

TEESDALE U3A FORUM

**Your monthly newsletter about interest
groups and events in the Dale**

April 2022 no: 22/04



In Teesdale

by Andrew Young

**No, not tonight
Not by this fading light,
Not by those high fells where the forces
Fall from the mist like the white tails of horses.**

**From the dark slack
Where peat-hags gape too black
I turn to where the lighted farm
Holds out through the door an open arm.**

**No, not tonight,
Tomorrow by daylight;
Tonight I fear the fabulous horses
Whose white tails flash down the steep watercourses.**

Chairwoman's letter

Dear Friends

I fancied a poem to set us off this month. I am just so happy to have more light, and more SPRING! As I wander about the Dale I have been gladdened by daffodils, sometimes in the most unlikely places, and thank those anonymous benefactors of good will who have planted bulbs that everyone can be cheered by. My newspaper reported that in the south west, such has been the fashion for forage-cuisine, that woodlands have been stripped of wild garlic. In Borough Market in our capital city, the cost of a jar of wild garlic pesto is astonishingly stupid, and all the while, Flatts Wood and the banks of the Tees upstream are luxuriating in a bright smelly carpet of the stuff. We may need levelling up, but we certainly have the last laugh when it comes to wild garlic, or *allium ursinum*, as it is known in Borough Market circles.

It's that time of year again, AGM time. It has been extremely gratifying that there are three new committee member nominations, and that means a great refreshing of our thinking and ideas. It doesn't let the rest of you off the hook, though. We are always ready to listen to your views, and the means to get in touch are listed below.

I wish you all a splendid springtime.

Annie

www.teesdaleu3a.org.uk

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Founding Chairman: George Jameson

It's Your Forum

Editors: Annie Clouston & Celia Chapple. This month's editor is Annie.
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Both editors receive all contributions and share the email account:
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DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS for the next edition:

Tuesday 10 May 2022

If we do not acknowledge a contribution by email this is probably because we haven't seen it. Please ring us if we have not acknowledged receipt within 48 hours.

Handwritten/typed contributions can be left in the u3a file in the library. Please phone to let us know if you have left a contribution in this file.

If you want to receive a copy of the Forum but cannot make it to the monthly meeting, you can acquire one by:

- ◆ Viewing it online on Teesdale u3a website at:
<https://teesdaleu3a.org.uk/>
- ◆ Sending us some SAEs and a cheque (£2 per copy payable to Teesdale u3a) and we shall post them to you each month
- ◆ Asking a friend to collect one for you at the meeting. The cost is £2 on a 'first come first served' basis.
- ◆ Email forumeditor@teesdaleu3a.org.uk or call Celia 07783 419067
- ◆ Collecting a back copy from the u3a file in the library or in The Witham shop or at TCR Hub.

The Forum is a place for you to share and keep in touch with other members, so please send in your group reports, stories, recipes, your subject articles and research, or something entertaining to make us laugh. Please limit submissions to about 1 page or 400 words and 1 photo, and send them to the Forum Editor at:
forumeditor@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

Next Forum deadline for contributions: Tuesday 10 May 2022

MONTHLY MEETING AT THE WITHAM
Meetings assemble from 10.00am for a prompt start at 10.30am
Tickets are no longer required so please come along.

Guests are welcome to attend one of our meetings as a 'taster' before deciding whether to join. Children under 18 are NOT allowed to partake in group activities as guests, as they would not be covered by our insurance.

Report of March's monthly meeting talk by Ian Reid

If you heard Maria Glot deliver part one of her talk about Saltaire, the World Heritage site in Shipley, then you would have been looking forward to part two. Maria did not disappoint and delivered the second half of her entertaining talk at the last u3a monthly meeting in her own individual style.

She began with the death of Titus Salt in 1876. There were 4,500 dignitaries at the funeral and about 120,000 people lined the streets. Special trains were laid on so the public could see the open coffin. Titus Salt Junior, the youngest son, took over the running of the business, and later bought adjacent land and property known as Milner Field. This house became an important part of the Saltaire story.

In 1743, Sir James Milner was living in the then manor house. He had a 16 year old daughter who wanted to marry a man considered by the family to be unsuitable. So, the family arranged for him to be transported to America. The daughter was so distraught by this that she hung herself from a tree in the grounds and it is said that she put a curse on the house. Her father and mother then died shortly afterwards and there followed a series of owners of the house, where members of their family came to a sudden and early death.

Titus Salt Junior rebuilt the house with no expense spared. Milner Field became one of the most luxurious houses in the country, often visited by royalty. In 1873 he moved into the house with his wife Catherine Crossley, a daughter of the Halifax carpet manufacturing dynasty. At this stage the weaving business was not doing well, largely because of international competition. Titus Salt Junior died in 1887 and the business went into voluntary administration in 1892. James Roberts took over the mill and made it profitable again. He was an excellent business man. He had manufactured blue uniforms no longer needed for the Russian army on the assassination of the Tsar, and sold them to the newly formed Royal Flying Corps, later to become the RAF.

However, the curse of Milner Field continued and there was a growing reluctance to move into Milner House, which was eventually abandoned in the 1930s and demolished in the 1950s. The factory itself

had its ups and downs but was busy and profitable during WW2 but went into decline with the development of artificial fibres and closed in 1986.

Maria is an inspirational and knowledgeable story teller and this was a fascinating story. The vote of thanks was given by Ian Royston. To know more about u3a, visit the website www.teesdaleu3a.org.uk

NEXT MEETINGS

28th April when Max Adams will speak on his book *Unquiet Women*

26 May Fran Sandham *Dr Livingstone I Presume*

23 June Kim Harding *Richard III—New Research*

WEEKEND WORKSHOPS

March - Play and Activities to Entertain Under 10s

Yet another relaxed afternoon in the Guide HQ when Judith Fanner, ably assisted by Mandy Meacham, suggested numerous activities and games to amuse the under 10s. Being such a glorious afternoon, we spent half the time sitting in the garden and sharing suggestions of how we all amused, initially our children, and then our grandchildren - some even admitted to having great grandchildren!

Judith, a former primary school teacher, went through suggestions for indoor and outdoor activities. After refreshments, including delicious crispie nests made by our demonstrator, we moved indoors and were shown lots of ideas for Easter things to make with our little ones. We also had a demonstration by Phil, Judith's husband, of how to make a 'tank' from a wooden cotton reel - something you may remember making as a child. The intention had been to have a craft session with the large amount of materials that had been brought along and to play games - Genga, Pick Up Sticks, Snakes and Ladders and others. However, all too soon our time was up and we had to pack up, but we left with lots of ideas and samples to take home. A big thank to Judith and Mandy for agreeing to do the workshop and for the time they had spent preparing for it beforehand.



