



Contents

1. Introduction
- 2 + 3 Mummies, medicine & healing practices
4. Pyramid Concert Orchestra
5. Upcoming Talks
6. Good News for Interest Groups
7. u3a Online Learning
8. Chairman's Statement
9. AI - Monthly Update
- 10+11. Pioneers of Medical Science 1790's - 1950's
12. New Members

Contact details for the Editor with ideas, comments and suggestions:-

kenbishop8@hotmail.co.uk
Mobile: 07747 008441

Introduction

Why a photograph of a pyramid? It's not a suggestion as a holiday destination, it's because this is Egyptian Month. We have had a Science Group talk on Mummies and what we can learn from their medical and healing practices; there is an advert to see the Pyramid Orchestra in action (travel abroad not required though you will need to get to Stockport) and finally (not a comment on the subject matter but simply the date it happens) an Online Learning talk on the Role of Women in Ancient Egypt.

Egypt is one of the oldest civilisations in the world being first settled circa 5000 years BCE. Unified in 3150 the Empire was probably the longest in the world, lasting nearly 3000 years until 332 BCE when it was conquered by Alexander the Great.

The country can boast a number of world firsts: writing, in the form of hieroglyphics; the construction of the pyramids which date from 2500 BCE; contributions to medical science and healing with many of the practices and remedies still in use today. Their knowledge of medicine and the body, were not only a world first but invaluable in the Ancient World Europe and the Near East having been passed down to the ancient Greeks and Arabs.

Mummies, medicine and healing practices

This month's Science Group talk was given by Rosalie David, emeritus professor at Manchester University and an expert on Egypt. The practices of the ancient Egyptians provide a scientific resource for studying disease and medicine.

Egypt was referred to by Herodotus as the 'gift of the Nile'. The annual floods divided the country as either desert or the cultivated area where people lived. The relatively small area of the latter resulted in burials in tombs or pyramids for the wealthy and pit graves for the less well off with mummification for both.

Egyptian medicine was based on the rational and irrational. The rational side was through observation, the cause of the illness being visible and a knowledge of anatomy obtained through mummification which required the removal of the organs.

The irrational, or magical, side was the belief that illness was caused by the displeasure and punishment of the Gods, each of whom were attributed to a certain part of the body. Sekhmet and Imhotep were the most important with Imhotep being considered the founder of medical science in the ancient world.

There were a range of medical practitioners:-

- Priests of Sekhmet
- General practitioners attached to armies
- Magicians, who performed spells and gestures on patients
- Aides - nurses, masseurs and bandagers (who did the mummification)

Egyptian medicine is the origin of most medicine and pharmacy in Europe & the Near East. The knowledge was passed down through the Greeks and Arabs. The Egyptians were the only ones in the ancient world who practiced surgery including trepanation, amputations and circumcision. They developed the use of anaesthetics using drugs (opium) and alcohol.

continued

Much evidence on the medical procedures and the remedies used has been taken from the hieroglyphics on 12 major medical papyri dating from 1550 BCE. These were used as handbooks for GP's and as the basis for medical lectures. The Egyptians achieved a number of world firsts - observations in anatomy; the beginnings of a medical vocabulary; the use of splints, bandages and compresses; experiments in surgery and pharmacy; use of sanatoria and isolation for the treatment of the mentally and physically sick. 50% of the the drug sources used by the Egyptians were still being used in modern times and 64% of the remedies within the papyri are proven to be effective treatments.



Mummified remains of the ancient Egyptians have preserved a wealth of evidence about their diseases and physical ailments, as well as the medical and pharmaceutical treatments employed to alleviate these conditions. Through the use of radiology, X-rays can provide not only an insight into disease, the skeleton and funerary practices, but also information on diet. This shows the wealthy had a diet high in cholesterol and saturated fats, whilst the rest of the population ate mostly fish and vegetables. Sadly with a life expectancy in the 30's the impact of the difference in diet on length of life can not be compared.

Analysis of remains in the stomach as identified 30 different types of bread. The inclusion of sand and grit in the product had a highly detrimental effect on their teeth and gums. There is evidence of dental work having been undertaken, most famously on Tutankhamun, but their knowledge did not include understanding the negative impact of the bread they were eating. A modern parallel would be smoking cigarettes and the consumption of sugar.

