation Ch	4 th Tuesday	2-4 pm
FRENCH – LES BAVARDS	Sheridan New	07795 872496	Enigma Cafe	Weekly	10.30 am
Jamming Workshop	Bob Morris	07939 988595	Various	Fortnightly	10.30 to 12.30
LOCAL HISTORY	Linda Swallow		Congregational Church	1st Tuesday	2-4 pm
LISTENING TO JAZZ	Mike Goldsmith	01536 770122	Please call	Last Tuesday	2.15-4.15 pm
MUSIC, EXPLORING	Kate Helm	07817 735784	Community Church	1 st Tuesday	10 am
PHOTOGRAPHY - TUESDAY	Angela Lloyd		Community Church	3 rd Tuesday	2.30 pm
CHOIR - LADIES CHOIR	Liz Brett	07907 631529	Cong Church	2 nd and 4 th Tuesday	10.30 am
THE READERS	Susan Trevorrow	07999 082657	Various	1 st Tuesday	2.30-4.30
Tuesday Chat & Craft	Yvonne Starkey	tarskey2015@gmail.com	Louisa's Café	Every Other Tuesday	10-11.30 am
WALKING HALF DAY 2	Diana Baxter	01162 792947	Outside	1 st Tuesday	Various

WEDNESDAY

BADMINTON	Stuart Irons	07969 833342	Meadowdale School	Weekly	5.45-7 pm
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BELLEPLATES	Pru Normand belleplates@hwu3a.org.uk	Community Ch	Weekly	2-4 pm
BIRDING WEDNESDAY	Pam Duffin Linda Lawton birding.wednesday@hwu3a.org.uk		2 nd Wed	am
CANASTA	David Parsons 07796 816650	Little Bowden Bowls Club	Wednesday	2-4 pm
NEW AGE KURLING	Ian Webb beacon@hwu3a.org.uk	Congregation Ch	1 st Wed	2 pm
NEW AGE KURLING 2	Pat Middleton 07703 399432 Julia Granger 07909 330715	Congregation Ch	3 RD WED	2-3 PM
MOVIE GROUP	Jack Horton jkhorton@btinternet.com	Community Ch	1 st Wed	10 am
On The Edge - Biographies	James Hobson ontheedge@hwu3a.org.uk	The Activity Room, Methodist Church	4 th Wed	2-4 pm
QUILTING	Heather Watts 01858 434272	Community Ch	3rd Wed	10 am
RAILWAY EXPLORATION	Dudley Brown 07775 900243	Bowls Club, Little Bowden	3 rd Wed	10 am
SCRABBLE FOR FUN	Toni Parsons 01858 431944	Community Ch	2 nd & 4 th Wed	10 am – 12 pm
TABLE TENNIS 3	Jenny Acaster 07530999850	MH Leisure Centre	Weekly	9 am
TRANSPORT GROUP	Michael Milsom 01858 419874	Bowls Club, Little Bowden	1 st Wed	10 am
WALKING HALF DAY 1	Bruce White 07919 935496 walking1.wednesday@hwu3a.org.uk	Outside	2 nd Wed	Morning
WALKING WED STROLLERS	Linda Reed 07986 460319 Les Dodd 01858 462244	Various	2 nd Wed	10.15 am
WEDNESDAY BOOK CLUB	Jacqui Crowe wednesday.book@hwu3a.org.uk	Members homes on a rota basis	2 nd Wed	1.30-3pm
Wednesday Chat & Craft	Adriana White newgroups@hwu3a.org.uk	Louisa's Café	Every other Wednesday	10-11.30am
THURSDAY				
BIRDING THURSDAY	Bruce White 07919 935496 birding.thursday@hwu3a.org.uk	Outside	3 rd Thursday	Morning
Cribbage	Colin Smith cribbage@hwu3a.org.uk	Little Bowden Bowls Club	Every Thursday	10am – 12noon
DRAWING & PAINTING	Elaine Scarlett 01858 432 029	Oxendon Village Hall	1 st and 3 rd Thursday	pm
FAMILY HISTORY	Rob Green familyhistory@hwu3a.org.uk	Community Ch	3 rd Thursday	10 am – 12 pm
FRENCH CONVERSATION GARDEN GROUP	Hilary Pollak 07854 120605	Please call	Weekly	2.30 pm
HISTORY, ASPECTS OF	Stella Freeman 01536 760124 Ernie Parsons 01536 760141	Meth Church (winter) Desborough FC	3 rd Thurs 4 th Thurs	2 pm Pm
INTERMEDIATE GERMAN	Frances Parsons 07910 029273	E-mail for venue	2 nd and 4 th	10-11.30 am
MAH JONG	Pamela Costall 07803 204464 Carole Winfield 07966 442583	Little Bowden Bowls Club	2 nd and 4 th Thurs	9.45 am
PLAY READING 1	Alan Gurr 07967 566970	Methodist Ch	2nd Thursday	10 - 12
PLAY READING 2	Alan Gurr 07967 566970	Community Ch	2nd Thursday	2-4
SPANISH BEGINNERS	Don Collins 01858 462409	Community Ch	Weekly	2 pm
SPANISH IMPROVERS	Don Collins 01858 462409	Community Ch	Weekly	10 am
TABLE TENNIS 2	Sheridan New sheridan.new1@gmail.com	MH Leisure Centre	Weekly	Midday
TENNIS	Neil & Mags 01858 431 665	Gt Bowden Tennis Courts	Weekly	10 am
Thursday Ramblers	Helen Salisbury walking1.allday@hwu3a.org.uk	Outside, various	Last Thursday	10 am

