

READY WHEN YOU ARE

On the verge of an exciting step-change in activity, the ESU's primary school programme had to take a back seat while schools coped with the tsunami of Covid-19 and its aftermath. Jenny Wheeldon took time out from her role as education consultant and leader to describe what primary schools and their pupils have gone through and why, more than ever, the ESU is committed to implementing its programmes when schools are ready.



BY the start of 2020, we had seen how shy, under-confident pupils could quickly become articulate debaters in our *Discover Your Voice* sessions. Working with expert educationalist **Dr Tony Wood**, we had developed an effective programme which we knew worked; we were finally making a difference and were planning a debating competition similar to the one for Secondary schools as well as rolling out further training sessions and events.

THEN THE PANDEMIC HIT The impact was devastating. When all schools closed from 23rd March (except for the most vulnerable and children of key workers), pupils were told to remain at home and teachers asked to provide home learning via packs or online. In reality, many pupils had no access to a suitable device, younger children often being well down the pecking order for access at home, after parents' work and perhaps other siblings' secondary school work.

A GROWING GAP To those working within primary education, it came as no surprise to see engagement in learning fall rapidly amongst our hardest-to-reach, most vulnerable pupils. Pre-covid, we had already highlighted an estimated 30 million word gap between students growing up in a language-rich environment and those not,

and the impact on their oracy, reading and understanding of text. The divide will only grow between children living in homes with parents or carers using a rich and varied vocabulary and sharing interesting discussions, and those who are not. And, where the first language at home was not English, many children heard no spoken English at all during lockdown.

RECOVERY MODE Back at school in September, we became acutely aware of just how far behind some had fallen. To open safely and make up for six lost months, schools implemented a "Recovery Curriculum" focused on reading, comprehension, vocabulary, writing and arithmetic alongside strict public health measures. Meanwhile, schools are supporting staff, parents and pupils coping with issues from bereavement to homelessness and financial crisis.

LOOKING AHEAD The education community is working hard to make sure schools do recover and get to a stage where they are ready to take on more. With social disparities larger than ever, the need for communication skills is greater than ever, so we will be ready to go back to our contacts, provide refreshers and introduce a new audience of teachers and children to the ESU's oracy programmes to give those who are most disadvantaged a voice.

YOUNG SPEAKERS POLISH UP SKILLS

Once again **Caroline Childs** leads ESU competitions on the ground in Lincolnshire and beyond



Caroline Childs in action

WE are delighted to see schools returning to our competitions. Although moving online will bring some difficulties, many of the children are well experienced as they are doing so much school-work remotely. It will enable some to compete that might have found travelling an obstacle. This year our area for the **Churchill Public Speaking Competition** includes Rutland, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire in addition to Lincolnshire, so we will need to organise two first round heats starting in January with a regional final in March.



Competitors from 2020

Newsletter kindly sponsored by Carlbom Shipping



NEWSLETTER — WINTER '20/'21

Dear friends and fellow members,

It has been a while since our last newsletter, not surprising, as in lockdown and under all the other restrictions, life for everyone has been heavily constrained.

Our events programme was mostly cancelled although we took to the virtual world to present talks which attracted much favourable comment. We shall do more of these in the coming year even when we can get back to face to face occasions.

But, of course, the biggest loss has been to our schools' programme for improving communications skills. Nevertheless, we are ready to commence this vital work as soon as schools are operating normally and I am confident that the Branch has the right plans for 2021 and,



following our successful AGM this month, which involved really inspiring presentations from scholarship students, we are ready to push ahead in the New Year.

I'd like to thank you all deeply for your support and enthusiasm.

With very best wishes to you all

Sir Michael Graydon,
Chairman,
ESU Lincolnshire

EVENTS –2021

'Facing the Future' — Julian Free, Deputy Vice Chancellor, of the University of Lincoln, joins us on Zoom to talk about plans for the University and how it is dealing with the challenges of COVID-19.

6pm, 21 January
Free pre-registration essential.

Watch out for more details:-

Series of free Zoom talks.

Spring Lunch at the IBCC

AGM 2021 in July

Summer Evening Reception at Doddington Hall the

Autumn dinner 2021 with guest speaker **Lord Robertson** in November.

THE ESU LINCOLNSHIRE IN 2021 - JOHN RAINE SHARES PLANS

2021 will be challenging for everyone but we are delighted to say we will be carrying out a full range of activities albeit in virtual format.

Encouraged by the success of our online speaker events, this year we will be hosting more live events which give members a chance to hear distinguished guest speakers

and join in discussions afterwards. Whilst those scheduled for the Spring and early Summer will be online we very much hope that our annual speaker and dinner event in November will be in person.

We are also pleased to be running the regional heats of the Churchill Public Speaking Competition. This year we will combine with Rutland, Leicestershire and Northants for online heats in January and February with the final in March. Similarly we will be running, as in previous years, the Performing Shakespeare competition in May and June. That too will be online.

Our Annual General Meeting is scheduled to take place in July and we hope to hold our annual Summer Event at Doddington Hall, possibly in August.

We would love to hear any of your ideas for events too.

We very much look forward to seeing you on a screen or, we hope, in person during 2021.



