

### **U3A Gardening group December report for Forum**

In December the gardening group enjoyed the final trip of the year.

The trip was to Wallington Hall, a National Trust property in Northumberland, to see the Christmas decorations in and around the hall.

The journey to the hall took a little longer than expected as we had an early snow fall in the week, the National Trust team were pleased to see us as they had thought we may cancel due to the weather. On arrival most of us went straight to the courtyard café for welcome refreshments and we had the café to ourselves.

Outside the main hall there was a reindeer towing Santa's sled. Inside the hall all the rooms were decorated with Christmas themes. There were lots of Christmas trees, all beautifully decorated, lots of wreathes, a magnificent Christmas lunch set out in the dining room. In the main central hall there was a huge tree. We were taken back in time with the 70s theme with the old paper steamers and concertina folding decorations. We saw Santa's office with toys packed ready for Christmas and masses of letters tumbling down from the chimney, Santa had a giant list of all the children he was taking presents to and a basket of snacks for the reindeer. Even the large doll's house had tiny paper chains hung from the ceiling, presents ready for the children and stockings hung in the bedrooms.

It had taken the National Trust team 2 weeks to put up all the decorations, a commendable job and they had boards in each room explaining more about each theme.

It was back to the courtyard café for a seasonal lunch then a walk around the grounds for some fresh air. As we returned to the coach we were greeted by the line of reindeer getting ready for Christmas Eve. All in all a very enjoyable and worthwhile day out.

In 2024 Kate will be taking a step back from the gardening group and we are delighted to welcome Fran who will be helping Julie.

There will be no gardening group meeting in January but we will resume in February with a talk at Stainton Village Hall at 2pm Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

Julie Archer and Kate Keen