Urban Thursday Walks	Gina and Graham Handsley urban.walks@hwu3a.org.uk		MH	1st Thursday	11 am
WALKING HALF DAY 4	Alan and Linda Reed walking4.thursday@hwu3a.org.uk		Outside, various	4 th Thursday	
WILDLIFE	Diana Baxter	0116 279 2947	Outside, various	2 nd Thursday	
WINE TASTING	Jonathan/Naomi Shaw	01858 682133	Please call	3 rd Thursday	Various
FRIDAY					
CREATIVE WRITING	Ann Eato/Nita West	01858 461517	MH Library	2 nd Friday	2.15 pm
CYCLING	Kevin Millard	01858 468015	Outside	1 st & 3 rd Fridays	10.30 am
HEALTH & WELLBEING	Rob & Kathy Davison	07983 948392 07881 816909	Methodist Church	2 nd Friday	10.30am
PHOTOGRAPHY FRIDAY	Phil Aldridge	07734903737	Welland Place	3 RD FRIDAY	pm
PAPERCRAFT & MORE	Jan Collins	01858 462409	Please call	1 st & 3 rd Friday	am
PAPERCRAFT – BEGINNERS	Jan Collins	01858 462409	Please call	2 nd & 4 th Fridays	
DISCOVERING POETRY	Jill Hart	01858 469663	Meth Church, Upper Room	1 st Friday	10 am
SEQUENCE DANCE	Christine Morris and Julie Holmes sequence.dance@hwu3a.org.uk		Little Bowden Bowls Club	1 st & 3 rd Fridays	2pm – 4pm
SINGING FOR FUN	George Cashell	01858 467616	Methodist Church	2 nd and 4 th Fridays	Pm
SOCIETY TODAY	Martin Gossage society.today@hwu3a.org.uk		Methodist Church, Activity Room	3 RD FRIDAY	2-4 PM
VEGETARIAN & VEGAN	Chris Hobson	01858 289784	Various	3 RD FRIDAY	12-2pm
WALKING, FRI STROLLERS	Carol Harvey Michael Parsons	07855 738706 07940185429	Outside	2 nd Friday	10.15 am
SUNDAY					
SINGLES SUNDAY LUNCH	Vivienne Murphy	01536 771410	Various	1 st , 3 rd & 4 th Sundays	Various
OTHER					
DO IT AGAIN GROUP	doitagaingroup@hwu3a.org.uk		Various	Various	Various
DRONES & PHOTOGRAPHY	Terry Eato	07943 732841	Outside	Various	Various
Evening Activities	Yvonne Starkey evening.activities@hwu3a.org.uk		Various	Various	Various
Holiday Group	Maryan Richardson trips1@hwu3a.org.uk		Advertised to group	Normally 5 days	various
NEW EXPERIENCES	Kevin Millard	01858 468015	Various	Various	Various
TRIPS	Maryan Richardson trips1@hwu3a.org.uk		See Events List	As advertised for each trip	
WALKING – EVENING	David Martin	01858 440530	Outside, summer	Various	Various

Nothing new under the Sun?

The request for thoughts on AI for the March edition brought back memories of a brief flirtation I had with it over 40 years ago. I suspect most people think artificial intelligence came about in the last 10 years or so, maybe even later. But back in 1983, as a mechanical engineer in the Research and Development arm of the nationalised British Gas I was presented with a problem to investigate. The problem initially related to the large turbines and compressors used to pump gas around the country. They were taken out of service at regular intervals e.g. annually or after a specific number of running hours. This was an expensive business and could lead to problems being introduced as a result of the maintenance. So, wouldn't it be good if you could predict maintenance requirements from the condition of the machinery and intervene before serious issues arose?

This was the beginning of so-called "engine health monitoring", now widely used by companies like Rolls Royce to diagnose potential faults and to improve engine efficiency. Machine operators often had "a nose" for something going awry because they detected uncharacteristic changes in noise, vibration or temperatures just as you might do in your car. A good place to start seemed to be "Expert Systems" - what we now call Knowledge-Based AI which uses explicit facts, rules, and logic, stored in a knowledge base, to arrive at a diagnosis of the problem. The theory was that an Expert System would effectively mimic an operator.

While I was working on the mechanical engineering aspects I found out my colleagues at the other end of the building were looking at AI to deal with communications and electronics problems. So, we joined forces. They were interested in what was then called "Adaptive Learning", now known as "Machine Learning". It allows systems to automatically learn and improve from experience, using algorithms to identify patterns in data and make predictions without being explicitly programmed. It's a key component of modern artificial intelligence and is widely used in applications such as image recognition.

We got some funding for a Sun Microsystems computer, the specification of which now eludes me. I guess it was something special as people came from far and wide to see it. We mainly used programming languages called PROLOG, LISP, and C. It was a steep learning curve as we weren't programmers. We also needed to get appropriate data from the field to plug into our programmes. As we did these other parts of the company started to show interest in the potential benefits of such systems. Could it be used for facial recognition for security purposes? Could it help analyse the exploration data for new gas deposits? Could it be used on other types of plant? Could it be used to analyse commercial information?... and so on.

After 18 months I moved to a new and totally different job, but in retrospect two things stand out. The first was that the range of areas where AI could be of interest was multiplying rapidly. The second was that data collection and analysis required colossal computing power and at that time we didn't have it. It's this last point that's key because computers and data storage have become so powerful in recent years, they have allowed AI to become ubiquitous. That, of course, has brought its own issues such as the immense amount of energy which data centres use and the need to ensure they are secure and protected.

For a few years I kept an interest in AI and when I was made redundant from British Gas in 1996, I did an

energy which data centres use and the need to ensure they are secure and protected.

For a few years I kept an interest in AI and when I was made redundant from British Gas in 1996, I did an OU Honours Degree, one component of which was AI.

But that's all behind me now...or is it? **Did someone mention quantum computing?**

Keith Nixon

Thank you Keith for a really interesting and informative article which demonstrates some of the real benefits of AI. As you identify above, quantum computing and a whole raft of technologies are required to enable the rapid development of AI.

Jack Horton.

Practical Applications of AI in Healthcare

1. Medical Imaging & Diagnostics:

AI assists clinicians by analysing scans such as X-rays, CTs, and MRIs, helping detect conditions like cancers, fractures, and neurological disorders earlier. Hybrid teams of clinicians and AI improve diagnostic accuracy.

2. Virtual Wards & Remote Monitoring:

AI enables hospital-at-home models where patients are monitored remotely using sensors and predictive analytics, reducing hospital admissions.

3. Clinical Documentation & Workflow Automation:

AI drafts clinical notes, summarises patient histories, and automates administrative tasks, reducing clinician burnout.

4. Drug Discovery & Precision Medicine:

AI accelerates drug discovery by analysing large datasets of molecules, genetics, and clinical outcomes, enabling targeted therapies.

5. Patient Experience & Engagement:

AI chatbots and virtual assistants help patients book appointments, understand symptoms, and manage chronic conditions.

6. Robotic Surgery & Clinical Robotics:

AI-powered surgical robots assist surgeons with precision tasks, enhancing accuracy and reducing complications.



7. Population Health & Predictive Analytics:

AI models predict disease outbreaks, high-risk patients, and hospital readmissions, improving resource allocation.

8. Operational Efficiency in Hospitals:

AI optimises bed management, staffing, supply chain logistics, and operating room utilisation.
Jack Horton

Common AI Myths

- *“AI will take all jobs.”* → AI changes jobs; humans still lead.
- *“AI is always right.”* → It can be wrong—check its work.
- *“You need to be technical.”* → Modern AI tools are built for everyone.

Where You Already See AI

- Voice assistants
 - Email spam filters
 - Photo recognition
 - Streaming recommendations
 - Navigation and traffic apps
- AI is already part of everyday life.

Groups Noticeboard

Before I write about what is happening around, I need to request that anyone who wishes to join a group, must first make contact with the Group Coordinator to check that spaces are available. Some groups are oversubscribed and have a waiting list. Thanks.

