

TEESDALE u3a FORUM

Your monthly newsletter about interest groups and events in the Dale

February 2023 no: 23/02



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u3a

CHAIRWOMAN'S LETTER - February 2023

Dear Friends

February is probably the month of the year that, in cahoots with November, brings out the groans. And yet, there are plenty of reasons to be cheerful. Snowdrops are in their prime, harbingers of Spring, and you can really tell that daylight – that massive contributor to human well-being – is lasting longer. And despite the goings-on in the wider world, we can still be incredibly pleased with ourselves for having the good fortune (and foresight) to live in Teesdale.

On the u3a front there are many good things to be savoured. Last month's talk about the Kearton Brothers of Thwaite was terrific. I was blown away by how these minimally educated small boys from a remote village in Swaledale were so entranced by the natural world that they became ingenious men who would be vanguards in the recording of animal behaviour and advance the cause for respecting and conserving the environment. This brings me to the subject of February's talk – Reasons to be Cheerful by Kate Bailey. Kate wants to focus on what each of us can do for our natural world, rather than being weighed down by the prophets of doom whose message would appear to be it's all too big for our puny efforts.

Our workshops continue to be very popular. I, and several others, have started the long process of learning to play Bridge, following January's session led by James Dykes. Bamboozled, yes! Intrigued, yes! An embarrassment to potential partners (be warned run for the hills if you see me at the table), undoubtedly! The urge to chinwag is strong, the disparagement of that distraction is strong, but there is no doubt about it, it fulfils quite a few of the six essentials, claimed by specialists in well-being, that will keep us going in good health. These are: Avoiding alcohol (I'm not too hot on this one, although I did struggle through Dry January), not smoking, exercise, playing games, friendship, and healthy diet. The u3a pushes a good few of those buttons – so keep up your membership and we will go from strength to strength!

With warmest wishes

Annie

Cover picture: Deer in Raby Park - Ian Royston

It's Your Forum

Editors: Annie Clouston, Celia Chapple and Ian Royston

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All editors receive all contributions and share the email account:

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DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS for the next edition:

Tuesday 7 March 2023

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, in The Witham shop or at TCR Hub.

NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

We are very grateful for all your contributions. Wherever possible, we will try as editors to include your work, and also urge you to be succinct. The more succinct you are the more photos, illustrations and interesting articles and silliness we can include! Sincere apologies to anyone who feels they have been cut short or neglected. Please limit submissions to 1 page or 400 words and 1 photo, and send them to the Forum Editor at:
forumeditor@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER 2023-24

2022-23 was a year of recovery after the 'COVID years' which preceded. It has also been a year of progress with the exciting range of Saturday Workshops developing further, audiences for our Main Meetings topping the 100 mark and new groups starting up, all supported by a current membership of 410. We hope that all members will now wish to move forward with us and renew their memberships for the year 2023-24. Many thanks to those of you who have been quick off the mark and paid already. Here are the points for you to renew as simply as possible.

The membership fee for 2023-24 will remain at £20 per member (£16.50 for anyone who is also a member of another u3a area group).

There will be a stall at the February and March monthly meetings for payment by cash or cheque.

By far the quickest way for you to pay is by **direct bank transfer**. The details you will need to pay by this method are:

Account: **The Teesdale U3A**

Sort Code: **20-83-73**

Account Number: **23470873**

Please type '**The Teesdale U3A**' in full and quote your name as your reference for the bank transfer to make sure we can identify the source.

I know that many members still prefer to pay by cheque. Cheques must be made out to: '**The Teesdale U3A Number Two Account**' with your full name(s) on the back to avoid any possible confusion. This can be done at the next main meetings or by sending your cheque to me at:

S T Meacham (Teesdale u3a Membership Secretary, The Sidings, 1a Station Terrace, Cotherstone, Barnard Castle, DL12 9PZ.

Finally, if you wish to pay by cash, please make sure that this is in a sealed envelope showing your name and, if possible, any further identification (address etc.).

Please note that we cannot yet accept payment by debit/credit card or PayPal or similar on-line companies. All payments will be acknowledged by me although given the numbers involved, this might take a while. We no longer issue membership cards, so please do not send stamps or return envelopes with your payment.

Good news for members with membership numbers 655 and later. You do not need to renew as your last year's payment includes 2023-24!

Any queries: email Tim Meacham at simontimothymeacham@gmail.com or phone on **07847 182554**. Many thanks for all your support.

MONTHLY MEETING AT THE WITHAM

Meetings assemble from 10.00am for a prompt start at 10.30am

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.

u3a NEXT MEETINGS

23 March - Martin Lloyd - Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies

27 April (AGM) - Sheila Petersen - By Canoe to Timbuktu

WEEKEND WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

Your Weekend Workshop sub committee needs you!

The current trio responsible for organising the monthly weekend workshops since September 2021 would welcome two more people with fresh ideas to join us. We meet once a month to plan events and share the tasks involved as appropriate.

If you are interested and would like to come to our next meeting, please contact Sue Overton **07512 368884** or email sueoverton@hotmail.com

Saturday 18 March 2-4pm Bird Song led by Andrew Lapworth-Guide HQ Birch Road Barnard Castle. Contact Annie at **01833 637091**

Saturday 22 April 10am - 12 noon Drum Lampshade Making led by Barbara Lynche Matthews at the Guide HQ, Birch Road Barnard Castle. Cost: £38 - Learn how to make a 30cm diameter drum lampshade with fabric of your own choice - cotton or linen fabric is recommended. You'll need to bring your fabric and a sharp pair of scissors plus lots of enthusiasm!

To see finished examples, visit the Handcrafters Hub 42 The Bank.

To book a place on the workshop, contact Sue Overton **07512 368884**

Saturday 20 May 10-1pm Wire Sculpture led by Sara Cox (if you saw the recent exhibition by members of Teesdale Schools at The Witham you will have seen some of Sara's excellent guided work) Very much a hands-on session with materials provided £25 per person. Please contact Hazel Yeadon to book a place. Tel: **01833 638710**

Saturday 17 June Gin Tasting in Whitby. Gin Tour is fully booked but places will be available on a large coach if you'd like a day out in Whitby Please contact Sue Overton. Tel: **01833 908597**

TEESDALE u3a DAY TRIPS for 2023 - Jane Mathieson

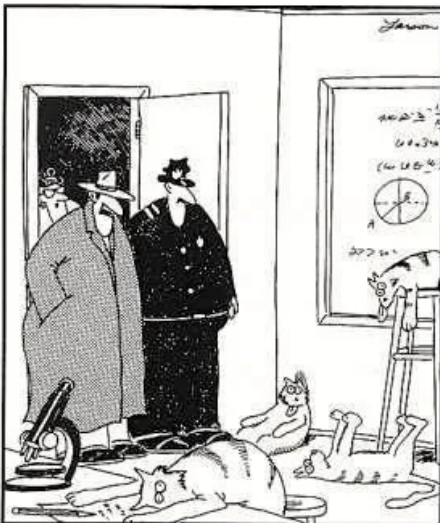
17 March - National Glass Centre, Sunderland, leave Barnard Castle outside Addisons, Galgate at 09.00 return about 18.00. Price £11.00. Includes the museum of glass, gallery, watching glass blowing, there is a shop & good cafe.

