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FORUM

SEPTEMBER 2023

No. 23/09



u3a

CHAIR'S LETTER from Ian Reid

Are you getting enough from your u3a? At the last monthly meeting, there were about 120 members present which represents a third of the total membership, taking it almost back to pre-covid levels. As many members attend the monthly speaker meeting, the topic is particularly important. If there are issues which you would like to hear about, or if you wish to recommend a speaker, then have a word with one of the speaker finders, Sue, Stella, Pauline, Elizabeth and me.

We have now started another monthly get together, the In-Betweeners, which meets in The Witham between the speaker meetings. This provides an opportunity to hear a speaker on a specific topic, e.g. Helen Dexter, a local solicitor, spoke recently on wills and powers of attorney. I understand that several members found this very helpful. Please contact me or a member of the committee if there is a topic you would like to hear about and we will try to get this arranged. In the absence of a speaker at the In-Betweeners, please come along anyway for a coffee and informal chat with other members.

If you need information about our groups, we will try to have several Group Convenors available at each monthly speaker meeting, displaying a badge.

Well, congratulations if you are still reading this. I am aware that not all members read the Chair's letter as there are much more exciting contributions later in the Forum.



Don't forget!

The Inbetweeners get-together

**An opportunity to meet other members of the u3a
informally for a chat, a cuppa and good company**

**Thursday 12 October at 14.30
Ground Floor Gallery, The Witham**

Cover: The Buttermarket, Barnard Castle - photo by Ian Royston

It's Your Forum

Editors: Annie Clouston, Celia Chapple, Ian Royston and Kate Bailey

This month's editor is Ian Royston: Edition No: 23/09

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All editors receive all contributions and share the email account.

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! Please limit submissions to 1 page or 400 words, and 1 photo, and send them to the Forum Editor at:

forumeditor@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

DEADLINE for the next edition: Tuesday 10 October 2023 and next month's editor is Annie. 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.

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TEESDALE u3a Officers

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AUGUST'S MONTHLY MEETING AT THE WITHAM

From Prison to Palace - Report by Ian Reid

From Prison to Palace was the title of Veronica Bird's presentation to Teesdale u3a. Veronica was brought up in a very poor family of nine children, and after an abusive childhood, decided to make a career in the Prison Service. She started work in Holloway and then worked her way up to become Governor of Armley Prison in Leeds. During this time she had responsibility for some of the most notorious criminals in the country. She was awarded an OBE for outstanding prison service. Veronica described how the Queen cleverly moved people along during the award ceremony, as she only had about 20 seconds with each person. Asking questions of the Queen was not encouraged although apparently Tommy Cooper asked her if she liked football. When she replied 'no' he said 'so can I have your cup final tickets?'

With the help of a 'volunteer' from the audience Veronica described the admission procedure, where a prisoner is stripped, inspected for lice, etc., showered and then dressed in prison clothes. It is reported that the blue/white shirts sell for top prices in the local markets. Veronica met many other important people in her work and with the help of 2 more volunteers, she described her meeting with Prince Andrew and Princess Anne. Princess Anne is a strong supporter of the Butler Trust, which celebrates and promotes the best in UK prisons, probation and youth justice. Veronica was invited to visit Russian prisons, where she said prisoners work very hard making uniforms and where the officers carry a gun.

Veronica then regaled us with several stories describing pranks which prisoners had got up to: prisoners boxing up Christmas cards where rude words had been added to the back page of the card; spring bulbs were planted by prisoners which came up spelling out similar rude words.

She listed some telling UK statistics: 57% of inmates can hardly read; there are 200,000 children with a parent in prison. She was sympathetic to the role of judges, prison governors and parole boards who had a difficult job to do. This was a stimulating talk delivered with humour and compassion. Veronica gives the proceeds of her talks to charities.



MEETINGS 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.

NEXT MEETINGS AT THE WITHAM

The next meeting is on **Thursday 26 October** when Gary Bankhead will be offering us '*Dive into Durham*'.