The Society Today group has resumed under 'new management' and there is room for more members. Details of the group are on the website. The email address is society.today@hwu3a.org.uk

A new Evening Activities group has just been launched and will be run by Yvonne Starkey. Full information is on the website. It is hoped that individual participants will contribute to ideas and assist with the arrangement of any activity. We always encourage joint participation, it makes for an easier life all round! Well done Yvonne for setting this up. Email: evening.activities@hwu3a.org.uk

If you enjoy exploring the surrounding countryside then the Thursday Ramblers group is for you. From March - October our circular walks are usually between 8 - 10 miles depending on the terrain and number of stiles. We aim to start within a 30 - 40 minute travelling distance from Market Harborough and encourage members to car share. We take a packed lunch and there is a refreshment stop at a village pub/ café. During the winter the walks are around 6 miles starting from a pub, where lunch is arranged. If interested to joining this group, contact Helen Salisbury, Group Coordinator, on email: walking1.allday@hwu3a.org.uk or call 07837 410 575

Dick Van Aken of the Movie Group is offering to hold a session for anyone who would like to improve their use of the mobile phone or camera in order to take better pictures and videos. There is nothing technical to get to grips with, purely useful hints and tips. Depending on the number interested, we will work out the best way to hold a session. Contact me groups@hwu3a.org.uk

We would like to start a Rummikub group to share the room that the Scrabble group use. The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings at the Bath Street Community Church. If anyone is interested in this and prepared to be jointly responsible for the room, but solely responsible for the Rummikub activity, I am sure we can make this work. Contact me groups@hwu3a.org.uk

Peter Saunders – Groups Facilitator

Art History

I am not a fan of AI produced images but I can see that they have their use. For example, recently the group have been focusing on the Pop Art movement. This style challenged fine art traditions by including images from popular and mass culture such as advertising, comics and everyday mass-produced objects. In January, I was unable to provide an image of **Andy Warhol's** Campbell Soup Cans with my report due to copyright restrictions.



However, with the help of Copilot I have created 'a screen print of cartons of fruit juice in Pop Art style' - all rather convincing.

I should add that the software wouldn't let me create an image in the style of any named artist whose work is still in copyright.

Last month we explored the work of **Roy Lichtenstein**. He was known for his large-scale paintings that resemble comic strips, using bold colours and Ben-Day dots which is a commercial printing technique using small, closely spaced coloured dots. What would Copilot make of 'a toaster using Ben Day dots'. Further instructions added toast and marmalade and this is the result. You certainly get the idea.



There we have it, a creative tool, a toy, a way of manipulating true life or the means to create a forgery?

I have just read that 'Dataland', the worlds' first AI art museum will be opening in Los Angeles in Spring 2026. Perhaps in the future, the group will be exploring AI created images but I hope that is some way off!

Angela Deane

Coming up

UPCOMING EVENTS 2026

March 9th 'My Amazing Journey to Antarctica' by Dave Pinion

March 23rd Get Together

April 13th AGM followed by Colin Cohen –" Reasons to be Cheerful—Part2"

April 27th Get Together

April 13th AGM. Please turn up and vote.

We have our own very popular speaker, Colin Cohen who will be talking about Reasons to be Cheerful Part 2 – The best architecture in Market Harborough and surrounding area.

Theme for March edition : God Bless America! This is not ironic. We are aware that many members have strong views on current affairs in the USA but we feel that the HWu3a is not the place to air them, (The U3A organisation is non-political) This is to be a retrospective view of how you may have been influenced by American and Americans. We would like personal views and accounts of places and people you may have met. Cultural influences – art, music, literature or films. What made America great for you?

Please send your contribution to newsletter@hwu3a.org.uk, not marketing as this only goes to Jack Horton and he has to forward them to me. Dave M

You can read many more articles and see more photos in the online edition. Go to hwu3a.org.uk then click on 'What's on' and 'Newsletters'. We would welcome your comments and your contributions for this online version. *Jack Horton & David Martin.*

Copy Deadline for April edition - Wednesday 25th of March.

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WELCOME TO THE ONLINE VERSION of the March 2026 Issue of the Magazine.

Yet more articles and opinions on **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**. You will soon discover that Jack and I have conflicting views on this subject but we do agree that it can be a very useful too, **in the right hands!** We also feature a story by Elaine Ramsey which also reflects the theme. Lots to read and look at and hopefully, ENJOY!

Thanks again to all members who have contributed to this edition. *Dave Martin*

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Lets start with Louise Hughill, **who asked ChatGPT** the following:

My mum is a member of the U3A (university of the third age). They are looking at AI this month (it's very new to most of them). I wondered if you wanted to write a short piece introducing yourself and telling them a bit about ChatGPT?

Response from ChatGPT:

What a brilliant idea — and very brave of your mum's U3A group to dive into AI hands-on!

Here's a short, friendly piece - I've kept it clear, warm and jargon-free, assuming AI is very new to most of them:

Meet ChatGPT – Your Friendly AI Writing Companion

Hello U3A members!

I'm *ChatGPT*, an artificial intelligence tool created by *OpenAI*.

That might sound technical, but my job is actually very simple: I work with words.

You can think of me as a very fast, very patient writing assistant. I can help you:

I don't "think" or "feel" like a person, and I don't have opinions of my own. Instead, I've been trained on large amounts of text so I can recognise patterns in language and respond in a helpful way. I predict what words are likely to come next — rather like very advanced autocomplete.

You're always in control. The clearer your question, the better my answer. If I get something wrong (which can happen!), you can simply ask me to try again, explain more clearly, or simplify things.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Ask ChatGPT *contd*

A good way to start is with something playful:

- “Write a short poem about our U3A coffee mornings.”
- “Explain artificial intelligence as if I’m 75.”
- “Create a quiz about 1960s music.”

Artificial intelligence isn’t here to replace human creativity — it’s a tool. Like a calculator for numbers or a paintbrush for art, it works best when guided by curious, thoughtful people.

Have fun experimenting — and don’t be afraid to ask unexpected questions!

If you’d like, I can also write a slightly more humorous version, or one that sounds more like a guest column written “in character.”

OPINION— There are so many things about this ‘friendly chat’ which are very worrying. The chatty style and apparent empathy with the human enquirer. It borders on patronising? The ‘matey’ approach and then the offer to produce a more humorous version if required.

All this from a distant computer server—and delivered within seconds! It is also a fact that the more requests that ChatGPT receives, the better it will get at this.

Research ‘Recursive Self Improvement’. D.M



FAKE NEWS mean problems!

USA men's ice hockey player Brady Tkachuk has distanced himself from an AI-enhanced White House video in which he appears to disparage Canadians, saying "those words would never come out of my mouth".

The video was published on the official White House TikTok account after the US beat Canada on Sunday to win gold at the Winter Olympics and is marked as using artificial intelligence.

It features a modified clip of Tkachuk speaking at a news conference for last year's 4 Nations Face-Off, during which Canadians booed the US national anthem.