Saturday 14 May, 12-1pm, visit to McColl's Brewery for members interested in the production of real ale/craft beers. The guided tour by head brewer, Danny McColl, will inform about the brewing process and equipment, the raw ingredients and fermentation. You will learn "what makes McColl's Brewery tick" and try their products - 3 free thirds of your choice from the taps are included. Tickets £10

Place: Unit 4, Randolph Industrial Estate, Evenwood, Bishop Auckland DL14 9SJ

If you would like to book a place, please make your cheque payable to Teesdale u3a and send to Sue at 5 Cecil Road, Barnard Castle DL12 8AL. For further information, email sueoverton@hotmail.com or mobile 07512 368884

u3a Trip—Snowdonia & Portmeirion

Monday 27 June 2022 for 5 days

Royal Victoria Hotel, Snowdonia, Llanberis

Dinner, bed and breakfast with porter service at hotel

Monday 27 June 2022 Depart Barnard Castle and travel to Chester for a lunch break and time at leisure

Tuesday 28 June 2022 Morning tour of Snowdonia with stop at Betws-y-Coed and afternoon at leisure in Llandudno

Wednesday 29 June 2022 Single rail journey between Porthmadog & Blaenau Ffestiniog followed by a visit to Portmeirion Village & Gardens

Thursday 30 June 2022 Scenic tour of Anglesey plus a 75 minute Puffin Island Cruise. With an abundance of wildlife in their natural habitat, this is a chance to see seabirds, grey seals and bottlenose dolphin.

Friday 1 July 2022 Depart Llanberis with an en route stop at Bolton Market for lunch break time before returning back to Barnard Castle

Price per person - £599 based on a minimum of 20 passengers sharing

Twin/Double rooms still available. 2 x double rooms for sole use with a supplement of £111 per person. The deposit is £60 per person at time of booking. This group will be led by Carol Hunter & Jane Mathieson.

To book, please contact

Carol Hunter, Kyle Travel – 01833 690303

Group Reports
Birdwatching Group
Report by Peter Singer

For our March birdwatching outing, eight of us travelled to Rainton Meadows, the headquarters and main reserve of Durham Wildlife Trust at Chilton Moor, near Houghton-le-Spring. The reserve covers 74 hectares and has three nature trails and a large wildlife hide. It was created by the restoration of the Rye Hill Opencast coal mine in 1996 and now has extensive wetlands, reed beds and grasslands, where over 200 bird species have been recorded. There was also a visitor centre, with toilets and a café; both were much appreciated.

Our visit started at the imaginatively-named Pond 1, where one of us had had their toes nibbled by an over-attentive Mute Swan whilst carrying out the recce the previous week. This time we outnumbered the swans and the aggressor kept his distance, but we were rewarded with a sighting of a Little Grebe. These dumpy little aquatic diving birds, with their 'powder-puff' rear ends, are usually quite shy, hiding in the reeds, but can show a surprising turn of speed when they make a break for it.

Continuing to the wildlife hide at Pond 2 (more creative flair there), we found an abundance of species, including Herring and Black-headed (really chocolate brown) Gulls, the boldly-coloured Shelduck and Shoveler, long-legged Redshank, Curlew, Oystercatcher and Teal (our smallest duck with a vivid green head and a yellow patch under the tail) and many more. Observation of the day was by Ian Blake, who spotted a Common Snipe blending perfectly with its surrounding grasses, but showing its very long bill and striped head and body.

At this time of year, male birds are in their best bib and tucker, ready to show off for the breeding season, so it was an altogether colourful display. One of our favourites, although a very common species, is the Tufted Duck, which is present almost wherever there is water. This diving duck is black and white, with a yellow eye and pale blue-grey bill tipped with black, but the male has a slightly punk-ish look thanks to its long and drooping crest. A dapper and compact-looking bird.



(photo by Andrew Lapworth)

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Continued from overleaf...Walking on to Ponds 3 and 4 in the bright blue skies above, we saw a Buzzard escorted by two Sparrowhawks, riding a handy thermal. The Buzzard was unimpressed by the attention it was receiving (am I bothered?) and duly glided off to hunt elsewhere. At the ponds, we were treated to a pair of Great Crested Grebes conducting their “penguin dance” courtship display, which involved both birds raising their bodies, intertwining their necks and vigorously shaking their fanned head-plumes. Extraordinary, balletic and quite captivating. We also enjoyed seeing a Little Egret, a small but elegant white heron, with long black legs and yellow toes, fortunately more common now than they have been for some time.

We rounded off the visit with a stroll through woodland, accompanied by some lovely song from Robin, Chiff Chaff, Chaffinch, Blue and Great Tit and Blackbird. At Joe’s Pond, a deep, flooded clay pit, a majestic Grey Heron showed its long, statuesque neck, so well camouflaged in the reed bed that we kept losing it even when we knew where it was. There were also Gadwall galore, stylish ducks with their ‘vermiculated’ or tweedy-grey bodies. The grand finale came at the end of the walk, courtesy of a number of pairs of Bullfinches and Reed Buntings, the males of the former proudly showing off their bright pinkish-red chests and black caps.



In all, we observed 44 species (and heard Wren and Woodpecker), enjoyed a snack lunch at the cafe and went home mentally and physically refreshed by a fine walk and the never-ending delights of nature.

Book Group Two Report by Elizabeth Long
***A Town Called Solace* by Mary Lawson**

This book was enjoyed by the group, at least by the four of us who were there. Set in Canada, the story revolves around three primary characters. We liked the way the story was told from each person’s point of view, slowly unfolding the connections between all three. Clara, a seven year old, whose sister has run away from home, patiently waits at the window for her return. At the same time, she has been tasked with looking after her neighbour’s cat while she is in hospital. The neighbour, Elizabeth, is remembering her past, in particular the tragic events of many years before. Finally there is Liam, whose wife has left him, who turns up in Elizabeth’s house, much to Clara’s consternation.

The way these lives are brought together is both engaging and absorbing, and the reader wants to know what happens next. It moves along at a good pace, bringing in other interesting and sympathetic

characters. Exploring relationships, families and loss, the group felt this was a really good read and we all felt we would like to read further works by Mary Lawson.

We usually meet either every month or every two months, on the second Monday in the month, although this can vary.

Please contact Elizabeth Long on 01833 641494 or book2@teesdaleu3a.org.uk for further details.

Future Meetings

Monday, 11 April 2pm when we will be discussing *Motherwell* by Deborah Orr.

Monday 9 May 2pm (book tba)

Room to Read Book Group Report by Beverley Redfearn

***Stoner* by John Williams**

This novel, first published in 1965, received a more successful reception on its second publication in 2012, eighteen years after the author's death.

In the opening pages we immediately comprehend the grey, soulless existence of the young Stoner, born in 1891 to poor, hardworking parents, on a small farm in central Missouri. From an early age, the harshness and drudgery of his daily routine, 'milking bony cows; gathering small eggs from spindly chicks; sitting at a small table ... lighted by a single kerosene lamp' inevitably result in limited personal expectations and aspirations. At sixteen, Stoner stoically accepts that he will take over from his father, but his father has determined that his son will attend the College of Agriculture at Columbia University, whilst boarding with, and working for, a distant relative.

At first, Stoner does his work at the University as he did on the farm; automatically, devoid of emotion. However, a hugely significant encounter with Archer Sloane, a tutor in literature, causes Stoner to abandon his agricultural course and transfer to a subject for which he develops a lifelong love. Thus, Stoner, almost accidentally, becomes an assistant Professor of Literature.

Shortly after this aesthetic awakening in Stoner, he falls in love and marries Edith, a woman with whom he is totally incompatible. Both sexually inexperienced and apparently unable to communicate meaningfully within their marriage, their relationship quickly declines. As Edith's behaviour appears increasingly vindictive and unpredictable, their daughter, Grace, becomes an innocent casualty. Meanwhile, Stoner retreats further within himself, spending more time away from the marital home, eventually beginning a passionate love affair with a junior colleague.