19 May - Ripon & Constable Burton Gardens, leave Barnard Castle outside Addisons, Galgate at 09.00 return about 18.00. Price £14.00 plus price for gardens. Includes time in the morning to look around Ripon - cathedral, museums, lots of shops & eateries, also Booths if you want to do some good food shopping; afternoon at Constable Burton to look around the tulip gardens.

21 July - Bolton Castle, Wensleydale, leave Barnard Castle outside Addisons, Galgate at 09.00 return about 18.00. Cost £19.00. Includes entrance to castle, gardens, wild boar feeding & falconry displays.

15 September - York & York Cocoa House, leave Barnard Castle, outside Addisons, Galgate at **08.45**, return about 18.00. Cost - coach £14.00, plus making your own chocolate at the Cocoa house £16.50. Includes time to look around York & a session at the Cocoa House kitchens learning about & making chocolate.

For more information please contact: Jane Mathieson **01388 710741**



"Notice all the computations, theoretical scribblings, and lab equipment, Norm. ...
Yes, curiosity killed these cats."

Philosophy -

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u3a MONTHLY MEETING - January 2023 - Report by Ian Reid

The Kearton Brothers - Helen Guy

Richard and Cherry Kearton were born in 1862 and 1871 respectively and brought up in Thwaite, in the North Riding. Their father was a yeoman farmer. In their lifetime the brothers became world famous pioneers of wildlife photography and film making. At the January meeting of Teesdale u3a, the remarkable story of their life was summarized in great detail by Helen Guy from Keld Resource Centre.

As children, Richard and Cherry developed their interest in wild life from their grandfather and became very familiar with animal habitats, bird calls and birds' nests. The boys were very adventurous and when Richard was 7, he fell from a tree as he was trying to view a bird's nest, leaving him with a permanent limp. The boys were brought up in relative poverty as the mines were in decline and sheep farming was precarious.

Richard became a farmer before he moved to London to work for Cassell's publishing house, starting at the bottom addressing envelopes. He worked his way up to become manager of a publicity department.

Then he began a lifetime of travelling the world to photograph and film wildlife. They took the first photograph of eggs in a bird's nest. Their film of a Masai lion hunt must have been the first recorded. They abseiled down cliffs on St Kilda with their equipment, and even surprised the local population with their bravery. They pioneered the use of hides, and the lifelike models of a hollow cow and a stuffed sheep became famous. Cherry is credited with directing over thirty films for his film companies. Cherry also became friendly with Theodore Roosevelt and directed a film 'Roosevelt in Africa'.

In 1895, the brothers published the first natural history book to be entirely illustrated by wildlife photographs. Cherry contributed photographs to 17 of Richard's books and wrote and illustrated a further 17 of his own. Cherry took the first film of London from the air. Their contribution to wild life photography and conservation was widely acknowledged and was formally recognised when Richard was made a Fellow of the Zoological Society of London, and the Royal Geographical Society created the Cherry Kearton Medal and Award in Cherry's honour. The brothers had come a long way from their humble beginnings in Thwaite.

Helen gave an excellent presentation to an audience of over a hundred members.

GROUP REPORTS

ART APPRECIATION - Call for New Convenor

I am trying to restart the Art Appreciation Group, which I ran for 12 years. I no longer want to run meetings, but I have lots of DVDs on art and artists which could be used. We also used to have two or three trips a year to galleries where there were interesting exhibitions. If you feel able to coordinate this group, for which I am happy to give advice, please contact me on **01833 631758** or rogerwstanyon@gmail.com

BIRDWATCHING - Report & photos by Andrew Lapworth

Group visit to Saltholme RSPB Reserve 16 January 2023

Our first visit of the year coincided with the very cold snap and as the 7 of us met outside the Bowes Museum it had just begun snowing. After a brief review of prospects we decided to press-on and we went in 3 cars over to Saltholme in the heart of industrial Teesside. During our time there it was very cold but we enjoyed brilliant blue skies and there was no sign of the forecast snow showers.

First stop was in the RSPB's excellent cafe which overlooks The Lake. The pools have been remodelled over the last couple of years, resulting in lots of islands and edges, ideal for various species. We were soon trying to identify the various ducks: firstly trying to separate the diving ducks: female Goldeneyes from Tufted Ducks and Coots; then the usual Mallards from the black-bottomed Gadwalls. Around the edges were lots of yellow-bottomed Teal (the UK's smallest duck) and on the islands, grazing, whistling Widgeon flocks. There were also small numbers of waders: mainly Redshanks and Curlews, and on one island a good flock of the often overlooked Stock Doves.



Downstairs we checked the feeding station which had a delightful flock of Goldfinches, attended by a few handsome Greenfinches; below the feeders the usual suspects: Dunnocks, Chaffinches Robin and 2-3 Moorhens.

Our next visit was across the wet fields to the double-decker hide overlooking West Saltholme pool; this area is now protected from ground predators such as foxes. When we arrived in the hide the helpful volunteer there told us we had just missed the Spoonbill which had been seen there for a couple of weeks (doh!). A very handsome male Pintail (duck) was 'scoped, and we sorted out various birds : big flocks of Widgeon, out on the fields, Lapwings, Curlews and Golden Plovers. On the nearby low islands Peter found a close Meadow Pipit, and we also saw a Pied Wagtail and a small flock of Linnets. We did not see any raptors but the flocks were occasionally spooked and gave us some wonderful spectacles. There were very mobile flocks of Greylag Geese and we spotted one rather distant Pink-footed Goose.

While most went back to the cafe for a soup and sandwich, 2 of us ate our sandwiches in the (very cold) Phil Stead hide; we had good close views of the very handsome Teal, Shelducks and a Common Buzzard being mobbed by a Carrion Crow. As we drove out of the car park we briefly saw a few Redwings feeding on the ground in the scrubby area

Our last stop of the day was to the viewpoint above Greatham Creek near Seal Sands. We had really good low sunlight there and had quality views of numerous Redshanks, Curlew, Dunlin, Ringed Plovers and one for two Black-tailed Godwits; nearby, sheltering in the muddy creek was a Little Egret showing its yellow toes well, and a Little Grebe swam by. We scanned the salt marsh in vain for quartering Short-eared Owls or Harriers; facing the wind the views were literally eye-watering. The tide was receding and there were still around 20 seals hauled out making the most of the winter sunshine. We agreed it had been a very enjoyable visit on what had been a cold and crisp winter's day.



Left: Teal, Britain's smallest duck

BOARD GAMES GROUP - Report by Hazel McCallum

Six of us joined our first game 'Ticket to Ride', which started promptly at the scheduled time of 2pm. Jane conducted us on the rules and strategies and then, following a visit from the beverage trolley, we set off on our game.