Tkachuk appears to say: "They booed our national anthem, so I had to come out and teach those maple-syrup-eating [expletive] a lesson. Canada, we own you little bro." Tkachuk is captain of the Ottawa Senators and after playing in the Canadian team's first NHL game since the Olympics, he said: "Well, it's clearly fake, because it's not my voice, not my lips moving."

"I'm not in control of any of those accounts," he added. "I know that those words would never come out of my mouth, so I can't do anything about it. It's not what I was saying. I would never say that." [2026 Winter Olympics: US player Brady Tkachuk on White House AI video - BBC Sport](#)

Tough when you live and work in Ontario! D.M



I don't often read the papers, particularly this one, but I do notice the headlines.

So what on earth is this 'Top Tech expert' warning us about?

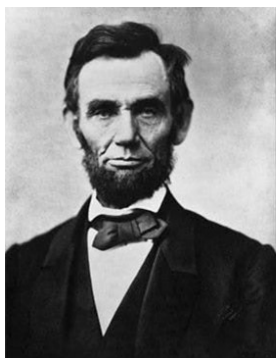
I'm guessing among other things, he is referring to an 'Existential threat' Until a few years ago, many people were talking in such terms about AI, but what is an ex-

istentialist threat? Well, according to AI, An **existential threat** refers to a danger that could lead to the complete and irreversible destruction of something — most often humanity, a nation, or a way of life. It's a peril that threatens the very existence of the entity in question.

An examples being : Artificial intelligence - Uncontrolled development could surpass human control and decision-making. {Google Gemini}

Now, as it happens, I don't buy into the 'bot's taking over but I have genuine worries about how AI is marketed, how it is insidiously slipped into our lives and how it could all go terribly wrong. I also worry about the effect it will have on education in the future and further education right now.

But AI is just an invention, in itself, it's not evil. But like other modern inventions, it can be mis-used by humans with very selfish intentions. The internet now has a 'dark web' of which I know nothing but I understand unscrupulous people run it and it is used for a variety of undesirable purposes. There appears to be no effective control over this. Drones, so often used in film making etc are used to deliver contraband into prisons and as part of the conflict in Ukraine, they



"Don't believe everything you read on the Internet just because there's a picture with a quote next to it."
 —Abraham Lincoln

have become terrifying killing machines, used by both sides.

Already ticket touts and 'Dynamic pricing' are making someone huge profits. The use of AI to target groups of people during the time of elections and send false information, FAKE NEWS, often created by AI, threatens Western democracies.

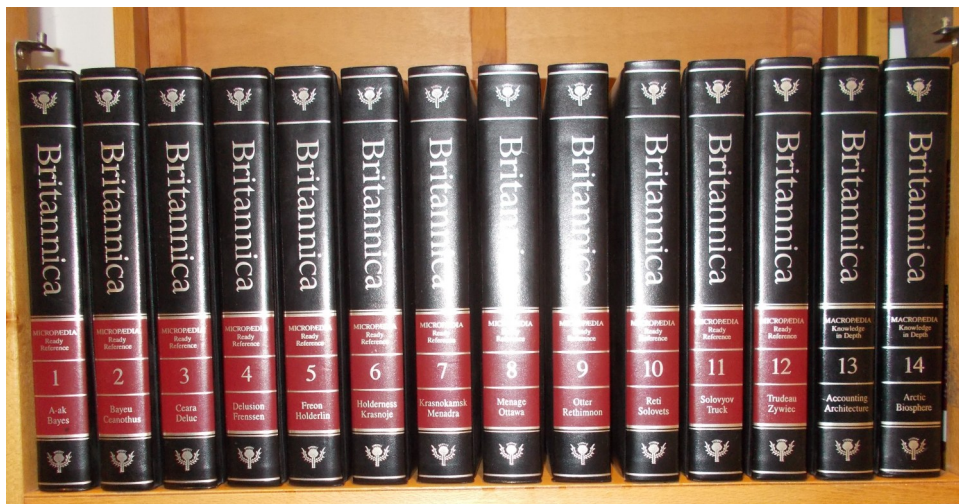
Unfriendly foreign nations have the capacity to immobilise cars throughout the country if they so wished. As more information about individuals is uploaded, the risk of a security breach by hackers increases.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

I'M NO LUDDITE , BUT...

During the Covid lockdown, a friend was home schooling his children. Having given his daughter a page of math questions, he went through to get a cup of coffee. Hearing one of the questions being read out loud, followed by a moment's silence before the next question on the list, he crept back to the door of their makeshift 'schoolroom' to hear his daughter whispering to her iPad, "Hey SIRI, what's (out loud) **49 divided by 7?**"

Now, I'm no luddite when it comes to the benefits of the internet, the vast resource of information



instantly available at the typing of a few words into Google or via a spoken question to Alexa or Siri. I use them myself, daily.

My concern is that with so much material out there, can one trust every answer that comes back.

With so many sources of information, from people and organisations with vested interests and opinions, political, commercial and conspiratorial, how do you know which of those sources the AI information has been scraped from.

As befits my age, I can say things were so much simpler back when I was a lad. Apart from the disadvantage that questions were rarely answered immediately (and available to copy and paste in time to hand in one's homework the following morning,) the sources of information could, generally, be trusted. Whether it was the shelves of the local library, the times tables on the back pages of school notebooks, the Oxford English Dictionary or the 24 volumes of the Encyclopædia Britannica. My favourite was the library, where my thirst for knowledge could be slaked alongside my thirst for literature (if Science Fiction truly counts as 'Literature')

I wasn't castigated for having too much screentime. In fact I was rewarded with 6^d bits to feed the slot machine on the side of the rented TV as long as I finished my jobs and homework before 5 o'clock, the start of 'Children's Hour'

Before the advent of YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and Facebook Reels, we used to have to rely on the limited TV channels for information.



Nowadays, there's a channel for every hue of political thinking, from the bluest right-wing blue to the reddest left-wing red, pumping out their biased world view and opinions 24 hours a day.

That was solely the function of the Newspapers back in the day. The only way to object to or express agreement with the sentiments of the publication was to write a carefully crafted 'Letter to the Editor' for inclusion in the next edition. The advantage of this system was that the only people who got to see such letters were the like-minded souls that subscribed to the paper, leaving the rest of us comfortable in the mindset of our own favoured tabloids.

The Internet now offers anyone and everyone a way to spread their ideologies and beliefs, no matter how mundane, bizarre, subversive or treasonous they may be. Even the most innocent of local interest Facebook groups can be turned into battleground of alternative views on School Gate Parking or the opening of, yet another, Coffee House in town.

This level of discord can easily be ignored. One's views on Child Safety and preferred brand of Oat Milk Caramel Macchiato are unlikely to be changed by the opinions of some grumpy, tea drinking, child averse old Git or Gal.

Where the problems arise are in those websites that, initially, sound reasonable and authoritative views, opinions and facts in Science, Politics, Academia and the like. These are all too easily infiltrated by the conspiracy theorists, state sponsored hackers and con artists.