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Though he continues to take solace from his teaching, Stoner makes an implacable enemy of his superior, Hollis Lomax, who makes Stoner's life extremely difficult. Again, Stoner accepts and endures his unjust treatment without retaliation, even when he is forced to give up his affair.

In discussing the novel, we agreed that it is well written, particularly in descriptive passages, and we felt the emotional intensity building throughout. However, there was some concern that the female characters are rather stereotypical, albeit defined by the expected role of women at that time.

As a recommendation to a reading group, we attributed an average score of 4, and 2.5 as a recommendation to a friend.

Next meeting: *Wednesday 18 May 10.30 Sad Little Men*, Richard Beard

Climate Solutions Discussion Group Report by Kate Bailey

For the first time we convened face to face in the Witham County Room. The discussions centred around climate justice, energy generation and waste. With current gas price rises, we are aware that more and more people are thinking about how to make their homes as energy efficient as possible. Of course many of us don't have savings available to carry out major works, but an energy saving system can be built up over a number of years.

The other issue we talked about is waste. Burning coal, oil and gas generates CO₂; burning single-use plastics emits toxic fumes and CO₂; nuclear power generates radioactive waste that we can only temporarily store; food waste goes to landfill and generates methane ... the list goes on.

If you click the link - <https://durham.gov.uk/composting> - you can order [recycled plastic] kitchen caddies and compost bins at discounted prices. If you don't have a garden, your neighbours may be happy for you to 'feed' their compost bins.

Energy-saving Tips for April:

Home insulation is the first priority:

- draught-proofing every gap is a good start if cash is limited;
- double the depth of loft/ attic/ roof space insulation;
- insulate solid floors (if your ceilings aren't too low);
- insulate external walls if you have cavities that can be filled;
- insulate internal walls (if your rooms aren't too small); 50-75mm thick insulation panels are essential, plus plaster-board on top of that;
- double glaze cold windows and install insulated (composite) doors;

If you're in a conservation area or live in a listed building you may find the planners will refuse permission for replacement windows - in which case please contact Kate (07867 683195) as we are thinking of approaching the Durham Planning Committee Chair about this issue.

Members of the group who have installed solar (PV) panels, batteries, heat pumps etc are offering to speak at one of the Teesdale monthly meetings (possibly February 2023).

If you need encouragement and support from the group for your own project, do come to any of our meetings in the County Room at The Witham.

Next meetings:

10am May 5: Engaging people - influencing behaviour, demonstrating how individual actions can make a difference to the planet, encouraging others to think differently about the natural world.

10am June 2: Circular economy - reduce waste, recycle, repair, reuse; helping to safeguard finite natural resources and minimise fossil fuel dependency.

DISCUSSION GROUP

The news at the moment is dominated by events taking place in Ukraine and for the first time since this group started some 7 years ago we went straight into our main topic about the situation there. Apart from being appalled by the conditions the population is having to endure and the atrocities that are being committed by the Russian forces we also talked about the reasons behind the invasion and the importance Russia puts upon keeping a friend on its borders!

We also undertook a cheese tasting and passed on our comments on the Black Mound (a goats cheese). Food must have been at the forefront of our minds as we also talked about Oxford County Council going vegan for its members' refreshments and whether a Council should actually be providing food at meetings; and the new Lidl store due to open shortly.

Our next meeting will be on Friday 13 May, 10.15am at Andalucia's when we will be discussing *The Influence of the Press*. If you would like to join us please give me a ring. Glen Howard 01833 631639

Gardening Group Report for April by Pauline Fawcett

On 1 April our speaker was Martin Fish who is no stranger to the group, having spoken to us on two or three occasions. Martin is a professional horticulturist who writes for several gardening publications and is also a Royal Horticultural Society judge.

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Continued from overleaf.... He started his career at 16 as an apprentice in the Nottinghamshire Parks Department and by twenty-one was Head Gardener. He is currently Garden Advisor for Harlow Carr and Chair of the Tender Plants Committee, and for five years he ran the award-winning Harrogate Flower Show.

During Martin's presentation, *Behind the Scenes as an RHS Judge*, we found out about the number of people in a judging panel, the training they had to go through and the requirement for re-accreditation after 5 years. Most importantly, we found out that the judges had a written criteria to consult to ensure consistency of judging. There was much more to the talk than I could possibly put down on paper and it was broken up with many humorous anecdotes about the great and glorious visitors to the Chelsea Flower Show over many years.

Summer Garden Visits

6 May. Himalayan Gardens

The 36-seater coach is now over-subscribed and there is a waiting list. I'm waiting for confirmation that we can take a 53-seater coach.

3 June. No Meeting – Queens Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday

1 July. Kirkleatham Walled Garden and Mount Grace Priory

5 August Coldcotes Moor Farm and The Beacon

2 September Breezy Knees Gardens

Please contact Pauline on 01833 638020 or

paulinefawcett59@gmail.com if you are interested in joining any of the coach trips. Details of prices and timing will follow shortly.

Genealogy - April Report by Alan Swindale

The April meeting considered family history sites on the internet.

Family history research has been revolutionised in the last generation by the availability online of historical genealogical records. There are many sites offering records of a particular type but a few set out to be a 'department store' offering nearly everything you need. Switching metaphors, the front runners are FamilySearch, Ancestry, FindMyPast, and MyHeritage with TheGenealogist somewhat behind. A number of other sites 'also ran' but can't compete for the top spot for various reasons.

The most important factor is the number of historical records that you can access through the site. All four sites provide the basics of census records, the BMD indexes, parish records and probate records but there are many other record sets that can help. FamilySearch and Ancestry have most records – around 10 billion – but many are in North America. FindMyPast is definitely best for the UK whilst MyHeritage is stronger in Europe.

Other useful facilities available from these sites are the ability to build a

family tree and DNA testing and matching. These are available elsewhere separately but linking them with the records and with each other provides extra power.

You need to be able to find your ancestor in the records and the user interface and the hints provided are usually the deciding feature for most people, but it is a personal choice.

Most of us cannot justify paying for multiple subscriptions even if each one only amounts to the cost of a cup of coffee once a week, so a choice has to be made. FamilySearch has to be the best value – it is free – but provides no DNA matching. The list price for MyHeritage is twice that for Ancestry or FindMyPast but a 50% discount can be negotiated.

In May, the topic will be *Irregular Marriages* – at Gretna Green and other places. The meeting will again be by Zoom, as usual on the first Thursday of the month, 5 May at 2pm. Details will be circulated to Genealogy group members nearer the time.

Alan Swindale ajs@fivenine.co.uk 01388488348 .

Geography Group Report by Phil Johnson

***A Journey Through Time* presented by Prof Mattias Green**

This was a complex and far reaching talk, a full recording of which is still available via Zoom, so this is a much abbreviated report.

I have started in reverse; this 15 year project with Mattias as lead, has a publication out towards the end of the year with a possible title *A tidal journey through Earth's History*. Mattias has said he will let me know closer to the publication date what the title will be and presumably the publisher, although he said pre-order cost would be the price of a kidney – hope he was joking!