From Mummies to the Pyramid

Friends of the Pyramid Concert Orchestra

PYRAMID CONCERT ORCHESTRA
Best of British

Elgar: *Pomp & Circumstance March No.4*
 Coates: *Three Elizabeths Suite*
 Vaughan Williams: *Fantasia on Greensleeves*
 Sullivan: *Pirates of Penzance Selection*
 Wood: *Fantasia on British Sea Songs*
 ... and more

45 MUSICIANS LIVE
ON STAGE
AT THE PLAZA,
STOCKPORT

SUNDAY JULY 26TH 2026 3.30PM
 TICKETS AVAILABLE ON THE PLAZA WEBSITE
WWW.STOCKPORTPLAZA.CO.UK

Book now for our next concert
on Sunday 26th July

Dear Friends

We look forward to welcoming you to our first ever summer concert at the Plaza, Stockport for '*Best of British*'. Here's the full programme:

Elgar	<i>Pomp & Circumstance March No.4</i>
Coates	<i>Three Elizabeths Suite</i>
Binge	<i>The Watermill</i>
Sullivan	<i>Pirates of Penzance Selection</i>
Coleridge Taylor	<i>Othello Suite</i>
Vaughan Williams	<i>Fantasia on Greensleeves</i>
Coates	<i>For Your Delight</i>
Wood	<i>Fantasia on British Sea Songs</i>

Tickets are available now on the Plaza website here:
[Pyramid Concert Orchestra – Best Of British](http://Pyramid-Concert-Orchestra-Best-Of-British)

Alternatively, you may purchase tickets by calling in at the theatre box office (which will save you the online booking fee - check the Plaza website for opening times).

And on Sunday 11th October ...

... we shall be whisking you to Austria for a fabulous musical cocktail entitled '*Viennese Gold*', including for the first time a singer in our line-up. We're excited to welcome soprano *Lucy Farrimond* who will be performing three songs with the orchestra for your pleasure, including *Vilia* from *The Merry Widow*. You'll also hear lots of familiar favourites by Strauss, Lehar, Gershwin and others, including *Gold & Silver*, *Thunder & Lightning Polka*, and the celebrated *Blue Danube Waltz*.



This concert will be at Stockport Guildhall (on the A6 not far from the Town Hall). There is ample, free, on-site parking, and a bus stop outside the front entrance.

Tickets for this concert are available now at the orchestra's own online box office: www.ticketsource.com/pyramid-concert-orchestra

Please help to grow our audience by spreading the word amongst your family, friends and neighbours. The more, the merrier!

With very best wishes,
John Wilson
pyramidconcertorchestra@gmail.com



Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61572452937151>

PYRAMID CONCERT ORCHESTRA
Viennese Gold

Join us for an afternoon of great music including
 Strauss - *Blue Danube*, *Die Fledermaus*,
Thunder & Lightning Polka
 Mozart - *Marriage of Figaro Overture*
 Lehar - *Gold & Silver Waltz*
 Suppe - *Post & Peasant Overture*

THE GUILDHALL,
169 WELLINGTON
ROAD SOUTH,
STOCKPORT

SUNDAY
OCT 11TH
3.30PM

WWW.TICKETSOURCE.CO.UK/PYRAMID-CONCERT-ORCHESTRA

Upcoming Talks

Monthly Talks- 2.30 pm Church Hall, Wilmslow Reformed Church

22nd July: Hiking the Inca Trail - Terry Cook

23rd September: History of Christie Hospital - Dr David Poppitt

28th October: Tatton Parks Last Baron Egerton - Judy Copley

25th November: Retired Barrister Turned Author - Simon Michael

9th December: Our Christmas Carol

Science Group - 2pm Wilmslow Library

21st July: Psychedelics and mental health: hype, hope and healing

15th September: Electronic Flight Technologies- future prospects. Dr Yagya Regmi, Manchester Fuel Cell Innovation Centre, Manchester Metropolitan University

20th October: Life and death of a star. Peter Cadman. Cheadle U3A

17th November: MOFs- Metal-Organic Framework Materials: Applications and Future Technologies. Prof Martin Schroeder, Department of Chemistry, University of Manchester

Further details are available on the website: www.wilmslowu3a.org.uk

Technology for Everyone Group

2pm Heald Green Village Hall, Outwood Road, Heald Green, SK8 3JL

6th October: Medical Technologies - Prof Andrew Weightman, University of Manchester.

This is an Open Group at Cheadle & Gatley u3a. Cost £3 including tea/coffee and biscuits. Please take your membership card or membership number with you.

Interest Groups - Good News

Two New Committee Members!

We are delighted to advise that two members of the Committee. Pat Lee is to become Interest Group Co-ordinator and Dave Lee is to take on the role of Vice Chair. They have been a member of Wilmslow U3a for just over eight years, primarily to join the Cycling Group. They live in Knutsford and are Associate Members of Knutsford u3a, taking part in the Walking Groups and Singing for Pleasure.