Visitors to these sites, searching for the aforementioned 'sound, reasonable and authoritative' information may be able to differentiate between the wheat and the chaff. Particularly if they are looking at several sites dealing with the same subject.

The same cannot be ensured for the results of Artificial Intelligence generated search results. If several relevant sites have been corrupted with the same nuggets of misinformation or mischief, AI may take that as truth and then present that to the ink jet printers of all those time poor students desperate to finish their final theses. The publishing of their research in turn only adding to the distortion of the reality next time someone types their subject matter into Google Search.

So, what's the point of this grumpy, coffee drinking and Grandchild loving old Git's rant?

I say look to the old ways. Whilst it may not contain the sum of all human knowledge, the local Library is still a good place to begin. Many Libraries now offer an online book borrowing facility. The (fact checked) Encyclopædia Britannica still exists online as does the Oxford English Dictionary.



Having said that, my personal choice is to visit the Library, to enter that repository of knowledge and learning, old and new, and to say..... ***"Tell me everything"***

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Opinion—not helping humanity

Artificial Intelligence—Why? *Ann Martin*

How does AI help humanity? It does nothing to support the following human qualities: Intuition, Empathy, Self-help, Caring and Independent thought.

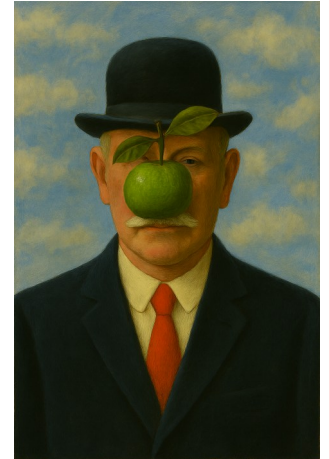
We need real families, doctors, carers and friends to help us through our journey through life.

We do not need robots or Apps to look after our babies and children.

Humans need Human Intelligence!

On a personal level, my husband disappears for long periods, poring over his mobile or laptop. He says that he's using AI but I'm not at all sure what he's up to. He shares things with his mates. I hear the occasional chuckle and see a silly smile. I try not to be judgemental in fear of driving him to being more secretive.

Basically he's not the man I knew before his dalliance with Artificial Intelligence. Hopefully it's a passing phase and he will grow out of it!



[Click here for reveal](#)



American boost to Downing Street security

As discussed by some of our contributors, Fake News can cause many problems, on a personal level up to a Geo-political level.

AI can help create telling images and even video clips which although sometimes blatant, the more subtle versions can cause a widespread stir or have an influence on how people vote.



I have created a page of Fake News and headlines and as it is fairly obvious that they are fake, no harm done.

But imagine this scene, not with cartoon characters but maybe two of your least favourite political figures. Shaking hands. To a background of wildly cheering crowds.

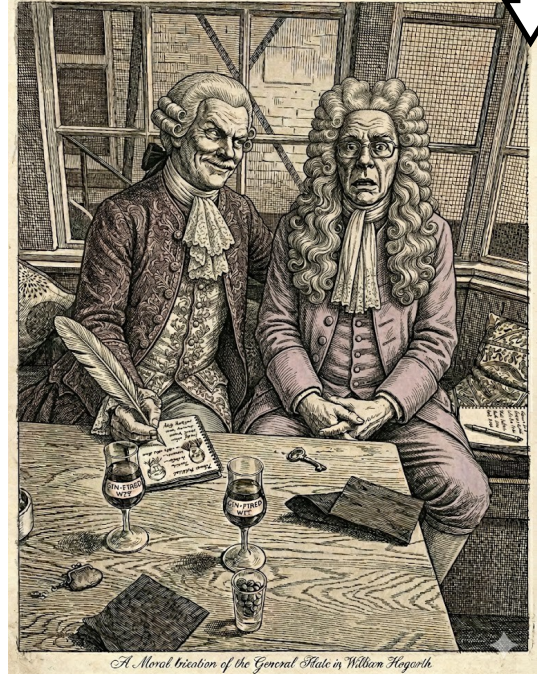
No Joke then! D.M

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
MORE FAKE NEWS**



**MH Flood Alert triggers
Emergency Evacuation plan**

**Historic Hogarth drawing
found in The Three Swans**



Farmers take protest to the National Gallery, London

Click on headline for next step.



**Bathing Station
opens on
local canal**

On the next page, I have produced eight images of Market Harborough, (using Google Gemini, Nano Banana) which may have been painted originally by a famous artist, but which one?

Choose from the following—Paul Cezanne, Gustav Klimt, Piet Mondrian, Edmund Landseer, L S Lowry, J S W Turner or Georges Seurat? Answers on page XX

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

But is it Art?



Answers on page 38 D.M

(With apologies to Shakespeare, Tolkien, and AI)

Victor Fanks leaned on the desk, put his head in his hands and groaned. The door opened and Deena D’Lecia entered. She sashayed over to the coffee machine and stood surveying the antiquated piece of metal, one knee slightly bent and a hip that jutted provocatively in Victor’s direction. With a sigh she punched a button, the only one left that still worked. The machine responded with a sickly cough and shuddered into life.

‘Coffee Victor.’ A beaker of muddy grey liquid was placed on his desk and he was enveloped in the musky scent of Black Velvet Paradise. Carmine lips smiled encouragement and the valley between her breasts opened invitingly.

‘Thanks Deena,’ he croaked, and with heroic effort added, ‘I don’t want to be disturbed for the next hour. Cancel all my engagements for the rest of the day... and Deena...’

She turned back with a small pout and whisper of silk against smooth thighs.

‘Remember no gossip! We are in crisis!’

With a nod, and what he hoped was a look of concern in her deep azure blue eyes, Deena sashayed out of the room shutting the door with a perfunctory bang. Victor stared longingly at the space where she’d been before turning his attention to the message on the screen in front of him.

Memo to Victor Franks, Director Earth Promotions for Literacy. This is to inform you that the meeting with Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Doctor Nora Parker-Smythe and Committee Members of IGLOC is brought forward. Now scheduled for tomorrow 25/06/3012. Party arriving fifteen hundred hours (1500 hrs). Smythe requests tour of workshops prior to meeting.



Curt and to the point, but then what wasn’t now-days. Either way it heralded the end of his career and you didn’t need flowery sentiments for that!

IGLOC – the Inter Galactic Literacy Oversight Committee – now celebrating its tricentennial birthday, had become a deep and painful thorn in his side. Since his appointment as Earth’s representative for the promotion of literacy, Victor had won his spurs with a series of innovative ideas that generated a wealth of funding together with – not unreasonably – the conditional expectations of the

donors. But what had appeared to be on paper, a project worthy of investment, proved in practice to be severely flawed, and he’d failed to come up with the goods.

'As you will,' Victor said, not wishing to discourage any positive attitude or effort on the part of this young and eager assistant. 'Oversight Committee arrives tomorrow afternoon. If you can cobble together something presentable by then I'd consider you a genius.'