As he indicated in his talk, it was a couple of facts as regards tides and the moon that didn't match that prompted this 15 years' worth of discovery, and that Darwin was wrong. Not Charles, but Sir George Howard Darwin KCB FRS FRSE; 1845 to 1912, (Charles' second son), barrister and prize winning astronomer who in his excellent books and articles on Earth's tides had estimated that the moon was aged about 1.5 billion years (The "fission" theory of the earth-moon evolution) versus that of the rock returned by the Apollo 15 crew which when analysed to be some 4.4 billion years old. This old theory was based on the Moon-Earth distance (and also Earth's day-length) based on the estimated energy loss from the resistance of the tidal flows to the spinning motion of the Earth and Moon combined system around this mean centre of gravity. Mattias put it simply as a spinning ice-skater; the speed of the spin depends if the arms are outstretched or held close to the body.

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Mattias started by outlining what are tides, how they are formed and their daily cyclic life. Based on that last data and using computer modelling to then estimate the energy consumption of tidal resistance and the effect of the whole energy system on the rotating masses of the Earth and Moon, to give the age of the system. The outcome was to reconcile the radio-isotope dating of those returned rocks to that by examination of the tidal data. George, of course, couldn't have reckoned on lunar exploration by man and the return of lunar rocks, or satellites measuring tides and ocean depths from space.

Mattias presented an animation clip of the tectonic changes to Earth's topography from some 400 Mya to present day which encompassed the formation and loss of the super continent, Pangea. As he pointed out, this sort of work alters one's perception of time. The clip by Dr Clara Matthews, in which her 3 years' study culminated in a 1 minute 18 seconds presentation! The calculation by George Darwin was made without our present knowledge of Earth's supercontinents, the last being Pangea. Modelling showed that a compact supercontinent produced less tidal resistance and hence the Earth-Moon distance altered very little.

The talk concluded by looking at the possible future movements in tectonics and our current land masses, the value of tides and ocean currents in our climate (important for fish stocks and the regulation of Earth's temperature) and to look back in time to study the other 2/3 of Earth's history, currently rock cores are being taken of ancient tidalytes rock formations so to have a better understanding of the whole system across the 4.6 billion years of Earth's existence.

Next meeting is on the 21 April, 2pm at the Witham. The meeting is based on series of small presentations based on *The tales from the Map Room*.

There are a few places left for the special arranged visit to Raby Castle on the 17 April looking at the map archives.

Historic Environment Report by Tim Meacham

For our April talk, Tim Meacham spoke on *Railways Round Barnard Castle*. We started with a run through the history of the arrival of the first railways. Despite a few efforts to promote a canal from Cockfield to Gainford (and then another from Gainford to Stockton in the 1760s), it was actually the construction of the Stockton and Darlington Railway between 1821 and 1825 that started Barnard Castle's merchants' serious quest for improved transport links to the coast. So in 1832, a meeting was held to promote a railway to connect with the S&D at West Auckland, costing £50,000, but this ran into opposition from the Earl of Cleveland, a recurring theme. Despite a growing desperation among the

merchants who felt the town was being side-lined as the industrial revolution took its hold elsewhere, a further public meeting was held in 1839 which sent Henry Witham to Raby with a plea to the Earl, this time for a line to Darlington: this too fell on deaf ears. Following the death of the Earl in 1842, J Monkhouse, a leading carpet manufacturer from the town, took up Witham's cause by leading a deputation to Raby in 1844. The new Earl was, if anything, even more resolutely opposed, talking of 'horrid railways' and firmly shutting the door.

Yet in 1846, as the merchants plotted another attempt at a Darlington line, a second West Auckland proposal was brought forwards, this time with the apparent support of the Earl (was money involved?) Parliament became involved but very soon Barney was in the grip of cholera and both railways took a back seat. In 1852, Monkhouse, nothing if not tenacious, came back with another Darlington proposal. The Earl seemed non-committal but the door remained open and the company was launched with a capital of £80,000; at this point Raby once again objected, Parliament became involved again, and to the Earl's chagrin, despite his again supporting a West Auckland counter-proposal, the Darlington scheme prevailed, the bill passed on 4 July 1854, and the line at last opened on 8 July 1856. The much-touted West Auckland route followed on 1 August 1863 and Barney had joined the 'modern' world.

The second half of the session was a photographic journey along the two lines as they are today. The West Auckland line lost its passengers in 1962 while the Darlington line lasted until November 1964. Despite the passing of more than half a century, much remains to be seen. Finally, Simon Owens spoke on recent (so far abortive) efforts to reopen the West Auckland line for the public to enjoy on foot or cycle. Thanks to Simon for a most interesting, if frustrating, exposition. There was time for questions but not for any reference to Barney's 'other' railways, the erstwhile Tebay mainline over Stainmore, and the Middleton-in-Teesdale branch line. These will be covered at a later date.

Next meeting: Thursday 14 April, Tony Metcalfe, Altogether Archaeology. Recent Archaeological discoveries in Teesdale. Outside visit: Thursday 12 May. Rob Pearson. *Walk on Cockfield Fell*. Please let Tim know if you wish to come.

iPad & iPhone Group Report by Mike Sweeting

Twenty of us met in The Witham for another session with our iPads and iPhones. I had been attempting to find a way of creating groups in the Contacts app. After a great deal of research, there turned out to be no

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way it could be done on iPad or iPhone. The only way is by logging into your iCloud (www.icloud.com) account in a web browser on Mac, MacBook or PC. We went through the process for doing this and then grouping contacts.

We caught up on the new initiative for increasing transaction security when buying online and then looked at a few more Settings. Particular focus this month was on Apple Books. Not many were currently making use of this, but the app is a good way of saving, storing and reading books and pdf documents including manuals and instructions. Web sites such as Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org) provide a vast library of out of copyright books that can be downloaded and read in the Books app.

Final topic of the day was Apple Maps. We compared the app with the main competition, Google Maps, which we will look at in more detail next month. We then went on to look at using Apple Maps as a map, a source of route information and as a satnav for car, walking, bike and public transport journeys. It is also a source of information for many destinations. Next meeting: 22 April 2022 2:00pm in the Witham Room

Lunch Group – March Meeting

The lunch group met this month at the Fox Hole, Piercebridge. As usual there was much to discuss and catch up with so the chat was lively. The Fox Hole offers a good lunch time menu, with many of us dithering over what to choose as the choice was just too tempting. The portions were generous and some needed doggie bags to take home what we could not manage to eat there. We found the staff attentive and friendly and no doubt members have added this location to their list of places to go.

20 April – The Forresters, Middleton in Teesdale. Meet at 12.15pm.
Please remind me if you are coming. New members welcome.
Jane Mathieson 01388710741

Needlecraft Group April Report by Glen Howard

It is lovely to meet up with fellow 'stitchers' to work on our various projects and put the world to rights. Unfortunately, we don't seem to succeed with the latter but the former keeps us well occupied. Embroidery, knitting and crochet were in evidence today and we spent a very enjoyable couple of hours on a very blustery afternoon.

Our next meeting will be on Monday 2 May. Please get in touch with me if you would like to join us.
Glen Howard 01833 631639

Painting Group

Report by Martin Page

This month's painting Group saw two new members and a returning member to whom we bid welcome to you all. It would be good to see some of our previous members returning to the group now that Covid is somewhat in the past.