"Dive into Durham" is a project that aims to research and catalogue the River Wear collection. The project has two main components: the Durham River Wear Assemblage and the Dive Site. The Assemblage comprises over 13,000 objects that were recovered between 2008 and 2017. These objects are typically small metal objects that transcend the late- and post-medieval periods, challenging the way in which we understand Durham's past. The Dive Site is adjacent to the C12th Elvet Bridge in Durham. It is a significant site for underwater archaeology, and artefacts research is undertaken in the Archaeological Artefacts Centre at Durham University.

The following month on **Thursday 23 November** Martin Fish will be joining us to give a light hearted but informative talk on his role as an RHS Senior Judge. In "**Behind the Scenes as an RHS judge.**"

FUTURE DAY AND LONGER TRIPS

12 - 17 October - Hampshire

There are now 26 people booked on the Hampshire holiday. There are still places available but we are definitely going! Living 'up North' you may perhaps feel that October is a bit late in the year to travel, but Hampshire has a different climate! As it is organised through Kyle Travel it is not just for u3a members. Anyone can go, so we are looking for 'Uncle Tom Cobley and All' to join us!

The trip includes a day in Portsmouth with a visit to the Mary Rose, a day in Winchester and a trip through the New Forest to Beaulieu House, as well as time in Southampton. Chilworth Manor Hotel ★★ for 5 nights, dinner, bed and breakfast. Kyle Travel are taking bookings and the coach will leave from Galgate in Barnard Castle.

THEATRE BY THE LAKE

The Little Princess

Saturday 9th December 2023

I have reserved 30 seats for the 2pm matinee. The cost for each theatre seat will be £26.50 p/p and coach (Maude's) £12.00 p/p.

Please let me know by email if you would like places reserved dianamarks813@gmail.com or by calling **07762 626912** or **01833 630469**

I look forward to hearing from you, Diana Marks

THE SAGE, GATESHEAD

Classical Concert

Friday 16th February 2024 at 7.30 pm

Royal Northern Sinfonia Orchestra

Schumann. Symphony in G minor
Clara Wieck Schumann. Piano Concerto
Beethoven. Symphony No 3. Eroica

Dinis Sousa, conductor
Isata Kanneh-Mason, piano

26 seats in Level 2A 3rd row @ £38 70 p/p & coach @ £15 p/p
Cheques totalling £53.70 to Teesdale u3a

Meet Maude's coach at Addisons, Galgate at 5 45pm.

Please send cheque and contact details to:
Elizabeth Formstone, Bridge House, Piercebridge DL2 3SG

Reply to:

elizabeth.formstone6@gmail.com

Closing Date: October 30th 2023

WORKSHOP REPORTS

Features of the natural landscape of Upper Teesdale led by David Ewart. Report and photo by Annie Clouston

In more ways than one the day was about waterfalls. David Ewart had prepared excellent handouts to help us understand the geology, geography and history of Upper Teesdale. After an introduction to the landscape in the upstairs space, we headed from Bowlees Visitor Centre and through the car park en route to Summerhill Force on Bowlees Beck. To be found there is a disused quarry where limestone was mined from 1920 to provide stone for the iron and steel industry in Teesside and also for road chippings and cement. Prohibitive transport costs brought production to an end in 1946.

The valley of Bowlees Beck is picture-book pretty and is often visited by photographers and artists to capture its enclosed beauty. Summerhill Force is the highest of waterfalls on the beck. It has a considerable overhang formed by limestone in which the bedding planes and joints are well-marked, and below the softer sandstone and shale have been eroded to form Gibson's cave. Intrepid walkers can walk behind the curtain of water, get thoroughly soaked, and imagine the plight of the eponymous outlaw, William Gibson, who in the 17th century hid from the constabulary to evade arrest. The waterfall is receding back to the beck's source at a considerable rate as successive rock falls from the lip of the force causing the overhanging rock to tumble majestically downstream. David notes that this could happen at any time, bringing hundreds of tonnes of limestone crashing down.



Safely away from this danger we retraced our steps down the valley to Low Force as the sky tipped no end of water on our heads.

Around 295 million years ago, an igneous intrusion of hard rock forced its way between layers of softer limestone and solidified, then erosion by glaciers and ice sheets exposed the hard dolerite of Whin Sill into cliffs, crags, waterfalls and gorges which were formed in the Dale.