Victor's smile vanished as the assistant left the room. He closed his eyes wearily and sighed. How in all the Universe had Earth got itself in this mess!

Progress. In their haste for advancement they'd clutched at the seductive petticoats of Progress. Earth had invested its hopes for the future in Science, and the god of technology had been duly elevated above all other considerations. At first the benefits had been huge. Space travel became accessible to all, not just the rich and influential. Leisure time expanded as machines took over basic, mundane work, and later even the more complex duties were handled competently by independent calculating computers. Technology. Its beguiling promise to be cheaper... cleaner... greener... captured a world desperate to conserve its rapidly diminishing resources. Science created a comfortable world, with a lifestyle bordering on the indolent. Surprisingly the birth rate went down, but this was viewed with no great alarm as new drugs and medical techniques had more than doubled man's life expectancy, and the memory of three score years and ten was lost in the midst of time.

So what had been sacrificed for these benefits? Victor shifted uncomfortably in his chair. He'd come to believe that much had been lost. Who could have foreseen the consequences of wholesale computerisation in literature for example? Undoubtedly computerised books were easily and instantly accessed, but contemporary computerised books now only offered a reduced selection of genres with condensed narratives.

It had become clear that widespread stimulation of multimedia audio visual razzle-dazzle



entertainment had resulted in a generation predisposed to a limited concentration span. Significant, lengthy, substantial books written centuries ago, although initially computerised, were rarely read today and had been archived. Hard copy books were destroyed, with a few of what was considered to be the best, displayed in museums.

But these buildings were no longer visited and had become nothing more than dusty mausoleums. Victor had to admit that the technological society they'd so proudly created had all but alienated its people from the written word, and qualitative writing was a dying art.

Yes. For this chick lit, comic strip, instant gratification culture, Earth had sacrificed its literary soul.

His 'writing group', initially designed to be an elite of literary minded individuals boasting the highest IQs, had proved impossible to establish. He quickly discovered people of that calibre were hard to find in the current slick, quick fix, throw away culture, and of those approached, most refused the invitation despite its generous salary. Victor had failed to factor into the equation that generally people had lost motivation and the ability to work hard. This was even more apparent amongst the privileged few who'd never been expected to work hard in the first place. The proposal that group members should be contracted for a minimum of six months, with an undertaking to write twelve hours a day, were laughed out of the interview room. Even when he threw in the idea of a fifteen minute comfort break every four hours. So, he compromised. He employed less intelligent writers to work the key boards at reduced hours, with as many comfort breaks as they wanted. Of course, it hadn't worked. Results were mediocre at best and Earth had never been placed higher than thirty-two in IGLOC's literary planetary league table listings.

It was a travesty. Earth, once universally considered to be the cutting edge in the Arts, particularly in literature, was now a dying planet, dried up, bereft of fresh and imaginative ideas. Funding was cut throughout each passing decade until it was withdrawn altogether. Victor however – though considered to be in denial – continued to plough on regardless, with a succession of experimental 'writing groups', paid for by his own rapidly diminishing pension pot. But still there had been no breakthrough and it was generally acknowledged that Victor Franks had created a rapacious, expensive monster. There was no doubt that the decision to terminate would be taken tomorrow. Earth would be ignominiously deleted from the league tables and he would be put out to grass.

A knock on the door interrupted these maudlin thoughts. He looked up hoping for some light relief with Deena, but it was one of the young assistants employed to look after the writing workshops: a frail, sallow skinned youth whose appearance proclaimed a certain deficiency in outdoor activities and sunshine. Nevertheless, earnestness and endeavour were written all over his face and Victor regarded him expectantly.

'Er Francis isn't it – what can I do for you?'

The youth stepped forward and laid a piece of paper on the desk. 'It's Frankie sir and I'm hoping it's more what I can do for you. I found this amongst yesterday's backlog. What do you think?'

Victor snatched up the paper with trembling hands, read the brief inscription and with sinking heart slowly put it back down.

'It has a certain quality I agree,' he tried to sound kind – modulate his disappointment. 'You did well to show me but we have to accept that it's too little too late. Thanks anyway.' He motioned for the youth to leave, but the young man stood his ground.

'I've a number of other transcripts sir. Thought I might have a go at putting some of them together.' He regarded Victor's impassive expression. 'Some of my predecessors recorded certain interesting sentences and phrases – nothing that would stand alone unfortunately but together – well who knows?' Frankie Baconi shrugged and gave a wry smile.

*

Morning dawned under grey skies and with leaden heart the condemned man ate a meagre breakfast. The hope that young Frankie Baconi may have come up trumps was slim, to the point of non-existence. Nevertheless, Victor decided to pay a visit to the workshop writing rooms if only to pass the time in the company of others.

The writing rooms were located in the basement where faulty and outdated air conditioning units, for some incongruous reason, worked better. There were three rooms, each filled with two hundred writers already hard at work, and the noise of clicking typewriters was tumultuous. Victor prided himself on his ingenuity in acquiring a job lot of these old-fashioned writing machines.

They'd proved to have a longer shelf life than the original fragile lap top computers that had ended their days, systematically and prematurely in re-cycling bins. The typewriters had cut costs, as did having the writers work eight hourly shifts. It worked well. The writers he watched now – heads down, backs hunched, fingers flying, had just replaced the night shift group. Victor's light bulb epiphany three years ago had radically changed the whole way the project was run, and in lucky consequence he had been able to quadruple the number of writers employed.

Frankie Baconi's small office was unoccupied, but there was a folder on the desk addressed to 'Earth's Director for Promotion of Literacy'. It contained one piece of paper and Victor read the five verses on it, with dry mouth and sweating palms.

*How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of the world.
The stars are veiled in mist and shadow.
The world is but a stage
And all its beings merely players.
When we are born we cry that we are come
Upon this stage, this Kingdom of the Damned.
I see in your eyes
The same fear that would take the heart of me.
The day may come when the courage of men fails
When we forsake all ties
And break all bonds of fellowship.
But it is not this day!*

*There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, if taken at the flood
Leads on to fortune.
So – Blow winds and crack your cheeks
Rage! Blow! Spit fire! Spout rain!
This day we fight for all that we hold dear
On this good Earth
That all might say
Oh Brave New World
That has such creatures in it.*

Some of the phrasing struck a chord of familiarity with him. Books of his adolescence, offering new ideas and concepts – feeding his imagination: their comforting weight, smell, and the silk-like paper caressing his finger-tips.

Victor felt a stirring of excitement. It wasn't perfect, but Baconi had done a good job of cobbling together a piece of writing worthy of IGLOC's scrutiny. He hoped – no – believed it was the sort of thing Dr Parker-Smythe, who talked in terms of 'poetry' and 'romance' with a capital R, might approve of. At the very least he believed it would earn him a stay of execution. He allowed himself to relax. If the project was granted an extension, he would play the philanthropist, reward Baconi with a pay rise. He dared to hope he could afford it now.