This month's task was to mark the Barnard Castle HOLI celebration in producing Spring/festival paintings to be exhibited in The Witham. Usually white is not used in water colour. It is a colour that is left out. It is the colour of the paper that gives the white. This is not always straight forward and in some cases virtually impossible. Cases in point are clouds, waves, foam and flowers. Various techniques have been demonstrated previously, but in this meeting Blanking fluid was demonstrated on how to apply a modified rubber latex. When dried, this allows you to paint freely over it knowing that once it is removed, by rubbing it off, the white of the paper remains. Then you can detail the snowdrops or flower petals in marked contrast to the background.



Our special thanks to Anne for the demonstration. Examples of the technique can be seen in the exhibition paintings.

Philosophy Group

***Virtue Theory and Aristotle:* Report by Ruth Sansom**

There are many theories about what is the right thing to do, and how to live a good life:

Continued overleaf...

Last month we looked at consequentialism, which defines “good” as whatever brings the greatest total happiness. We looked at Bentham and Mill’s ideas here.

This month we explored Virtue theory, based on Aristotle's ideas, formulated over 2,300 years ago. Unlike the duty-based theories and utilitarianism, which typically concentrate on the rightness or wrongness of particular *actions* or *results*, virtue theorists focus on *character* .

The central question for Virtue Theorists is, "*How should I live?*"

The answer they give to this question is to *cultivate the virtues*. Aristotle claims that cultivating the virtues is the way to flourish, but the big question was - what is a virtue? One definition is that it is a *pattern of behaviour and feeling*: a tendency to act, desire and feel in particular ways, in appropriate situations. It *isn't* an unthinking habit but rather involves an *intelligent judgement* about the appropriate response to the situation you are in.

Virtue theorists believe that virtues such as generosity and courage are traits which any human being will need in order to live well. But you can't pick and choose the virtues. Aristotle felt a virtuous person is someone who has harmonised *all* the virtues. They must be woven into the fabric of that person's life. He believed we couldn't just learn moral principles at home or in the philosophy group because virtue is something we can only learn by *doing*, like learning a flute or cooking.

We discussed criticisms of the Virtue Theory:

First of all, did we agree on *which* patterns of behaviour and feeling would count as virtues? Virtue theorists produce a list, such as: benevolence; honesty; courage; generosity; loyalty. We asked, would those still be a list of virtues in the 21st century Western society? Would there be any others? We came up with a number of other virtues including empathy, discernment, truthfulness, self-awareness.

Secondly, does someone always display a particular virtue across a range of circumstances? Aristotle found a way round this: the doctrine of *The Golden Mean*. Virtue is the midway point between the two extremes, each of which is a vice, e.g. generosity is the mean between profligacy and meanness. the aim is a balanced personality, moderation in all things.

We then considered how Virtue theory has developed throughout the ages, including looking at stoicism, Thomas Aquinas and Christianity.

Our final discussion looked at the virtues of loyalty, truth and the principles of justice. Can loyalty compete with universal laws and principles of justice? For instance, if you see a friend cheating, would you turn him in? Should you be truthful or loyal? What's the right thing to

do? Have you a duty to tell the truth, or be loyal to a friend? A very thought-provoking session!

The next Zoom meeting will be held on Tuesday 26 April. All welcome.

Photography Group Report of third workshop by Ian Royston

This was the third workshop on the subject of digital photography and we welcomed three visitors from Bishop Auckland u3a as well as many returning members from Barnard Castle.

It presented the opportunity to discuss and share some of their experiences in exploring the features of their cameras away from AUTO and to look at some of their recent work. Whilst many had had some success exploring the adjustment of shutter speed and/or aperture, some were noticing the limitations of some modern DSLR and Bridge cameras in not providing the latitude at the top and bottom ends of the exposure ranges that might have been expected, and the need to 'fight' with AUTO when using shutter or aperture priority rather than fully manual modes.

Waterfalls seem a persistent topic which brings technical and aesthetic challenges – to use a high shutter speed to freeze every droplet, or to provide the characteristic milky curtains of an exposure measured in several seconds? Preferences vary and whilst freezing the motion is not too tricky if there is sufficient sunshine, the classic, silky-smooth ethereal veils are only possible by using a tripod and perhaps neutral density filters, a set-up which can seem to take up time, especially if one is walking with others.

The group also discussed resolution and RAW format. With memory cards being so cheap there is little reason not to shoot at the highest possible resolution; it is possible to downgrade an image to send it as an attachment or to post on social media but quality cannot be created if it was not originally there. There were fewer compelling reasons to use RAW format which in any case is not available on many simpler and bridge cameras. Though RAW format does allow for the greatest possible amount of data to manipulate in photo-editing software, particularly from photographs taken in challenging light conditions, it nevertheless needs such software to extract any useful data beyond that which the camera would otherwise automatically condense for a jpeg image. For many in the workshop, RAW seemed a complication to deal with at a later date when other fundamentals have been mastered.

With the better weather coming along people expect to be out and about taking more photographs and with a little more confidence gained in these workshops many hope to explore the features and benefits they have learned about over the past few weeks. We hope a further workshop after summer will bring us much more to discuss.



Snowdrop Report

On a brilliantly sunny 1st March, the Photography Group met at the Atkinson residence, (Pinner's Cottage, Cotherstone). Our purpose was to take pictures of the prolific display of snowdrops in the extensive grounds surrounding the Atkinson's now extended property. David kindly gave us a personal tour after which Mrs Atkinson generously plied us with tea/coffee, biscuits and cake in their comfy conservatory. How time flew. It was only after we had been amply refreshed that thoughts of photography came to mind. Cameras readied, we ventured out to revisit photogenic subjects we had spotted on the previous extensive tour of the garden. The plan with snowdrops, and any flowers close to the ground, is

to get down to their level, which would have been fine, had there not been significant rainfall in the 24 hours preceding the bright sunny morning. Consequently, those of us prepared to suffer for our art ended up with damp knees and bottoms. Apart from the snow drops, early primroses, budding pussy-willow, colourful hens-and-chicks, various mosses, sprouting rhubarb, statues in various states of undress, a bench of gnomes and two geese, all competed for attention. Interesting pictures were taken and we departed for our respective lunches, happy.

Photo and text by Pete Redgrave

Poetry Group

Report by Annie Clouston

March's poetry group focused on Sonnets. The range was wide, with strict 14 liners in religiously applied iambic pentameters—*How do I love thee?* by Elizabeth Barrett Browning and *In an Artist's Studio* and *Remember* by Christina Rossetti to anarchic offerings from Simon Armitage, *Di-di-dah-dah-dit-dit* (inspired by Sonnet 20, but in morse code) and rule-breaking octosyllabic *Do not Stand by my Grave and Weep* by Mary Elizabeth Fry. The poignant *Time does not Bring Relief* by Edna St Vincent Millais led us to an appreciation of this American poet, 1892-1950, who was the first woman poet to win the Pulitzer Prize, known for her "riveting readings and performances, her progressive

political stances, frank portrayal of both hetero- and homosexuality, and, above all, her embodiment and description of new kinds of female experience and expression.” (www.poetryfoundation.org)

In April, we chose our favourite spring poems. It was a great pleasure to seek them out, with Philip Larkin’s *The Trees* being chosen by two members and once again, Christina Rossetti was a firm favourite with her gorgeously rich, evocative but accessible *Spring*. I discovered that I could admire Ted Hughes—after shunning him for years—because of his fantastic poem *The March Calf*. Peter introduced us to his friend Fr. Kevin Nicholls, one-time parish priest here in Barnard Castle with a whimsical poem *Usually March* from his collection of writings *Begotten in Silence*. Another wonderfully joyful poem by Billy Collins, *Today*, highlighted the fact that without the poetry group our readings would be narrower and maybe a bit stuck in our schooldays.