As the name might suggest, 'Ticket to Ride' is a game where players build railway tracks across the USA to win points. The longer the route, the higher the score, with a final bonus for the player with longest continuous route at the end of the game.

Once underway, the game jogged along quickly with destinations visited including Montreal, Miami and Los Angeles. A range of game strategies were revealed, with Andy gathering a variety of routes, Jane meandering along the East Coast, Sue garnering an impressive hand of cards, and Kate building her American Circle Line. Judith completed her Great Railway Journey first and won the game!

We will embark on our next meeting on 7 February, with a repeat playing of 'Ticket to Ride'.



<https://www.daysofwonder.com/tickettoride/en/usa/>

BOOK GROUP REPORTS

ROOM TO READ - Report by Ruth Lapworth

Period Piece: *A Cambridge Childhood* by Gwen Raverat.

This book of childhood memories of the grand daughter of Charles Darwin is beautifully illustrated by the author. In the preface Gwen advises the reader that this is a “circular book “ that it can be dipped in and out of as the chapters are not written in chronological order. The memoir includes recollections of her family, her social circle and life in Cambridge through chapter headings such as propriety, ladies, clothes, education and religion. The book was written late in the author’s adult life but her memories of growing up in Cambridge are very much seen through the eyes of a child. Some members of our group thought the observations were made through rose - tinted spectacles; others enjoyed the light hearted style and found many of the observations very pithy and humorous. Although the book was first published in 1952, and at the time was not expected to have a large readership, it has remained in print ever since .

Gwen Raverat was born in 1885 and was the first child of an English academic (one of Charles Darwin’s sons) and an American mother. At the time her family was one of a small group of families forming Cambridge’s intellectual society and as such she had a very care-free and privileged upbringing. Her social circle also included members of the large Darwin family which had a major influence on her childhood years. In two particularly entertaining chapters she describes each of her five uncles and her Aunt Etty and in another describes visits to the Darwin family house at Down in Kent.

The majority of the group really enjoyed the observations of small incidents of life, her comic portraits and illustrations. They forgave some of what we would now consider her prejudiced views as these were prevalent at the time. Others in the group did not warm to the memoir either because they did not like her style of writing, thought it too contrived or simply did not find it interesting!

We decided to award the book 4 out of 5 in terms of recommending to a friend and 4 out of 5 for a book group.

Book Group 2 - Report by Maggie Cleminson

Following the departure of our convenor, Elizabeth, to her new home, and to whom we say thank you for looking after us for many years, we are just beginning to get reorganised. A small group of members met recently to discuss our way forward and to share some thoughts on our recent reading.

“English Pastoral”, by James Rebanks brought to our attention the devastation English farm land had suffered since the days of his grandfather, only 50 years ago, by the expectation of cheap food. In beautifully expressed poetic prose, we understood his love and care of the land, its nature and wildlife. I quote ‘Our land is like a poem, in a patchwork landscape of other poems, written by hundreds of people, both those here now and the many hundreds that came before us... And the poem if you can read it tells a complex truth. It has both moments of great beauty and great heartbreak. It tells of human triumph and failings, of what is good in people and what is flawed; and what we need, and how in our greed we can destroy precious things’.

One of our member brought along a resume of the work of Dorothy Dunnett, a Scottish historical novelist and gave us a brief introduction to her work ‘The Lymond Chronicles’ and especially ‘The King Hereafter’ a reference to Macbeth, set in Orkney and Scotland in the years just before the invasion of England by William the conqueror. We decided to add this novel to our reading list for the year.

We meet usually on the 2nd Monday of each month or every two months, and host the group on a rota basis in our homes. We would welcome one or two new members; if you are interested please ring **01833 650006**.

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS DISCUSSION - Report by Kate Bailey

The group met to discuss a draft presentation, prepared for a different group last year, on the subject of 'Climate, Biodiversity and Health'. This illustrated talk may be revised and presented to the Geography group at a later date.

The points of interest we discussed included the use of satellite imagery to assess annual changes to ecosystems, for example, areas of forest loss and gain. It is notable that the continents suffering the greatest loss of forest cover are the equatorial regions of Africa, SE Asia and South

America, not including China and India. We also discussed nature recovery projects in the UK, including peatland restoration in the North Pennines (part of the 'Great North Bog') and flood management projects in places like Holnicote Estate on Exmoor and the River Otter in East Devon, where Eurasian beavers have successfully been reintroduced.



(Image - Devon Wildlife Trust)

We also talked about the UK Environment Act 2021, which brought in legal requirements for developers to create 'Biodiversity Net Gain' on the development site or equivalent gains in the local area. Covid-19 lockdowns emphasised the need for housing schemes to include networks of 'Green Infrastructure' such as cycle routes, footpaths and wildlife corridors, and 'Blue Infrastructure' such as sustainable drainage systems with natural water channels, pools and ponds to capture heavy rainfall. We agreed that visits to recent housing developments around Barnard Castle, to see whether local builders are providing greener places for people to live, would make a good research project.

We decided that for future meetings the group would, in advance, do some 'homework' on a chosen topic for discussion. This may include listening to a podcast or talk or conference session that is available online. In April we plan to consider whether financial institutions, banks and corporate decision-makers are supporting the UK's proposed transition to a green economy.

New members will be very welcome to join us, please contact the convenor Kate Bailey.

DISCUSSION GROUP - Report by Glen Howard

January 2023 saw our greatest attendance ever and the news items discussed were very varied: The return of the Elgin Marbles to Greece; crypto currency; 'Spare' and associated interviews; £2 cap on bus fares; the proposed selling off of Startforth School; the Mayor of Bradford spending £55,000 on encouraging children to walk to school; acts of human kindness (for mental health benefits); a Ukrainian refugee in Barney; and 'field' being replaced by 'practicum' at a California University.

Our main topic of Christmas Highs and Lows was a chance for everyone to exchange tales of their holiday experiences.

If you would like to join us please give me a ring:
Glen Howard **01833 631639**

GARDENING GROUP - Report by Kate Keen

2023 launches a new era for the Gardening Group as the new Convenors Julie Archer and Kate Keen lay out the programme of events for the year. The group will continue to meet at Stainton Village Hall on the first Friday of the month in the autumn and winter. Then from May to September coach trips to gardens are being arranged.

On February 3rd Speaker Jim Moody gave us an interesting talk– “The Birds and the Bees, Wildlife Friendly Gardening”. The key aspects to having a wild life friendly garden are having food and water for the wildlife. We can have trees and shrubs with red berries to feed the birds. Jim lives in Stokesley and was surprised at the types of birds which are frequently seen here in Teesdale. We can plant flowers to have pollen all year round for the bees and for the butterflies in summer. Leaving the foliage on perennial plants through the winter provides ladybirds and other insects with nesting sites and seeds for the birds. The other key issue was not to use any pesticides.

Our next meeting is on 3 March 3 Speaker Louise Wickham – Thomas White – the Capability Brown of the North East. Louise has recently published a book Thomas White, redesigning the northern British Landscape.