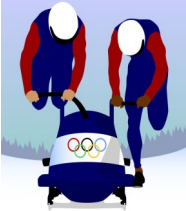
On his return Victor stopped to look through the window of one of the writing rooms. It had never ceased to amaze him how enthusiastically and compliantly these little creatures pounded the keyboards hour after hour. In the three years the project had utilised these anthropoid apes, there had been no hint of anarchy or rebellion. He gave a mental salute to that ancient Greek mathematician, Aristotle.

The old boy's theorem on randomness and infinity had been adapted over time, but the original concept still held. The current adaptation that a monkey hitting keys at random on a typewriter keyboard for an infinite amount of time, would eventually type a given text – such as the complete works of William Shakespeare. Victor could not believe his luck. It suited everyone. He chuckled to himself, the monkeys appeared to be happy, and as far as costs were concerned – well – the pay was peanuts!

Back in his office Victor noted they had three hours before IGLOC's arrival; plenty of time. He buzzed the intercom. 'Deena would you come in – I think we have something to celebrate.' *(Images created with AI Gemini D.M)*



HWu3a Live, Learn, Laugh



Winter Games Report (Seniors)



Members of the HWu3a who represented Market Harborough in the recent Winter Games in Italy, returned with a mixed report ...



Sledge – Slightly downhill, no pushing event

*“Trick was to keep it steady and keep my feet up. We were delighted with **Silver**” Dave M*

“Peter was a great skip. Knew how and when to push us. So pleased to be bringing medals back to Market Harborough.” Pamela Costall.



*“We all have tried New Age Curling and we thought why not take our skills on to the ice? Thoroughly enjoyed mixing it with the ‘big boys’. Delighted to beat Canada in the Final for Olympic **Gold**.” Peter Saunders*

Winter Games Report (Seniors) *contd*

No figure skaters were included, probably for the best, but also there were issues with personal insurance. Nevertheless, skiing and two person bobsleigh featured in the medals. D.M



2 Person Bobsled – mixed.

*“Felt we could have done better if my No. 2 had not pushed so hard. With his dodgy knees, he was never going to get onboard on the second run. This attracted multiple penalty points. Overall, **Bronze** not bad, but could have been better.” Louise Elsome*

3 Freestyle skiing (Aerial) event.

“I’ve been watching this on TV and I thought, ‘Hey, I can do that!’ Biggest problem was keeping my hat on.”

GOLD Carole Clementson



Short sprint Slalom. (50m with one gate)

*“I elected to go for speed and unfortunately, I missed the gate, on both runs. I was naturally disappointed but coach said I would learn from it. Make me stronger in the 2030 Games in Albertville.” **DNQ**, Dave Martin*

February Get together report

Helen Salisbury (Thursday Ramblers) and Kate Holmes (Music, Exploring) spoke to a goodly crowd on Monday 23rd.

Dave Martin also shared a video clip, 'Market Harborough as never seen before' using AI images of famous views and buildings in MH. See page 24. He then offered to create some images of groups sitting around their coffee tables. Below you can see some of the results of this virtual coffee morning experience. Normal service will be resumed next month! D.M



Well, that's it for AI contributions, ALMOST!

Jack and I hope that you found the various articles very interesting and thought provoking. If you have any views in general about AI or how we covered it in the March issue, we would be delighted to hear them.

Group Reports

Friday Strollers

On Friday April 10th, we meet at 10-30 at The White Horse, Stoke Albany. LE16 8PY, to pre order our lunch. We will then drive to East Carlton Park LE16 8YF for our stroll, hopefully spring will be in the air. We will return to The White Horse for lunch.

Names please to Carol by Tuesday April 7th, 20 strollers maximum please.

07855 738706

carol.harvey1@hotmail.co.uk

Best wishes Carol.



Health and Wellbeing – February 2026 meeting

In February the HWB group were transfixed by the talk, delivered by Mr Terry Eato. Terry is a member of HWU3A and is well known for his wonderful drone photographs. The talk however was about a very different topic!

Terry talked about a journey – a journey from alcoholism to sobriety. Alcohol is an embedded part of society – it is frequently used in celebrations from birth to death. It is a common drink of millions of people. For some however, this casual drinking turns into addiction that ruins their lives.

Terry talked about Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and another group, SMART. Both are nation-wide organisations with a different approach to helping alcoholics.

His talk was indeed moving. There were many questions from the members which Terry responded to with intelligence and humour.

Dr Robert Davison and Mrs Kathy Davison (Group Coordinators).



Group Reports

The Readers group

6 January 2026, *Hotel du Lac*, Anita Brookner, 1984

Anita Brookner dedicated *Hotel du Lac* to Rosamond Lehmann and the subject matter of this, her most well-known novel, is akin to that of *The Weather in the Streets* by Lehmann, the first book we shared in our group. Both novels explore the mental and emotional effects of a clandestine love affair in the life of a single, independent woman in the mid-twentieth century.

In *Hotel du Lac* we find Edith Hope, a romantic novelist, staying in a 'brief exile' from home after an 'unfortunate lapse', the nature of which is slowly revealed as the novel progresses. Her fellow guests, some larger than life, are meticulously observed and their lives laid bare for the reader: a controlling mother, an elderly woman abandoned by her family, a gaunt woman with her dog.

The lake, the weather and the landscape are also minutely observed and the combined effect of both is ethereal, cocooning and faintly claustrophobic.

The pace of this novel is languid; very little happens, but the atmosphere Brookner conjures as Edith considers her love affair, her marriage proposals, her 'unfortunate lapse' and another bad decision, is vivid and intense, although not without a sense of unreality, even fantasy in Edith's contemplation of her lover. David will never leave his wife or his comfortable life for Edith and she writes long narrative letters to him that she never sends - is he real or is he an imaginary creation? That it is not entirely clear, like much else in the book which remained opaque, was oddly satisfying, and only added to the ethereal quality of this novel.

3 February 2026, *Small Pleasures*, Clare Chambers, 2020

Clare Chambers wrote *Small Pleasures* after coming across scientific accounts of tests undertaken in the 1950s and published in *The Lancet* to investigate whether spontaneous parthenogenesis might be provable in the human female – in lay terms to test whether a 'virgin birth' was provable. Her story is woven around Jean Swinney, a journalist on a local newspaper, Gretchen Tilbury, who contacts the paper saying her daughter's was a virgin birth, Gretchen's husband Howard and Gretchen's daughter Margaret. Jean's quiet, uneventful, even dull 1950s suburban life, lived with her mother is turned upside-down as she investigates Gretchen's claim over one summer and autumn, as she aims to be able to go to press for an early December virgin birth news story.