Spring was definitely in the air; “For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone/The flowers appear on the earth;/The time of singing of birds is come...” (The Song of Solomon ch2 v11-13).

Anyone who wishes to join us would be most welcome. If you would like a copy of the poems we discuss at our meetings, please email me. Our next meeting is on Wednesday 11 May when we will be discussing narrative poems.

P.S. Last month’s riddle—Clue: All the king’s horses and all the king’s men...

Science and Technology Group Meeting 14 March — March Miscellany

In this session, Roy Tranter presented four very different topics which have interested him over the years.

The Origin of the Chemical Elements goes back to his days as a sixth former when he bought a Scientific American article about the subject. More recently, an article in Chemistry World described the current cosmological theories on how the elements heavier than iron are formed. Two mechanisms of fusing neutrons with atoms are involved but, as they need a lot of energy to take place, they only occur in neutron star collisions or supernovae. Elements lighter than iron are formed by the fusion of protons or helium nuclei with atoms. These reactions produce copious amounts of energy but need the temperatures of stars to be sustainable.

LIGO has been in the news since its first detection of gravitational waves in September 2015. LIGO is a very sensitive interferometer - an instrument for measuring very small changes in length (one ten thousandth of a proton diameter!) **Continued overleaf...**

Continued from overleaf...Roy described how an interferometer works and demonstrated a very crude one. Although LIGO is a very large (and expensive) instrument, interferometers are now found everywhere - in infrared and Raman spectrometers, checking flatness or defects in optical surfaces, looking at the structure of biological samples, being a few.

Some experiments Roy had done to pin down the cause of two long case clocks sounding unhealthy when chiming came next. He took video recordings of the clocks and used software to analyse the sounds and gear ratios in the clocks. This pointed to a likely cause, but not the solution. That came from a clockmaker who applied tiny drops of oil to the pivots!

A personal selection of beauty in science followed. Hubble images of objects in the universe have an appealing, grand-scale beauty, as do photographs of crystals that Roy had made during his days as a research chemist. There is a very different beauty that comes from numbers and a successful statistical analysis. Turning an everyday photo of a tree into a lightning flash demonstrated the law of conservation of beauty. And finally, a colourful fern-like image from particle physics showing two protons colliding and annihilating each other to form a shower of new particles, one of which decays to reform a proton showed there is beauty at the tiniest scales.

Spanish Conversation Report by Lusía McAnna

Our March topic was *Do I regret my career choice?* and all 8 participants were content with their choices. One wanted to be a journalist but as the media descends into sensationalism and half-truths, was glad of the lucky escape. They had trained as an interpreter but worked in export sales, then ran a company, travelling extensively and using languages. One became a microbiologist at GSK by default, despite wanting to study languages and travel, but had enjoyed her interesting career with good pay and conditions, part time working when the children were small and a good pension. Another wanted a career that would enable her to travel which she did, using her language skills, mainly working in offices, but would have liked to work as a tourist guide then writing about her experiences.

One was a doctor for 40 years and felt privileged to have had a challenging, interesting career, meeting great co-workers and patients. Her mother was a biochemist and her father a lung specialist, so following in family footsteps. Another wanted to be a translator, but became a bilingual secretary and had worked abroad in Spain, Greece, Hong Kong and France for many years, when it was possible to do so easily, so had achieved her aim of travel.

One had trained as a translator at the University of Sorbonne hoping to travel extensively, but married someone whose job took them all over the world, so her language skills proved very useful and she acquired more in each new country.

Another followed family tradition, becoming a nurseryman/gardener and loved working outdoors following the cycle of nature and had the opportunity to garden abroad for many years in Spain. And one had two careers, first as a paint chemist which led to a career as a chemistry teacher, then to head teacher which was very satisfying and fulfilling.

April topic is *A book that inspired me?*

Stay safe, Lusia

Table Tennis Group Report by Peter Singer



We continue to enjoy our weekly Friday table tennis sessions at the Teesdale Leisure Centre, when anything from four to twelve of us gather to do battle over two tables (and fortunately a couple of benches for occasional rests). There is also a certain amount of important information exchange (okay, catching up on holidays, books, entertainment and life generally), but this does not interfere with playing the game.

Our standard of play has gradually been improving and games are keenly contested. Most of our serves (the only shot that is completely in the control of the player) now find the mark, although we are all occasionally caught out by a mysterious and random shrinking of the table, causing the ball to fly long or wide. Whether this is due to a manufacturing fault, climate change or hallucinations brought on by excessive exertion remains to be determined, but we keep calm and paddle on as best we can (paddle is an alternative term for a table tennis bat). The net can also be a troublesome obstacle and comments have been heard on the ancestry of whoever thought of putting it there in the first place.

In the main, however, more of our rallies now extend to several shots and are quite exciting (well, to us anyway). The longest point in history was in a match during the 1936 World Championships in Prague, between Poland and Romania, when a rally for the opening point lasted for 2 hours and 12 minutes!! Alex Erlich of Poland was known as the King of the Chiselers and 'chiselers' in table tennis are players who play only defensive shots and wait for their opponent to make a mistake. Both players suffered physically during the rally and after 85 minutes even the umpire had to be replaced because his neck had seized up.

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As a consequence, the International Table Tennis Federation introduced the 'expedite rule', which limited a single game to a maximum of 20 minutes. In 1961, this was reduced to 15 minutes and in 2001 (when the scoring was changed from 21 points to 11 points), the limit was reduced again to 10 minutes, which is where it remains. This is probably not a rule that we will ever need to apply, as exhaustion or boredom are likely to kick in well before the time limit. Anyway, we play primarily for fun after all and cannot pretend to bother too much about the minutiae (what was that rule again?)

Incidentally, it is heartening to read that a team of four Ukrainian players made it to the recent WTT Star Contender event in Doha and, on 28 March, met the ITTF officials assisting and supporting table tennis players in Ukraine. Tetyana Bilenko said: "When we were playing our matches here in Qatar...we didn't think about the war. It was nice to be back in the sporting community and with many friends." So, a welcome, albeit small, ray of sunshine from the world of table tennis in these terrible times.