7 April – Garden quiz and plant sale.

GENEALOGY - Report by Alan Swindale

Researching Australian Relatives

Most British families will have Australian relatives but tracking down long-lost Australian cousins can prove difficult. The first hurdle is that each Australian state maintains its own records but 19th century 'settlers' could be anything but settled so there are multiple sets of records to search. The second hurdle is that census records with individuals' names are virtually non-existent. The third hurdle is that few church records are on-line so it would be necessary to identify the relevant church(es) and write letters asking for help – enclosing a SAE and donation of course.

The alternative is firstly to take out a subscription to Ancestry Worldwide - £20 for one month and then cancel – and search for the relative by name.

Ancestry should find:

- Passenger records; your relatives or their ancestors must have travelled to Australia
- Civil registration records of birth, marriage or death; these often provide more information than their UK equivalents. However, records which could relate to living individuals or their close kin will often not be available.
- Town rates records; these should follow your relative's movements.
- Probate records.
- Criminal records, including of course those famous transported convicts.

Secondly, search the newspapers using TROVE, Australia's very good set of digitised newspaper scans, using information gained using Ancestry to narrow down the search by date and locality.

You'll be surprised how many people there are in Australia with the same name as your relative! Keep notes, including the sources, as you go along and you should be able to link together some possibilities and eliminate others.

At this stage it is worth looking at online record sets, from State libraries and other sources, which might contain your relative. Use Google or FamilySearch's wiki to find possibly useful datasets. Good hunting.

The next meeting of the Genealogy Group will be on Thursday 2 March at 2 p.m. at Enterprise House. This will be a 'Helping Hand' practical session particularly aimed at the less advanced family historian.

GEOGRAPHY GROUP - Report by Annie Clouston

Professor Alan Townsend: *The Quaker Line*

Alan is a geographer, planner and Vice Chair of the Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. He has undertaken a study of the importance of the Quakers to the railway and industries of the area.

The protagonist of the talk, Edward Pease (1767-1858), was committed to the Quaker way of life. Non-materialistic and abstemious, early Quakers would not make an oath to the Queen and therefore were precluded from government and the military. This made business “the obvious occupation of the Dissenter”. Their ethical framework contributed to their success in business. Their frugality and sobriety led to isolation from others, cohesion with each other, an insistence on marrying within the faith reinforced this. Capital assets were gathered from fellow congregants – yeomen, small farmers, entrepreneurs. and meetings were occasions where business could be done. They were scrupulous, honest and reliable. There was also an ethos of philanthropy and respect for their workers. One of the Quaker bankers, Jonathan Backhouse, who contributed funds to the SDR summed up their attitude: “the root of evil is not so much the possession of property, as in the undue pursuit of it”.

Edward Pease was a visionary who could see that the transportation of coal and minerals by rail rather than canal was the way of progress. In 1822 he persuaded a reluctant management board to employ George Stephenson as engineer, and the line-laying was begun. Barnard Castle subsequently had four lines coming into it – from Middleton, Penrith, Shildon, and Darlington, with a station in Montalbo Road, and several spectacular viaducts. Money flooded into the industries that used the line and after Edward’s time his son Joseph extended the line into “Port Darlington” (Middlesbrough) thus enabling the development of Teesside.

Alan showed that the evolving nature of Quakerism (becoming more liberal and less rigid about the accumulation of wealth) was to lead to the downfall of the Pease family as businessmen and their eventual bankruptcy. The next Pease generation watered-down Quaker precepts by purchasing grand houses and marrying out-of-faith which led to a ruinous law suit – The Portsmouth Affair. A sad end to an enterprise that put our region on the map as a First! SDR celebrates its 200th Anniversary in 2025.

Next meeting: Thursday 16 March at 2.10 pm. A Geography Smorgasbord of contributions from group members, and in association with the Climate Solutions Group, launch of small group projects.

GEOLOGY GROUP - Reports by Bob Tuddenham

Meeting 9 January

Our first Zoom meeting of 2023 was in two parts. David Saville continued his 'Introduction to Geology' with a brief talk about sandstones, the range of different types and how they formed. David also produced a very useful handout that was sent out to members.

In the second half of the meeting Trevor Morse gave a presentation on the 'Permian and the Zechstein Sea' which tied in with Rick Smith's talk in November. Trevor gave more detail about the Zechstein Sea that covered parts of the northeast and across the North Sea and Europe during the Permian period (250 to 300 million years ago). The sea frequently dried up leaving crusts of valuable minerals which were the main reason for the start of the chemical industry on Teesside. Potash and polyhalite from the Zechstein Sea are still mined today at Boulby and will in the near future be mined on a large scale at the Woodsmith Mine near Whitby.

Meeting 23 January

A question had been raised at the previous meeting about unconformities (gaps in the geological record) and at the start of this meeting, Trevor Morse gave a useful presentation about this phenomenon and the different types of unconformity. There is an unconformity between the Permian and Carboniferous just outside Darlington.

The main talk was given by Les Knight entitled 'Silver in the Pennine Orefield'. Les explained that he had known little about the topic until he had started his research which enabled him to give this fascinating talk about this metal which arises in small amounts with some lead ores. Initially Les went over the use of this metal through history and explained that now its major use is in electronics and medicine. In his research, he and his wife Sue had put together a spreadsheet of records about silver that had been collected on all mines in the country in the 19th century. From this information he was able to compare the amounts of silver extracted from various orefields. In most mines in the North Pennines, the amounts were not worth extracting but occasionally higher quantities were obtained which were of some value. The highest amounts of silver were found in south west England together the more familiar tin and lead. In the discussion after the talk, Roger Stanyon mentioned that as a geology student, he had had a placement in a fluorite mine in Rookhope and the associated lead ore had been rich in silver. It was the silver that had kept the mine in business!

The next Geology meeting will be on Zoom on Monday, 27 Feb at 10.30 am. All are welcome. Please contact Bob Tuddenham for details.

iPad AND iPhone GROUP - Report by Mike Sweeting

Members of the Group had submitted suggestions for topics for this session.

These included a question about QR Codes, see below:



These are used in restaurants, advertisements, on loyalty cards and information boards to name but a few uses. We talked about how they came to the fore again during the pandemic. They had previously fallen out of use due to security concerns.

We moved on to creating additional email addresses. These can be useful across the spectrum, at one end being used for secure transactions where you may want to limit those who know the email address you may use for your online bank; at the other, perhaps a new source of online information that does not have your complete trust.

Keeping emails tidy was next. Many people have perhaps hundreds of emails in their inbox. To make it easier to find and manage those emails, they can be sorted into topic specific mailboxes or folders. We practiced setting these up in the Mail app.

How do we overcome the size restrictions on emails? Not as easy as it used to be as many of the files we send today are already compressed as far as they will go. Compressing or zipping them can still be useful if someone wants to send perhaps tens or hundreds of files and make it easier for the recipient to manage them when they arrive in one bundle.