Pat served in the Scout Movement for 11 years, initially as a Beaver Scout Leader, followed by District Commissioner for Beaver Scouts, then Joint Administrator for Cheshire Scouts. She is looking forward to making a contribution to the work of the Wilmslow u3a (see her comments below). If any of the Group Leaders need help please don't hesitate to get in touch with Pat via the website, or email leep1032@gmail.com

Table Tennis

Pat joined a welcoming group of 10 members at Wilmslow Leisure Centre. They guided her through a quick-fire round of games. Three tables were in use and we moved around playing with and against different people. The session was concluded with refreshments and a good chat in the Cafe. New members would be warmly welcomed. They play on Monday and Friday mornings at 10am.

Rummikub

A new group started on Tuesday 9 June, with like-minded members, for the first 2-hour session in a quiet corner of Wilmslow Leisure Centre Cafe. The staff are very accommodating and are more than happy to host us free of charge, with drinks and any cakes paid for before the start. There were six for the inaugural session with more expected when members are back from holidays and grand parenting duties.

Scrabble

For anyone interested members have asked for a second session each month. This would mean 1st and 3rd Monday, 2-4 pm in Topiary Restaurant Wilmslow Garden Centre.

Bowling Group

This Group is full and thriving but is there any interest in starting a 2nd group?

Online Learning Events



Here is a random selection of Online Learning Events in July follows :-

The technology built into modern cars & trucks - 1st July: 11.30am

Mrs Dickens tells her story: - 2nd July: 2pm

Watercolours with Tony - 6th July: 10am

Flight Inspirations: Aviation Group - 8th July: 10am.

Fusion Tai Qi Gong - 9th July: 10am

The Role of Women in Ancient Egypt - 10th July: 2pm

Secrets of the Human Brain: Vision - 27th July: 2pm

Staying Safe Online - 30th July: 10am

There is a wealth of other events and I'm sure there is something which would be of interest to you. Access to these and other events is via the website - www.wilmslow.u3asite. Click on the u3a@Your Home page, scroll down and click on Events & Workshops and then click on Online Learning Events.

The events are on Zoom and can be booked via completing the booking form.

Chairmans Statement

As you will see elsewhere in the newsletter, Pat Lee has joined the committee as the Groups Coordinator. I would like to welcome Pat and wish her well in this important role. Most people join a u3a to participate in a particular group, so it is important that we have an attractive offering of active groups.

With this in mind, Pat has already started contacting all the current group leaders to understand whether they need any support and also whether those that have waiting lists can expand.

The u3a ethos is that members come together and continue learning, sharing skills, and socialising in a relaxed environment. The key point is that to be a group leader you don't need to be an expert in a subject or the best player of a game. What is required is the willingness to help. If you think you could help either with the running of an existing group or even help start a new one, please contact Pat - her details are on the previous page.

We are always interested in starting new interest groups and can provide support to get going, including the purchase of equipment if necessary. So, if you have any ideas for a new group, please let Pat know.

Wilmslow u3a is also a member of the Northeast Cheshire Network (NECN) which covers the u3a groups in Bramhall, Cheadle & Gatley, Macclesfield, Poynton and Stockport. There are some interest groups at these u3as open to members across the NECN. So, if we don't cover a particular interest, please have a look at the list of Open Groups on the NE Cheshire Network page on the website the link being: <https://wilmslow.u3asite.uk/ne-cheshire-network/>

Finally, we want to spotlight each group in turn by having an Interest Group table at our monthly meetings. This will be in the small hall where we have the tea and biscuits, so you can find out more about a group and perhaps consider whether to join, or even get involved in helping to run it.

AI - Monthly Update

According to the u3a Online Learning the first use of the terminology of AI was in 1950 when Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the world wide web, wrote a paper on its possibilities. This was followed by a Conference in Dartmouth, USA, the aims of which were to solve the problem of AI in 9 days! Credit should be given for optimism if not for realism.

AI was brought to the wider public consciousness by a ChatGPT release in 2022. Progress since then has been and is continuing to be, exponential.

A few highlights from the newspapers this month:-

- Good - A new version of AI based weather forecasting is being developed sorting through historical data to identify weather patterns and improve forecasting which is still based on a high number of weather balloons. The 21st century meets the 19th!
- Good - Kew Gardens is using AI to unlock the secrets of its millions of plants which can then be sifted for scientific discoveries and also to identify crop varieties which are more resistant to climate change.
- Bad - Last year half a £billion was stolen from people tricked into transferring money by scammers using AI tools.
- Good - National Police are developing an AI program which could save 6 million officer hours per annum equivalent to 3,000 officer hours by 2028.
- Good - an AI has been developed by the Government to digitise historical maps, old documents and notes to accelerate the planning process. This should reduce planning officer hours searching through documents by an estimated 250,000 hours each year.
- Good / Bad - the Chief Executive of ChatGPT has admitted he overestimated the social and economic impacts when AI Chat GPT was launched in 2022. He thought there would be more impact on entry level white collar jobs being eliminated than has actually happened. But the Chief Executive of Anthropic warned last year AI could wipe out 50% of these jobs and cause unemployment to spike to 10 - 20 % within the next 5 years. Time will tell which prognosis is right.