Shorter Walks Group Bowlees March 2022 by Phil Johnson

Nine of us met for this walk which started at Bowless car park going to the NE corner of the Bowlees Centre and then following the farm track uphill towards Ettersgill. This track is an easy uphill climb, which we found very passable with opening gates on all field boundaries. On reaching Ash House Farm, the terrain levelled out and then gently started to go downhill with the view of Ettersgill opening out in front of us in a mix of sun and fine misty rain. As we came lower down, Dirt Pit Cottage could be seen down in the bottom of the valley. Aiming for the first footpath marker on our left, we passed through the gate to a wide meadow. The path was rather indistinct but with the signpost pointing us south we crested the small hill to find West Friar House farm far below us. We zigzagged down the easy going slope over the grass aiming for a small stile close to the main farm buildings. This stile and the crossing of Ettersgill Beck had proved difficult on the recce visit, so we were glad to have permission to use the main farm track instead. (An alternative path would have been to continue along the farm access track down towards Dirt Pit cottage and gain the valley road from there). On leaving the farm, we undertook a short double-back towards Bridge House Farm using the valley road to where we should have crossed the beck, and then on for 50 metres or so, until we reached the next signpost, again on our left, just before the main farm buildings. This south west path, alongside the stockyard wall led us up

a small grassy hill heading towards the B6277. Nearing the top, the wall/fence turned away from us and we were somewhat abandoned in the middle of the field. Keeping as best we could in the same direction, we topped the hill and the stile over the main wire fence was eventually spotted.

The fine rain had ceased by this stage and we had fine weather and good views all around. The last stile was not easy as the steps were of considerable height and even though the barbs on the barbed wire had been removed, it was tricky. Also, the verge at this side of the B6277 is very narrow so it is one to take time over. Our path was immediately across the road and towards the trackway down towards the footbridge over the Tees. There appears to be no specific name for this bridge on any OS maps, so, any clues anyone? The rest of the walk was the easy track alongside the Tees, which is known to most of us, towards the Wynch bridge and tea at the Bowlees Centre. Unfortunately, we were a tad late at 3:50 and as they had started cleaning up muddy boot prints would have been impolite. On this last stretch, we came across a group of birdwatchers looking intently at some flock of birds in the trees; unfortunately the walking group bird recognition skills were no match for these small brown birds and we came away unimpressed.

For anyone with OS Maps application on PC or phone can find the route in the OS library of walks for this area, which can be downloaded and stored on your phone (or printed off).

7-9 mile Walk Group March Report by Nicky Grace

A group of 10 of us walked from the layby to the Deepdale entrance to meet a further 6 walkers who had walked from their homes in Barnard Castle and Startforth. It was a grey day (sandwiched between days of marvellous sunshine) but we were fortunate to only experience a brief period of drizzle. Led by Ruth, we walked up Deepdale, passing only two other walkers. It was rather muddy underfoot and we had to pick our way across the Smart Gill stream. We made our way up Smart Gill glimpsing two roe deer en route and found a convenient coffee stop seated on felled trees. Crossing the disused railway line, we reached high and flat ground where we could hear the call of the curlew. The views of Teesdale are wonderful on a clear day! Ruth stopped to chat to a local farmer who enquired if we were a busload!

From Thornberry we walked on a good farm track to Nabb Bridge. The lovely bridge over Deepdale Beck has an interesting history. It was built in 1699 by Edward Addison and funded by William Hutchinson (founder of Bowes school) in thanks for being saved from drowning near this spot.

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We crossed the bridge and made our way uphill to our lunch spot at Low Crag with views across to Crag Pond. No-one seemed to know the history of this stretch of water which appears man made. Having reached our most westerly point, we turned east and walked across fields, tackling some very



stiff gates and large puddles. On reaching Raygill, we met a couple of donkeys on their way back from their pedicure (hooficure?) We then descended through Deepdale woods to reach our respective starting points. With thanks to Ruth for an interesting walk in an area very few people had visited.

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 20 April will be an 8 mile walk led by Alan. We start from beside Bollihope Burn. The route climbs towards Pawlaw Pike then proceeds on the moor top, with views as far as the coast on a clear day, towards Allotment House where it turns downhill off the moor heading back down to Bollihope Burn.

Please let Nicky Grace know nickygrace729@gmail.com if would like to come.

On 18 May our walk will be led by Phil in Swaledale – details to follow.

**The 4-6 Mile Walking Group Report by Lynda Barras
Middleton to Mickleton & Back, 6 miles**

We had a good turnout for this walk: there were 21 of us starting out, with a bit of a chill wind but sunshine as well so we couldn't complain.

From Middleton, we went down to the bridge (County Bridge as it is known locally) and along the north side of the Tees, initially on a gentle footpath, then after the caravan site, we hit the 'ups and downs'. There are 5 of them and what with a bit of mud in places, we had to take care.

After that, it was again pleasant walking with the river gently flowing on our right. We stopped briefly for a coffee/tea stop in the sun, luckily a bit sheltered from the wind. Over the millennium bridge and through a couple of fields, the second a bit wet underfoot, up Yarker Lane to Low Side and from there up past the Village Hall and up to the Tees Railway Way. Here, we stopped for a lunch break at the picnic table and three who wanted to get back early went on ahead.

Then along the Tees Railway Way, over the viaduct, through Lonton and down through the fields back to County Bridge and Middleton. It was good to get out again after all the bad weather and good to see the early signs of spring.

Photo by Ian Royston



Wild Flower Group Report by Kate Keen

The first walk of the year for the Wild Flower Group was looking at trees to see whether we could identify them in winter when there are no leaves. 9 of us, including 3 new members, met in Cotherstone to walk around the village and beyond. We were aided by a walk route devised some years ago by the Cotherstone Tree Group. We also used a helpful leaflet from the Woodland Trust which has photos of twigs; we found some of these were quite distinctive. We also had some tree silhouettes to use. We had an enjoyable afternoon looking at trees. We were disappointed that the Wych Elm tree referred to in our leaflet as being the largest surviving elm tree in England is no more than a stump now.

On the 29 March, Celia and I took a stroll through Deepdale Woods in Startforth to take a look at the spring flowers. Near the car park we were surprised to see moschatel or town hall clocks. These tiny plants have 5 flowers with 4 facing outwards and 1 on the top; we hope to see them again on our April walk but had not seen them in these woods before. We also saw lesser celandine, dog mercury, snowdrops, daffodils, spurge, butterbur, marsh marigold, primrose, gorse, colts foot, woodrush, dandelion, early dog violet and barren strawberry. The star of the day was the wood sorrel which is covering swathes of ground in the woods. It was charming to hear lots of birdsong and we spotted a dipper in the beck. All in all, a lovely afternoon with more plants in flower than we expected due to the good weather the previous week. I may well include a March walk in the 2023 programme.

Our next walk will be to look at spring flowers meeting at Egglestone Abbey at 2pm on Wednesday 13 April. Our route will include roadside verges, meadow and woodland. The milder the weather the more flowers we should see. New members are always welcome.

Wine Group Report by Tim Meacham

Our March meeting took place at Hamsterley (thank you, Stella & John) and was the first of a two-part look at wines of Italy. Our focus was on the north of the country with a range of medium-priced wines.

Our first of three whites was the Lombardy region's Pinot Grigio Garda DOP 2020 (12% and £5.49 from Lidl). This made a good first impression, living up to Lidl's claim of a 'crisp fresh, fruity, zesty white.' Members remarked on the long, satisfying finish. The more expensive Piemonte region's Gavi DOCG 2020 (12% and £6.99 also from Lidl), for all the reputation of its Cortese grape, was by comparison weak and unexciting; little to say here. Our third white promised much: the saviour of the Marche region, our Verdicchio Dei Castelli Di Jesi DOC 2020 (12.5% and £7.00 from Sainsburys) was certainly strongly-flavoured, but, as one reviewer concluded, 'some say crisp, I say tart!' The Garda offering certainly won the battle of the white wines.