L to R, judging in 2020: Lincoln University's **Julian Free** and Lincolnshire Life's **Caroline Bingham** with **John Raine** (ESU Committee)

ESU Lincolnshire c/o Committee Hon Secretary **Kelly Bevers**
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Camilla Carlbom-Flinn and James Birch

WITH schools closed and people at home for months, Lincolnshire's members were only too delighted to kick-start to 2020 fundraising at the annual ESU Private View of *Doddington Hall's Summer Exhibition*.

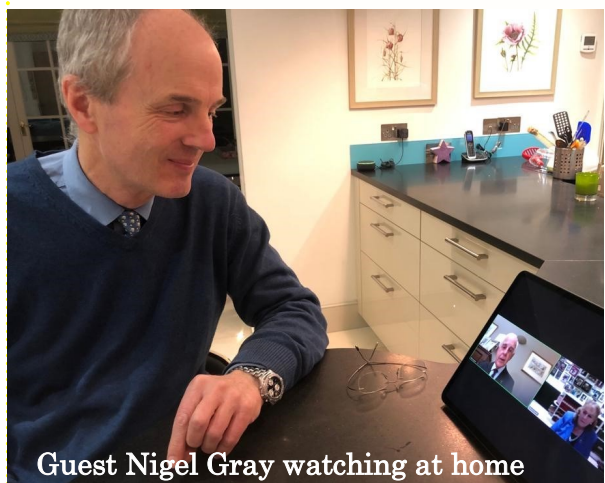
Set in the beautiful, verdant gardens and landscape surrounding what is a national Elizabethan treasure, the sunny evening event gave an ideal opportunity for socially-distanced interaction and meandering around this year's exciting collection of sculptures.

Branch Chairman **Michael Graydon** underlined the ESU's huge thanks to **James and Claire Birch** for welcoming guests into a safe and serene environment:- "This was a rare exposure to real life culture for many of us and sent a vital message to the wider community that the ESU continues to be alive and kicking. When schools are ready, we will be eager to work with them to help our young people develop public speaking and communication skills for the potentially rocky road ahead."

HONOURED to reach out to the wider world, the branch welcomed guests from across the

country and indeed from across the world to its virtual evening talk on the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), the civilian organisation set up to support the Royal Air Force during the Second World War and which ended up recruiting over a thousand women and men to play a vital role ferrying and maintaining service aircraft to support those fighting at the front line. Well over 200 virtual attendees shared the celebration of 75 years since the disbandment of these remarkable and pioneering men and women, many of whom had their own fascinating story.

Branch Chair Michael Graydon spoke for the branch: "We were privileged to organise this commemoration and tribute. This county was



Guest Nigel Gray watching at home

EMBRACING A NEW ERA AT A HUNDRED

The ESU Lincolnshire first virtual event hosted Air Commodore Suraya Marshall with a talk on the Centenary of the Royal Air Force College Cranwell focusing on its ground-breaking history and major plans for the future

LINCOLNSHIRE'S ESU-committee moved its ever popular annual lunch at the International Bomber Command Centre on to Zoom's online universe with over 50 virtual guests eager to join **Air Commodore Suraya Marshall**, the Commandant of RAF College Cranwell and five select companions.

Celebrating the 100th year of the world's first air college, Suraya gave a colourful round up of its history, telling stories of the many contributions of individual *Cranwellians* to World War Two.

Suraya is notably the first woman to head Cranwell and she is charged with training the next generation of officers for a forward looking air force, using the latest learning technologies and methodologies.

Reflecting the ethos of the ESU's work in helping young people, the RAF that Suraya depicted is one very much focused on humans and which sees its people as fundamental to its success:-

"Our ethos and core values have not changed. Respect, integrity, service and excellence are as relevant today in developing command, leadership and resilience skills," Suraya explained. She spoke about how the College continues to evolve training given there today and how it has to listen carefully to concerns of new generations of air men and women and respond to the benefits and challenges these offers.

The site is planned to grow in importance with projects afoot to increase its size and scope over the next decade.

Guests were able to ask



Enjoying the days of the Rule of 6: Air Commodore Suraya Marshall with Lord-Lieutenant Toby Dennis

questions at the end of the talk and their positive feedback showed the value of having live and interactive events. Many thanks to **the IBCC** for tech support and hosting the Zoom meeting, ensuring our first foray into online events worked so well.

NOVEMBER TALK - THE AIR TRANSPORT AUXILIARY- 75 YEARS LATER

the site of so many airfields for the RAF and Polish Air Force and continues its close association so we were delighted to be able to host the celebrations originally planned for the ATA's historic headquarters at White Waltham Airfield in Maidenhead."

The ATA Association's Honorary Commodore **Minnie Churchill** introduced the evening with some personal reflections on her father, ATA founder Sir Gerard d'Erlanger. ATA Association Secretary **John Webster** then shared his extensive research with detailed accounts of aircraft used and tales of how the organisation had to transform and adapt practices and attitudes. John recounted some of the formidable physical and practical

challenges different volunteers faced. With thanks to the speakers, the evening was a great success and, though free, the ESU was grateful to receive donations from delighted guests.



Air Transport Auxiliary Association archive photo