Finally, following on from the session on Apple Translate in November, we looked at Google Translate. It is perhaps simpler to use than the Apple equivalent and certainly has a much greater range of languages available. The app will translate from text typed or copied, handwriting onscreen, an image of text from the camera in the phone, or voice. It is possible to carry on a voice or text conversation. All languages can be quickly downloaded so that they are available where there is no signal.

Our next meeting will be at 2:10pm on 24 February 2023.

HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT - Report by Tim Meacham

History of the Theatre - Marilyn Anderson

After our annual December 'bring an object or memory' session, which as always produced a most varied and interesting selection, January saw Marilyn Anderson talk to us on 'The History of the Theatre'.

Marilyn began in the ancient world and introduced us to her topic with a modern photograph of the celebrated Roman theatre at St Albans (Verulamium). She went on to describe this structure aided by a most helpful reconstruction drawing. This set the tone for all that followed: clear concise detail enhanced by a series of well-selected slides. After briefly backtracking to consider the Greek influence on the Roman theatre she then spoke about the wearing of masks to represent character in the classical theatre; again the point was well emphasised by showing us a particularly appropriate trio of surviving masks.

We then moved quickly through the dark ages, when it is believed that itinerant minstrels performed what little drama survived, before the evolving church entered the story, adding a very brief dramatic exchange (possibly lasting only a few seconds) known as 'Quem Quaeritis' ('whom do you seek?') to its Easter Mass in the 10th century. From this small beginning genuine religious drama grew. Marilyn showed us a cross-section of Southwell Minster where raised platforms representing 'Galilee' (and of course 'Heaven' and 'Hell') were introduced to provide entertainment (at first in Latin) for the congregation. Interest grew and by 1210 lack of space had driven such performances outside, while the clergy began to lose some of their control, so that the 'mystery plays' which came into fashion mixed religious themes with episodes from daily life. Comedy too crept in and we were introduced to 'the Squib' (a sort of early banger introduced with great peril, one imagines, into parts of the actors' bodies), as well as fire-breathing masks. As plots became more sophisticated, the mystery plays went out of fashion, initially being replaced by morality plays featuring fast plots with full storylines showing the triumph of good over evil, which guaranteed the approval of the church. This phase was abruptly terminated by the accession of Elizabeth I in the 16th century.

Yet the years of Elizabeth's reign saw the golden age of theatre and drama with the erection of the first permanent theatres since Roman days: these were confined to London. 1576 saw the opening of 'The Theatre' at Shoreditch where a troupe called 'The Chamberlain's Men' performed the plays of Marlowe and a young newcomer, William Shakespeare. By 1597 the first indoor theatre had followed at Blackfriars, lit by candles and with

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costumes supplied by the aristocracy. Actors were versatile, being required to sing, dance and play instruments as well as follow their scripts. The accession of James I saw the doubling of the numbers of performances at court (with plays such as 'Macbeth' pandering to the new king's love of mysterious themes) but the arrival of the Puritans in 1642 again brought such frivolity to a halt. From 1660 however, the Restoration under Charles II led to bigger theatres and revolutionary changes like the first use of female actors – Nell Gwyn with her royal connections becoming the most famous. By 1705 provincial theatres were appearing with plays that often acted as royalist propaganda, although these gave way in time to largely non-political comedies of manners.

As will be becoming apparent Marilyn drew an inextricable link between the development of the theatre and the politics of each era. In 1737 Walpole established government censorship; then came the use of prologues to curry favour with the audience, the emergence of star actors like David Garrick and Sarah Siddons and, by about 1800, the establishment of professional companies. Here we stopped allowing 20 minutes of animated discussion among the large audience who had been royally entertained by a first-rate presentation. Many thanks again Marilyn (and assistant Wallace for the fine accompanying slides!).

LUNCH CLUB - Report by Christine Watkinson

The January 2023 U3A Lunch group meeting, was at The Three Horseshoes, Galgate, Barnard Castle on Wednesday 18th, kindly organised by Jane Mathieson

Ten members had a very warm welcome in the restaurant which was very busy, always a good sign! We appreciated that the staff were still friendly and very attentive due to the number of tables that had other diners.

The menu was extensive with plenty of variety for all tastes, however, 6 of the members decided the "Twice Cooked Brisket" with tasty chive mash, celeriac purée and tenderstem broccoli with Rich Pan Jus was too good to miss.

Two members had the "Beef Burger with Monterey Jack Cheese, salad and French fries and the last two members had "Pan Fried Chicken with Blue Cheese sauce" new potatoes & seasonal vegetables.

Judging by the comments on how delicious the food was, the majority of plates were left clean. We all appreciated it was good it was to have hot plates and beautifully presented food, even to the crispy fried onions on the top of the brisket, which melted in the mouth!

You would have thought as the portions were generous we would not have room for a pudding... perhaps it was the cold weather but 7 of us still managed to be tempted! Some were shared and the kitchen provided a spoon & plate each (very thoughtful) and some enjoyed their dessert to themselves .A very light "Sticky Toffee Pudding with Vanilla Ice cream. Apple Crumble Tart with custard, very boozy cherries & chocolate brownie and chocolate & orange bread & butter pudding!

We all said that we were very lucky in having such a venue nearby that produced such good quality food, served by excellent staff. We would definitely recommend The Three Horseshoes to friends & families.

NEEDLECRAFT - Report by Glen How

Our meeting this month was 'up the dale' and we were blessed with a beautiful sunny afternoon for the occasion. Some worked harder than others but projects on the go included canvaswork, upcycling and knitting, including trying out new techniques. Our conversations were very varied, not only about crafting but we also managed to put the world to rights! All in all a very good afternoon.

Our next working meeting will be on Monday 6th March.
Please get in touch with me if you would like to join us.

PAINTING GROUP - Report by Val Hobbs

On the bitterly cold day of Friday 13th,, our group, padded up like polar bears, braved the 'arctic plume' to meet at Startforth Community Centre. Anne had decided that we should revisit brush strokes and texture techniques, to reinforce the importance of the two.

She suggested we work 'quite small' and that we fold a large piece of paper in two, so we had two pieces to work on, side by side. We watched as she demonstrated applying ultramarine blue to a wet on wet sky, lifting the 'clouds' out with a tissue, on both pieces, and blending in purples and yellow ochre to create lighter and darker areas. She then applied a wash of lemon yellow to the base of one picture, worked in darker colours and then applied a piece of wrinkled cling film. Using the hair dryer, she dried the paint and peeled it off to reveal a texture, almost like crazy paving. Adding some darker features... rocks and bushes... saw Anne produce a perfect beach scape. With similar techniques, she demonstrated how to produce a country scape on the other.

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Experimenting with these techniques, we each produced two pieces, only after wrapping our frozen hands round a cup of hot coffee, and some of us, including me, used the biscuit crumbs which had dropped onto the wet paint, as added texture (all is fair in art and poetry)!

If you want to join our happy, little group, just bring a cup and your paint kit along to Startforth Community Centre, for our next meeting on 10th February, 10 am prompt!