So it was back to Lake Garda, this time the eastern bank for our Rose sampling, the Bardolino Chiaretto Rose DOP 2020 (12% and £6.99 from Lidl). Very light in colour, it lacked any particular merits. Made from the traditional Corvina & Rondinella grapes it was rather dry but lacked the 'oomph' factor (although the label's claim of 'refreshing' may have been true on a hot lakeside day in the Veneto region!) Our next region was Tuscany from where we sampled our first red, a Vino Nobile Montepulciano Toscana DOCG 2015 (13.5% and £9.99 from Lidl). This was regarded as 'not bad' but the effect faded rather when compared to our final red, a Marzemino Trentino DOC 2020 (12.5% and £8.50 from Sainsburys); even the non red-drinkers acknowledged that this was a very interesting number: the Trentino-Alto Adige region in the far north of Italy is gaining a good reputation for its flavourful red wines and the promised 'notes of ripe cherries' was delivered with spades. Our two recommendations then are for the Lidl Garda white and Sainsbury Marzemino; both represent great value for money.

Part 2 of the Italian tasting will be at the May meeting (there will be no session in April). Anyone wishing for more information should contact Tim Meacham via simontimothymeacham@gmail.com

March Quiz Answers

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. George Eliot | 2. True | 3. Over 80 |
| 4. Voldemort? | 5. Matt Haig | 6. 37 |
| 7. Ian Fleming | 8. Greece | 9. The Modern Prometheus |
| 10. Oscar Wilde | 11. Wuthering Heights | 12. John Wyndham |
| 13. Jim Hawkins | 14. Great Expectations | 15. Alan Sillitoe |
| 16. Mark Twain | 17. Acts | 18. Minerva |
| 19. Virginia Woolf | 20. East of Eden | |

Guiding at the Bowes

Hello! My name is Sue Fielder and I am a guide at the Bowes Museum. Our official daily rota tour guiding season starts on 4 April this year and runs through until the end of October. We take booked tours around the Museum throughout the year. We are seeking to recruit a few more guides. If you are lively, active, interested in paintings, furniture, ceramics, the story of John and Josephine Bowes and enjoy meeting and talking to people of all ages and backgrounds, then you might like to consider joining our team. Training and support are offered to all new guides. If you are interested, please get in touch with Annie Clouston, who will forward your details on to me; or leave a message at the front desk at the Museum.

NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

We are very grateful for all your contributions. As you can see, this edition is exceedingly packed, and because of printing costs we cannot extend the number of pages we offer. Very sincere apologies to anyone who feels they have been cut short or neglected. Wherever possible, we will try as editors to include your work, and also urge you to be succinct!

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Group	Meeting Time	Contact Details
Art Appreciation	1 st Wed pm	Roger Stanyon 01833 631758
Birdwatching	3 rd Monday am	John Howard 01833 631639
Book Group 2	2 nd Mon pm	Elizabeth Long 01833 641494
Book Group 3 Room to Read	3 rd Wed pm	Annie Clouston 01833 637091
Chess		Diana Marks 01833 631616 07762 626912
Climate Solutions	1 st Thurs am	Kate Bailey 07867 683195
Discussion	2 nd Fri am	Glen Howard 01833 631639
French Conversation	4 th Thurs pm	Stella Kirton 01388 488919
Gardening	1 st Fri pm	Pauline Fawcett 01833 638020
Genealogy	1 st Thurs pm	Alan Swindale 01388 488348
Geography	3 rd Thurs 2pm	Gerald Blake 01833 650899
Geology	4 th Mon am	Bob Tuddenham 07812 378004
Historic Environment	2 nd Thurs 10am	Tim Meacham 07847 182554
iPad & iPhone	4 th Fri 2pm	Mike Sweeting 01833 630005
Italian Conversation	Every Wed am	Marie Jenkins 07754 205664
Lunch Group	3 rd Wed noon	Jane Mathieson 01388 710741
Needlecraft	1 st Mon pm	Glen Howard 01833 631639
Painting	2 nd Fri 10am	Val Hobbs 07900 497503
Philosophy	4 th Tues 10am	Ruth Sansom 01325 401850

Group	Meeting Time	Contact details
Photography	1 st Tues	Jane Mathieson 01388 710741
Poetry	2 nd Wed 10am	Annie Clouston 01833 637091
Science and Technology	2 nd Mon am	Roy Tranter 01833 638288
Scrabble	2 nd Mon pm	Lilian Smith 01833 650628
Spanish Conversation	3 rd Thurs 10am	Lusia McAnna 01833 638989
Table Tennis	Every Friday 3pm	Peter Singer 07508 663998
Theatre	Varies	Elizabeth Formstone 01325 374727
Travel/Day Trips		Jane Mathieson 01388 710741
Understanding Classical Music	4 th Friday 10am	Bill Heyes 01833 640885
Walking Groups		
Shorter walks 3-4 miles	4 th Monday Phone	Sue Overton 07512 368884
Walking 4-6 miles	2 nd Tues 10am Phone	Gillian Barnes-Morris 07941 852165
Walking 7-9 miles	3 rd Wed 10am	Nicky Grace nickygrace729@gmail.com
Fell Walking	4 th Wed	Annie Clouston 01833 637091
Wildflower Group	2 nd Wed 2pm	Kate Keen 07880 741151
Wine Group	3 rd Tues pm	Tim Meacham 07847 182554

**Coming up at your
Community Arts Centre**



Thurs 28 Apr 7.30pm	FILM – Respect (12A) with subtitles The true story of Aretha Franklin’s journey to find her voice, starring Jennifer Hudson and Forest Whitaker.
Thurs 5 May 7.00pm	SCREENING – Northern Ballet: Merlin (PG) Don’t miss the legend reawakened through Northern Ballet’s blend of classical ballet and unrivalled storytelling.
Sat 7 May 7.30pm	COMEDY – Alfie Moore: Fair Cop Unleashed (14+) Join BBC Radio 4’s cop-turned-comedian for his latest stand-up tour show.
Fri 13 May 7.30pm	COMEDY – Lou Sanders: One Word – Wow (14+) As seen on <i>Taskmaster</i> (Channel 4), <i>QI</i> (BBC Two), <i>Travel Man</i> (Channel 4) and co-host of Mel Giedroyc’s <i>Unforgivable</i> (Dave).
Sat 14 May 2.00pm	FILM – Belfast (12A) with subtitles Directed by Oscar-winning Sir Kenneth Branagh, this heavily-autobiographical film is set in the city on the brink of the Troubles in the late 1960s.
Sun 15 May 2.00pm	SUNDAY CLASSICS: Deborah Thorne and Nicholas Butters The pianist and cellist perform works by Beethoven, Debussy, Cassado and Franck.
Thurs 19 May 7.30pm	FOLK MUSIC – The Sam Sweeney Band BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards 2019 – Nominated Musician of The Year.
Fri 27 May 7.30pm	JAZZ – Fergus McCreadie Trio The Scottish pianist has underlined his trio’s status as one of the most exciting young groups in European Jazz.
Wed 1 June 2.00pm	FAMILY – Pongo’s Party With a colourful farmyard and host of loveable puppet characters, this family show is suitable for 2- to 7-year-olds with fun, songs and laughter.

www.thewitham.org.uk

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