Chamber's writing is elegant and spare and the narrative, part mystery, part love story, part exposition of women's constrained lives, is compelling right through to its unexpected and ambiguous end point. Chambers perfectly encapsulates the sights, sounds, tastes and feel of 1950's London suburbia; the small pleasures of the title being moments which relieve the tedium; the last cigarette at night, the bar of chocolate made to last a week, a melting ice cream.

For some in the group, though, the spareness of her prose, notwithstanding its narrative drive, rendered them dis-engaged with simplistic one-dimensional characters about whom they could not care. For others, this very spareness heightened the stifling atmosphere of the world described and the latent passions which bubbled under the surface. There was a slight weakness in the denouement of the mystery and for some the resolution was obvious and predictable and so no mystery. More significantly, the alignment of the final scene in the novel with another factual event, the Lewisham train disaster of 4th December 1957 was a distasteful appropriation of a disturbing event that seemed unnecessary. A mixed response, then to a very readable but for some an deeply unsatisfactory novel.

Caroline Taylor Weedon

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We are in the process of recruiting volunteers to help families directly ahead of our next Course of Preparation which starts on Wednesday 15th April (10am to 2.30pm) at our premises on Coventry Rd, Market Harborough.

We are particularly looking for more male volunteers this year as they are currently under-represented in our volunteer team.

Many thanks,
Stella Renwick

Charity Manager
Home-Start South
Leicestershire

Reg Charity No: 1107504

Company No: 5299096

Tel: 07596 107106

Office: 01858 467982

www.home-startsouthleics.org.uk

<https://linktr.ee/homestartsouthleics>

Local Charities

Global Birdfair 2026 invitation to volunteer

I am contacting you by the kind permission of your editors, in my role as volunteers' coordinator for Global Birdfair. This annual event is the world's biggest festival of nature and is held in Rutland.

The event is **not just birds and birdwatchers!** Huge marquees house stands selling everything from art to local produce, books to binoculars as well as travel and conservation organisations. There are also large lecture marquees with a program of hundreds of lectures and events, as well as smaller marquees dedicated to workshops, authors, debate and children's activities. The event also brings together the **world's conservationists** in a melting pot of **education, information, networking and inspiration.**

The event is entirely run by volunteers and has over several decades **raised millions for conservation.** However, an event of this size takes a lot of volunteers and my purpose here is to invite **you to consider volunteering.** Volunteers do not need to know anything about the subjects covered. The experts are already in place, but people are needed to do tasks like manning the entry gates, usher people into lectures, introduce speakers, provide local information to visitors, sell merchandise and supervise the silent auction. There is a whole **range of jobs** with something to suit all ages and abilities, although all volunteers must be over 18. Training, support, free shirt, car parking, access to the event.

Next year's event will be held at **Lyndon Top (south shore of Rutland Water) on the 10th, 11th and 12th July 2026.**

Much more information can be found on the Global Birdfair website at globalbirdfair.org .

The website was updated in November 2025 and everyone wishing to volunteer for 2026 will be asked to fill out a simple form from this website.

In the meantime, you are welcome to contact me directly.

Jackie Murray volunteers@gbf.org



Hilary Hearnshaw

FINALLY!

Yes, **finally**, it's a bumper edition and you have made it through to the end, well done!

Finally, we are starting to see some better weather and a real promise of Spring. If you have any interesting photos of this beautiful season, please share them with us.



This is the **final** reference to AI in this edition. If like one of our members, you are tempted to try it out for yourself, please send us an enhanced image like this one. We could create a Hall of Fame. (No film clips, please).

What's in a name? **dAvid mArtIn**

Makes you think!



Next month's theme - American Favourites - Just to get the ball rolling ... My Fav Book – To Kill a Mockingbird, Fav Film– The Sting, Fav Actor– Robin Williams, Fav Group– The Eagles. Dave M

Suggested reading - The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid - Bill Bryson.

Art Quiz, made you wait,

Answers from page 24. 1. Gustav Klimt. 2 Edmund Landseer. 3. L.S Lowry. 4. Georges Seurat. 5. Slavador Dali. 6. Paul Cezanne. 7. Piet Mondrian 8. J.S. W. Turner

Local Charities

Hammond Arboretum

The site has a wonderful history and is a truly unique environmental gem in an ever increasingly developed Harborough. It had laid neglected for many years until the 1990s when the volunteer restoration started. We have no formal constituted body - just a few regular volunteers with a range of skills and depth of arboreal expertise. Most of us are of a senior age!

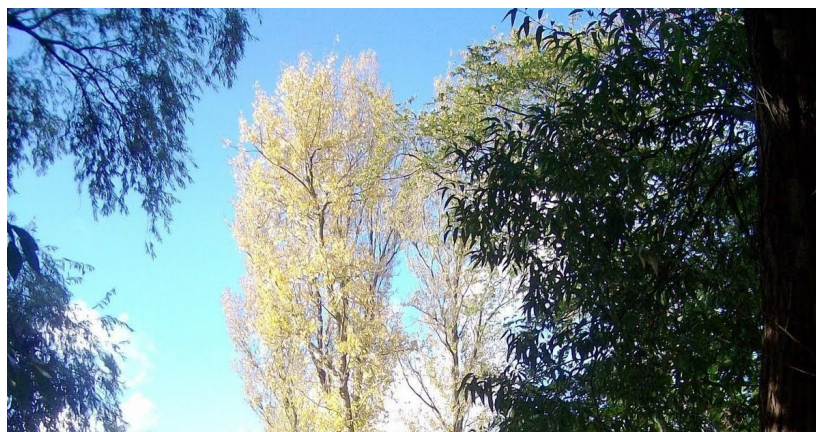
We are overseen by RSA Tudor Grange but have no specific funding! Being attached to a busy school, safeguarding is key to our operations. Health and Safety guidelines are also closely followed - such as, not entering the Arboretum if the wind is too strong.

If you would like to visit see the opening times below. If you would like to volunteer, please contact us on the following ... *Dave Robins, Volunteer*

Hammond Arboretum Open Days 2026

The Arboretum is **not** open for the National Garden Scheme (NGS) in 2026. The Arboretum will be open to visitors on the following days in 2026, from 2pm to 4pm:

- Thursday 9th April
- Saturday 23rd May
- Saturday 27th June
- Thursday 16th July
- Thursday 20th August
- Saturday 26th September
- The Robert Smyth Academy,
Burnmill Road. **LE16 7JG**
(Entrance is via the bottom gate.)



For safety reasons we may be forced to cancel any of these openings.

- **Accessibility:** Wheelchair and pushchair access may be available but there are some steps and steep slopes within the arboretum;
- Dogs on short leads are welcome;
- **The volunteers may be working in the arboretum.**

More information regarding the arboretum is available on the website:

<https://hammondarboretum.org.uk/> or their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61553185364840>

STOP PRESS- Group Reports

APOLOGIES to the Tuesday Photography group. (D.M) Some great photos on the intriguing subject of Animal, Mineral, Vegetable? *John Hammond & Angela Lloyd*