Contact Val Hobbs on **07900497503**'



Some artwork of the Painting Group



PHILOSOPHY – Report by Mike Glisenan

“What is this scientific method? Is it really as reliable as we are commonly led to believe? How does science progress? These are the sorts of questions which philosophers of science ask.” (Nigel Warburton’s “Philosophy: the basics”, Chapter 6).

Our Philosophy Group has been following Chapter 6 of Nigel Warburton’s “Philosophy: the basics” reading and discussing the development of the scientific method from a historical perspective. Our Group’s ‘fun run’ through thousands of years of human scientific endeavour has been fascinating and challenging – so challenging that we need a second session to focus on the 20th century significant developments!

Our journey began by looking at Antiquity/Classical pursuit of knowledge and the development of human logic by the Greek Philosophers. The early Islamic ages were a golden age for knowledge, and the history of the scientific method must pay a great deal of respect to some of the brilliant Muslim philosophers of Baghdad and Al-Andalus. They preserved the knowledge of the Ancient Greeks, but they also added to it, and were the catalyst for the formation of a scientific method recognisable to modern scientists and philosophers.

Outstanding scholars from the Middle Ages and Renaissance were another turning point for the scientific method. European scholars further built on the knowledge of the Greeks and the Muslims. We covered some significant contributors: Roger Bacon (1214 - 1294); Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626; Descartes (1596 – 1650); Galileo (1564 – 1642). The Scientific Revolution reached its zenith with Isaac Newton, who made perhaps the greatest contribution, as he was the first to really understand that the scientific method needed both deduction and induction.

As science began to split into chemistry, physics, biology and the proto-scientific psychology, the history of the scientific method became much more complex. Physicists could remain true to the Baconian inductive methods, but psychologists began to find this increasingly difficult when dealing with the extreme variability of the human mind and man-made constructs.

Karl Popper (1902-1994) questioned induction as basis for scientific method; his main point being that science was not infallible, and that well-established scientific disciplines often followed the wrong path and generated incorrect theories.

So, working though from the Greeks, the Muslims and the Renaissance, where does the modern scientific method stand?

To be continued... at the Philosophy Group (next meeting) 10am -12pm Tuesday 28th Feb 2023 at Enterprise House, Harmire Enterprise Park, Barnard Castle DL12 8XT

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Reports by Alan Kenwright & Ian Royston

Post Processing: Eleven members of the photography group met on 20 January at Enterprise House for a meeting to consider how best to make use of the possibilities for “post-processing” (jargon for adjusting and improving images after the photograph has been taken).

There was a presentation outlining the relationship between “raw” and “jpeg” files, and the pros and cons of each, and another outlining the kinds of adjustments that can be made using processing software. Finally, there was a hands-on session and general discussion where people could see some of the concepts that had been presented in action. The session was well received and most of those attending said they found it useful.



Before

After

Visit to Durham: Eight members of the Photographic Group, including two new recruits met in Durham Market Square on a cool but bright February 7th morning with the intent of exploring the city of Durham, its World-Heritage architecture, its bridges, riverside, wynds and people. After the customary coffee and cake we set of in different directions, some in small groups, some alone to see what we could find.

The weather was kind to us, at least so far as lunchtime so all got a chance to try a variety of views and new interpretations of some well-known scenes. Some trying out new kit, or seeking that elusive mastershot. Two hours on we rendezvoused back at Vennels Café (recommended) for lunch and to discuss our pictures, including what might make it into this month’s Forum.

We plan a further review of our work later in the year



Photographic Group visit to Durham - Photo: Ian Royston

POETRY GROUP - Report by Annie Clouston

New Beginnings

A very broad theme to lift our spirits at this time of year.

We had some cracking contributions. *Fern Hill* by Dylan Thomas is an uplifting evocation of his “green and carefree” childhood that seems so alien to the experience of so many of today’s children. Robert Frost’s poem *The Road Not Taken* seems to urge an approach to life that is curious and riskier – although recognising that choice also can mean regret.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

William Topaz McGonagall is my go-to poet for a good laugh, and improbable as it seems, there was never any sign that he viewed his poems as self-parody. His *A New Year’s Resolution to leave Dundee* is riddled with his self-pity as a misunderstood genius who is driven from his home town by derision.

Because the citizens and me cannot agree.
The reason why? -- because they disrespect me,
Which makes me feel rather discontent.
Therefore to leave them I am bent;
And I will make my arrangements without delay,
And leave Dundee some early day.

I suppose I ought to feel sorry for him!

We had two poems by George Mackay Brown (1921-1996), a prolific Orcadian poet. *The Finished House* tells of a crofting community tradition of bringing the flame to the hearth, and *Summer and Winter*, a poem written for the National Schizophrenic Newsletter, reminds us that though in Winter ‘each one has thought then/ The bleakness and cold never-ending’:

Listen to the summer music!
The sea is blue again, the grass is green.

Two members chose *Trees* by Philip Larkin, and the American Poet Billy Collins, made a second appearance in the group with *Today*

“if ever there was a spring day so perfect,
so uplifted by a warm intermittent breeze”.

Man and Tree by R S Thomas is a reminder not to write off the old:

Dumb now and sapless? Yet this man can teach.
Even as an oak tree when its leaves are shed,
More in silence than in youthful song.

We rounded off with the wonderful John Clare's **First Love**. Can we recall that moment when struck "With love so sudden and so sweet"? It was so good!

TABLE TENNIS GROUP - Report by Celia Chapple

We have a steady and motley crew at our table tennis sessions on Friday afternoons. Since we returned post-lockdowns, the ranks have swelled to an extent that group membership is well into double figures. When I think back to the standard of our play before 2019, it is obvious that we have all improved, and gratifying that our newer members quickly master the game. Their shots spin and zing across the table as you scamper after the ball with that awful sinking feeling that you have lost the point.



Peter, our Convenor, discovered that the Teesdale Leisure Centre has the equipment for 'short tennis.' What does that phrase capture for you? For me, I envisage short-handled tennis rackets and short trousers or cropped leggings. What's short is the court, the racket head and handle, and shorter sets (4 games instead of 6 to win) with a simpler scoring system and lower nets. It is reportedly played 'on half the court for twice the fun.' The yellow foam/felt balls are in fact larger than ordinary tennis balls and travel 75% slower with a lower bounce. There is rumour that short- or mini- tennis was developed for children with a simple single point awarded instead of the traditional 15-30-40 of the 'long game.' I think we can manage that!

Some group members tried it quite successfully with play that resembled a tennis game, and we agreed to try it as an additional activity for another week or so.

If you would like to join our group to learn the table tennis game, improve your skills or just have fun, please contact Peter Singer (pandjsinger@btinternet.com 07508 663998). All are welcome, whether you play regularly, not played for some time or have never played before.

UNDERSTANDING CLASSICAL MUSIC - Report by Bill Heyes

Our first meeting of 2023 was devoted to an introduction to classical music. Using two videos by Prof Wright, specifically aimed at people with little or no understanding of classical music, members of the group were introduced to some of the basic concepts of music – melody, rhythm, mood (happy or sad), pitch etc. These ideas were illustrated with examples from the classical music repertoire. In the second video, Prof Wright went on to explain motives and themes, the different genres of classical music and demonstrated some of the instruments that are part of a classical symphony orchestra.

