

Llandrindod Wells & District U3A Lecture Meeting July 2019

Conspiracy Theories - Mike Watkins

Report by Clive Barrett

The Chairman Roger Malvern welcomed everyone to the meeting on a fine sunny July morning. He referred to the Welsh U3A's short story competition on the website, and also the new French Conversation group, which will hopefully start soon after a meeting on July 31st at 10-30am in the Metropole Coffee Bar. He then introduced the speaker for the morning Mike Watkins, whose talk was entitled "Conspiracy Files". The speaker started his lecture by asking a couple of questions, "What is conspiracy all about, and why do we enjoy hearing about them?" He then continued his talk with the history of conspiracies including the bizarre ones. Suggesting that the definition of conspiracies is a "version of events that differs from the actual". Mike gave the following general examples, Watergate and Amelia Earhart. In the latter case she disappeared on a flight----- did she run out of fuel, become ill or experience bad weather. Amelia was never found, but for the search the American Government surprisingly sent out a strong military force----- was she carrying a soldier to spy on the Nazis, or possibly sensitive documents. He then mentioned some early conspiracies, which were mostly termed plots against the Government e.g. the Gunpowder Plot, Egypt's Tutankhamun, and the little knowledge known about his father, Julius Caesar, Thomas Beckett, and Mary Queen of Scots.

The speaker then moved his talk forward to modern times and the 1947 UFO conspiracy at Rothwell Reserve in the USA. The details involved experimental aircraft or alien landing---- simplified as "flying saucers". The first spacecraft or UFO's were described as weather balloons. At the time then President Roosevelt got involved with efforts to attempt to calm the situation down. Conspiracy theories about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November 1963 show that it has almost certainly been proved it wasn't Lee Harvey Oswald, because he couldn't shoot accurately enough. The fatal shot came from behind a brick wall on the grassy knoll, and not from a book depository nearby. Subsequently Jack Ruby, who was dying of cancer, and a member of the Mafia shot Oswald. The speaker summed up by stating that the then Vice President Lyndon Johnson was believed to have ordered the killing. Mark then mentioned some of the organisations mostly involved in conspiracies including Government agencies, NASA, secret societies, big organisations, Further incidents of death, "Elvis Presley's Alive Group" and the statement that his twin brother, who died at birth, is still alive!!!! David Icke, the former Hereford United footballer and TV presenter, who believes that the world is ruled by a particular sect. Icke has written a number of books, the speaker describing him "as having gone off the rails". He also mentioned the "Men in Black" which originated from a spoof, comedy film showing them keeping aliens in check. I must comment that the intriguing lecture although mainly serious was also at times very funny. He then mentioned the conspiracies involving Paul McCartney, the Flat Earth Society, Rudolf Hess, Adolf Hitler, Pearl Harbour and Martin Luther King.

Finally he mentioned his personal top three of the most famous and best conspiracies in reverse order, third Princess Diana, second 9/11 New York, and in first place the Moon landing

Did the Americans really go to the Moon? The following are reasons why this achievement needed to happen:

1. NASA was under pressure to put a man on the moon.
2. Huge sums of money were being spent
3. USA thought Russia was close behind them in space exploration.

On the other hand the reasons put forward why it didn't or couldn't happen.

- a) The Van Allen Radiation Belt.
- b) One respected "Orion project" member admitted "We must get through the above radiation belt, before we "can" conquer space.
- c) On the moon there is lack of impact craters, there being no truck/ moon buggy tracks, there also being a lack of footprints and dust in the pictures shown.
- d) In the pictures shown no stars and recurring background, incorrect shadows, lighting and other inaccuracies.

Did We Go!!!!

1. Surely one of the astronauts or someone directly involved in the space programme would have come forward if it had indeed been a hoax.
2. The Russians would have done all they could to prove their arch rivals in the space race, didn't go.
3. If they could get away with this most elaborate of conspiracies the first time, why did they bother doing it again several more times?

The speaker was thanked by the Chairman Roger Malvern, and then answered questions from a fascinated audience. He then concluded the meeting by announcing that there would be a lecture in August. As a meeting has rarely been held in the past during the main summer holiday month, was there a conspiracy theory involved here? The meeting will be held on Monday August 12th at the Metropole Hotel at 10—30am. The lecture is entitled "Family Matters: Four generations of women's lives" by Janet Robinson.