Three Medical Pioneers

Their fight against Mankind's Biggest Killers



Wilmslow u3a member, **Michael Palmer**, gave a fascinating talk on a personal selection of 3 radical pioneers from the 1790's to the 1950's and their vital work on smallpox, cholera and the effects of smoking on health.

Edward Jenner 1749 - 1823 was responsible for the complete eradication of smallpox worldwide. The disease was responsible for many hundreds of millions of deaths. In the 18th century alone it killed 10% of the population in Europe including 1 in 3 of children under 10 years old. It was highly contagious and without a cure until Jenner.

In 1796 Jenner, a country doctor, inoculated an 8 year old boy by giving him a small dose of smallpox. He survived and was later inoculated with cow pox and when he was found to be immune, Jenner realised he had found a solution and this led to widespread vaccination. Interesting fact: the word vaccine is taken from the Latin for cow. There were 300 - 500 million deaths in the 20th century up to 1977 but in 1980 the World Health Organisation declared it had been completely eradicated worldwide, the only disease to have achieved this distinction.

The next pioneer was **John Snow** 1813 - 1858. During a bad outbreak of Cholera in 1854 in Soho Snow decided to collect statistical data in the surrounding overcrowded streets to establish where residents took their water from. This was traced to a water pump on Broad (now Broadwick) Street. The source of the problem was the water extracted from the River

continued

Fleet and proved cholera was not caused by noxious smells from the filth ridden streets as previously thought. In 1858 the “great stink” of the River Thames caused Parliament to authorise the construction of the super sewer designed along the Embankment by Bazalgette. The subsequent improvements in infrastructure helped cure cholera in the UK and elsewhere.

The use of data collected by Snow led to the study of Epidemiology which relied on evidence and reason and showed that health was not just a personal problem but one caused by problems in the infrastructure. Snow is widely recognised as the “father” of epidemiology. Whilst Europe is now free from cholera sadly, in areas where there is a lack of clean water, poor sanitation and living conditions - Africa, India and Asia - the disease is still rife.

The final pioneer and one who clearly appealed due to Michael’s background in statistics and Phd in medicine, is **Sir Austin Bradford Hill** 1897 - 1991, a man not likely to be widely known outside the medical sector.

Hill had no qualifications in science or statistics and yet became one of the greatest medical statisticians in the 20th century. Working with Sir Richard Dodd he established a causal link between smoking and lung cancer. A rigorous study of patients with lung cancer was undertaken looking at their age, gender and diet. A questionnaire, with only a few questions on smoking, was given to patients and also to a control group. A follow up survey of doctors clearly identified smoking caused lung cancer.

Hill and Dodd’s work shifted public opinion on smoking and led to adverts, warnings on cigarette packets and more recently a ban on smoking in public places. Death rates increased from 2015 to 2020 but have now fallen back to 2015 levels thanks to their pioneering efforts.

Another claim to the fame of Hill & Dodd is their use of randomised clinical trial on Streptomycin, a drug given to sufferers of TB. As this drug was in limited supply a trial was undertaken to compare the benefit to those patients given the drug, together with bed rest, with those who were just proscribed bed rest. The trial positively showed Streptomycin to be beneficial for TB sufferers. Randomised Clinical Trials are now used by the medical profession on a range of potential drugs to establish their efficacy for a particular disease.

The work of these pioneers should be highly praised, not just for the millions of lives saved as a result but also for the widespread reduction in suffering of those people who had contracted these diseases as well as the wider impact on their families. We should be highly thankful for their invaluable work.

New Members

The following members have recently joined Wilmslow u3a. The Committee have several ideas as to how we can ensure they are welcomed and fully integrated into our activities and we would ask and encourage everyone to do the same when you meet them.

Barbara Medcalfe
Claire Robinson
Peter Kaye
Fergus McTaggart
Tim Pinder
Karen Prestidge
Anne Harper
Ron Harper
Russell Muirhead
Barbara McDade
Karen Griffin
Alan Dobson
Ruth Stones

Editors Note

I do my best to accurately summarise the Monthly Talks and that of the Science Group but realise that, on occasion, the summary may not be completely accurate.

Please accept my apologies for any unwitting errors.