At our next meeting we will continue with the same set of videos which will expand on the basic concepts covered in the first two videos.

New members are welcome to join with us at any time. Our next meeting will be 24 February 10.00am at Startforth school.

WINE GROUP - Report by Tim Meacham



A brief report this month as we enjoyed our 'Christmas' meeting in January where members 'brought a bottle' resulting in an interesting session rather than one from which to pick themes. I'll just set out details for the next three months here, although as I reported a while ago membership is currently at its maximum level, so anyone wishing to join us will need to join the waiting list. If a serious number come forward we will revisit this, but at present the need to use members' houses does prevent us from going above the 12 current members.

Finally, it was pleasing to see that the **Woodchester Valley Vineyard** which we visited in 2021, last year produced the first UK Sauvignon Blanc wine to win the 'best in the world ' award despite the usual competition from New Zealand who have always regarded the title as their own!

Due to a potential clash with a Convenors meeting, the March meeting will take place on:

Tuesday 14 March* in **Barnard Castle** (thanks Sue)
Members please let me know if this proves problematical.

While the April meeting will be on:

Tuesday 18 April also in **Barnard Castle** (thanks Hazel)

Topics for March & April's meetings will follow.

Please contact Tim Meacham for further details at
simontimothymeacham@gmail.com



Photographic Group visit to Durham - Photo: Pete Redgrave

WALKING GROUPS



SHORTER WALKS GROUP - Report by Sue Overton

Nineteen group members turned out for our first walk of the New Year on 23 January 2023 – we think that must be a record!

The weather was reasonably warm after days of hard frost so walking was pleasant enough despite the mostly grey skies.

We set off from the Post Office along Flatts Road and Raby Avenue to enter Flatts wood on the Cleveland Walk path. Only a few icy patches and mud in parts but no casualties so we turned left at the wooden sign post and headed for the river with Percy Beck on our right.

Our budding David Bailey (Ian) lined us up near the weir for a photoshoot before we skirted the castle emerging on the main road at the traffic lights on County Bridge. Crossing the road we continued to the bottom of the Bank and along Gray Lane to the Demesnes.

Following the track and cobbled path past the cottages and mill into fields with the river on our right, we saw lots of ducks (Mallard) and the resident cormorant patiently waiting for his next meal delivery.

Everyone managed to traverse the low wire fence and small stream as we headed for the sewage works – those of us with any loss of smell had the advantage at this point!

After the traditional mint break, we turned homewards via a diagonal uphill path through the fields with the rugby pitches and allotments on our left. At the top of the Demesnes, a few of the group left to head for town whilst the rest of us continued to Broadgates and the Bank.

The circular walk was 3 miles and took approximately 80 minutes.



**Shorter Walks Group alongside the River Tees at Barnard Castle
23rd January 2023** Photo: Ian Royston

7 to 9 MILE WALKS GROUP - Report by Phil Clarke

The first walk of the year on 18th January was a 7 to 8 miles circular, local walk from Barningham. A great turn out of fifteen keen walkers met at the side of the moor just outside the village. The afore-mentioned village was in the weekend Times as one of the poshest top 20 or so villages in the country. The paper said lovely touristy things about Barningham, apart from being geographically inaccurate stating it was near Darlington, totally missing the point as it should be Barnard Castle.

My last U3A walk was postponed for wind and heavy rain, I then did the walk a week later in fog. This walk was a worry with snow and surprisingly, ice. The joys of planning and leading walks in winter ... BUT it turned out to be a GREAT walk. Cold but sunny.

We left Barningham and walked onto the moor past a couple of aqueducts and an old tatty railway carriage to the lower slopes. The views were incredible. Can we see our houses down below in Barney. the Pennines. Upper Teesdale. Teesside, North York Moors?. Yes. We reached the top at How Tallon at c.1450 feet and then it was downhill following animal tracks in the snow to Black Hill Gate for a sunny, sheltered warmish lunch.



View back to lunch spot by Chris Gillings

After lunch, through the edge of the Stang we followed the track and then a minor road past Haythwaithe back to our cars. This was probably the hardest part keeping alert for the large patches of ice. A great turn out for a most enjoyable walk.

The walk on 15 March led by Lynda will be a 7 mile walk from Bedburn through Hamsterley forest. Please let Nicky Grace know if you wish to come along. nickygrace729@gmail.com

FELLWALKING JANUARY 2023- Report by Annie Clouston

Fabulous walk this month, an eleven-miler – thanks to Richard Acland for leading. Astonishingly, fourteen of us set out on a severely unpromising morning where the cloud layer was embracing the heather tops and the damp seeped through copious layers of protective clothing. From Folly Top, looking like committed striders from the Ministry of Silly Walks, we hiked a mile across hip-dislocating heathery fell across Langleydale Common where, before too long, the sun won its fight with the fog and the most marvellous landscape was quite suddenly in front of us. So good for the spirits.

We descended into the Gaunless valley and across the river to the Copley Chimney, once the property of the Gaunless Valley Lead Mill, at the foot of which in the Gibbsneese Plantation we had lunch. We returned to our starting point via a route that Richard had, with some economy of the truth, warned us was “a bit boggy”. The timing of wet feet at least at the end of a walk is as good as it gets at this time of the year. Thanks to Pete and Liz Harding for post-wet-feet refreshment.



Eleven walkers (two camera shy, one camerawoman)

THE WHITE QUIZ - by Phil Clarke

All questions to do with the colour white

1. *White Room* was a song by which super group?
2. What are the ingredients of a White Russian?
3. The White Sea is where?
4. You're the first, the last, my everything was a song by?
5. The American author of *White Fang*?
6. Most of the 1908 Olympics were held here?
7. The White House is located on which Washington Street?
8. The White Sox are a baseball team in which city?
9. *Whiter Shade of Pale* was a hit for which Sixties band?
10. Which country is known as the land of the long white cloud?
11. Which European country's flag is known as the blue and white?
12. What type of whale is also known as the white whale?
13. Walter White is a fictional character from which American TV series?
14. Who wrote the 19th Century fairy tale *Snow White*?
15. Jack and Meg White were members of which Detroit band?
16. Mr. White was a character played by Harvey Keitel in which film?
17. Who was he? Alf Wight?
18. *I'm dreaming of a White Christmas* was sung by Bing Crosby in which 1942 film?
19. Name the second largest mammal found in Africa.
20. Which insects are often called "white ants"?
21. Priscilla Maria Veronica White was better known as?
22. I am diamond shaped and extend 22.5 miles east to west and 13.5 miles north to south. What am I?
23. And extra questions to go with question 22
 - i. Name a town beginning with R
 - ii. Name a town beginning with V
 - iii. Name a town beginning with Y
 - iv. Name a town beginning with S
 - v. Queen Victoria's favourite place.

Answers will be in next month's Forum

ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER'S QUIZ

Apologies if you got frazzled with November's quiz that implied that every letter in the alphabet had an African country that began with that letter.

F, H, I (though if you de-frenched Côte d'Ivoire it would be there) J, O, P, Q, V, W, X and Y are all missing, as can be seen from the table below:

Country	Capital	Country	Capital
Algeria	Algiers	Lesotho	Maseru
Angola	Luanda	Liberia	Monrovia
Benin	Porto Novo	Libya	Tripoli
Botswana	Gaborone	Madagascar	Antananarivo
Burkina Faso	Ouaagadougou	Mauritania	Nouakchott
Burundi	Gitega	Mauritius	Port Louis
Cabo Verde	Praia	Morocco	Rabat
Cameroon	Yaounde	Mozambique	Maputo
Central African Republic	Bangui	Namibia	Windhoek
Chad	N'Djamena	Niger	Niamey
Comores	Moroni	Nigeria	Abuja
Congo	Brazzaville	Rwanda	Kigali
Cote d'Ivoire	Yamoussoukro	Sao Tome & Principe	Sao Tome
Democratic Republic of Congo	Kinshasa	Senegal	Dakar
Djibouti	Djibouti (City)	Seychelles	Victoria
Egypt	Cairo	Sierra Leone	Freetown
Equatorial Guinea	Malabo/Oyala	Somalia	Mogadishu
Eritrea	Asmara	South Africa	Pretoria /Cape Town /Bloemfontein
Eswatini (Swaziland)	Mbabane/Lobamba	South Sudan	Juba
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	Sudan	Khartoum
Gabon	Libreville	Tanzania	Dodoma
Gambia	Banjul	Togo	Lome
Ghana	Accra	Tunisia	Tunis
Guinea	Conakry	Uganda	Kampala
Guinea-Bissau	Bissau	Zambia	Lusaka
Kenya	Nairobi	Zimbabwe	Harare

ANOTHER MONTH IN AMBRIDGE - Report by Annie Clouston

Somewhat to my amazement, no other Archers cognoscente has come out this month, so here I am again, bringing all you closet fans either up to date or up in arms.

January has been dominated by the sudden death of Jennifer Aldridge, wife of Brian, mother of four, stepmother of one (Brian's lovechild, Rory, orphaned by his mother's death) and as with any of Archers' characters is officially a Saint now she has shuffled off this mortal coil. Her translation to glory has enabled a terrific indulgence in over- (sometimes called ham-acting) that has almost brought me out in hives. Chief contender for the title of Biggest Ham is Lilian, her sister, though there has been sterling competition from Brian, caught trespassing in the garden of the farmstead he lost because he polluted the Am and after years was finally found out and fined into near bankruptcy, and mithering on about how Jenny had loved that house and how she was everything to him. Next comes Rory, whom Jennifer irritatingly always referred to as Roo-or-ray, who has been gigolo-ing his way through university and could barely spare the time to come back to Ambridge to tell the family what a bunch of hypocrites and ingrates they are, thus proving that a crisis rarely improves family functioning. I await the funeral with trepidation.

In other family news – well there isn't much – but hints of future plot lines to come : the absolutely adorable "ooh those eyes" infant twins of Tom and Natasha Archer have been headhunted by a children's modelling agency. Call me cynical (because I am) but this smacks of either a scam – register your children for a paltry sum of £2000 and see the work come piling in – or child exploitation (illegal images on the dark web).

The highly dozy but budding Siegfried Sassoon of Ambridge, Chelsea, has been transformed from a useless and truculent adolescent to a considerate and contributing member of family and society by a change of scriptwriter. She has even been quite supportive of a brother to whom, just months ago, she was directing expletives and insults like a fishwife, when he was suffering a dose of unrequited love.

So you can see that if you haven't been listening in, you've been missing Ham, Gush and Reform. How can you resist?

Happy listening, Annie

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Photography Group visit to Durham - Photo: Jim Coleman

Group	Meeting Time	Contact details
Art Appreciation	1 st Wed pm	Roger Stanyon 01833 631758
Birdwatching	3 rd Monday am	Andrew Lapworth 07962 038052
Board Games	2 nd Monday pm	Hazel McCallum 01833 316484
Book Group 2	2 nd Mon pm	Maggie Cleminson 01833 640801
Book Group 3 Room to Read	3 rd Wed pm	Annie Clouston 01833 637091
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	Julie Archer 07774 903377 01833 637576
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
Photography	1 st Tues	Jane Mathieson 01388 710741
Poetry	2 nd Wed am	Annie Clouston 01833 637091

Group	Meeting Time	Contact details
Science and Technology	2 nd Mon am	Roy Tranter 01833 638288
Scrabble	1 st Mon pm	Lilian Smith 01833 650628
Spanish Conversation	3 rd Thurs 10am	Sue Overton 07512 368884
Table Tennis	Every Friday 3pm	Peter Singer 07508 663998
Theatre	Varies	Elizabeth Formstone 07979 204212
Travel/Day trips		Jane Mathieson 01388 710741
Understanding Classical Music	4 th Friday 10am	Bill Heyes 01833 640885
Wildflower Group	2nd Wed 2pm	Kate Keen 07880 741151
Wine Group	3rd Tues pm	Tim Meacham 07847 182554
Walking Groups		
Shorter walks 3-4 miles	4 th Monday pm	Sue Overton 07512 368884
Walking 4-6 miles	2 nd Tues 10am	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

Most meetings are held in or near Barnard Castle though the walks may start further afield.

For further details of any group; to confirm the start time and venue or if the meeting is going ahead please contact the Convenors/Group Leaders shown in the table.

Coming up at your
Community Arts Centre

Thurs 23 Feb 7.00pm	SCREENING – National Theatre Live: Othello (15) An extraordinary new production of Shakespeare’s most enduring tragedy.
Sat 25 Feb 7.30pm	MUSIC – A Celebration of Simon and Garfunkel Recognised as the UK’s No 1 non-tribute show! As heard on BBC Radio.
Sun 26 Feb 2.00pm	FUNDRAISER – Barnard Castle Band: Live in Concert
Wed 1 Mar 7.30pm	THEATRE – The Island (15+) Elysium Theatre Company
Thurs 2 Mar 7.00pm	FILM – The Tubular Bells 50th Anniversary Tour Recorded live in 2022 at Royal Festival Hall, London
Sat 4 Mar 7.30pm	COMEDY – Tom Houghton: Absolute Shambles (14+)
Thurs 9 Mar 7.30pm	MUSIC – Rob Heron & The Tea Pad Orchestra
Thurs 16 Mar 8.00pm	FOLK – Heidi Talbot: Sing It For A Lifetime Tour
Sat 18 Mar 7.30pm	FOLK – The Wilson Family
Tues 21 Mar 7.30pm	THEATRE – Mrs Churchill: My Life with Winston
Wed 22 Mar 7.15pm	LIVE SCREENING – The Royal Opera House: Turandot
Thurs 23 Mar 7.00pm	FILM – The Lost King (12A)