After crossing the Wynch Bridge at Low Force (one at a time, of course!) we took an immediate left along a footpath downstream, looking at the rocks of the dry stone walls, drumlins in the valley, and Holwick Scar. We recrossed the Tees at Scoberry footbridge and the photograph shows the group on the limestone pavement, immediately below the bridge on the north side, where the rock is dappled and dimpled with fossils in plain sight.

David's narrative was fascinating, thorough and hugely appreciated. The weather was, as it always is in Teesdale, predictably unpredictable, but mostly wet. The tea and refreshments at the Visitors Centre were very welcome and as usual the staff there were very accommodating.

This walk around the waterfalls would be a great way to encourage youngsters to really look at and appreciate the landscape. I think I will be subjecting my next lot of visitors to it, but cannot hope to do as good a job as David in stimulating their interest and admiration of the natural forces at work in the Dale.

FUTURE WORKSHOPS

Saturday 14 October - Play Reading Workshop

Leader:- Ronnie Lowery

2pm - 4pm at Guide HQ, Birch Road, Barnard Castle

Cost: £8 includes refreshments

Contact: Hilary Dunnighan - hilary.dunnighan@gmail.com

Saturday 11 November - Vegetarian Cookery Workshop

Leader:- Annie Clouston

11am - 2pm at Kirby House, Thorngate, Barnard Castle

Cost: £10 includes lunch with wine

Contact: Annie Clouston - annie@cloustons.uk

Saturday 2 December - Christmas Crafts Workshop - sharing skills and ideas
Leader:- Hazel Yeadon

10am - 12noon at Boldron Village Hall

Cost: £5 includes refreshments

Contact: Hazel Yeadon - hazelyeadon@hotmail.com

ART APPRECIATION GROUP—Report by Tony Seward

Our August meeting was devoted mainly to Piero della Francesca (1415/20 - 1492). But first we took a brief look at his contemporary, Andrea Mantegna, and his brilliant scheme of decoration for the Camera degli Sposi in the Palazzo Ducale at Mantua, full of daring *trompe l'oeil* effects and precise portrayal of members of the Gonzaga family and their court. He was known too as a master of foreshortening, so we also examined his image of the dead Christ viewed from the feet up.



It is impossible to cover the genius of Piero in one session,

so we concentrated on the powerful 'Resurrection' fresco in his home town of Sansepolcro, and 'The Baptism of Christ' in the National Gallery. The former was described by Aldous Huxley in a 1930s travel book as 'the greatest picture in the world', a phrase recalled by a young British artillery officer when ordered to bombard the Germans occupying Sansepolcro in 1944. He ordered the shelling to stop and so saved the painting, even though he had never seen a reproduction of it.

The 'Baptism' was briskly covered in a half-hour gallery talk by one of the National Gallery's curators, who emphasised how lucky the gallery is to possess this masterpiece *and* a 'Nativity' by Piero. Nearly all his greatest works are still held in or near their original sites in Tuscany and Le Marche: following the 'Piero trail' gives the traveller the dual satisfaction of discovering these and exploring beautiful countryside away from the main tourist hotspots.

At some future date, we will, I hope, make time to explore some of Piero's other masterpieces – his serene Madonnas (including the 'Madonna del Parto', the so-called 'pregnant Madonna'), the mysterious 'Flagellation' in Urbino, and his most ambitious work, the cycle of frescoes depicting 'The Legend of the True Cross' in Arezzo.

Next up – Wednesday 4 October.

‘Alone and Together: Whistler, Degas and Renoir’



**Arrangement in Grey and Black No.1
(Whistler's Mother)**



Degas: In a Café

AUTOMOTIVE GROUP - Report by Peter Colley

The automotive group had a busy and eventful summer.

We enjoyed two trips to Croft; one for the BTCC which included a dramatic race by the Legends. These are 5/8ths scale Ford, Chevy and Dodge cars powered by Yamaha motorcycle engines. The wheel to wheel action was intense and colourful.



The other event was the Classic Race weekend. Apart from exciting 'on track' action, this featured a quintessentially British day of traditional fairground rides, traction engines, beautiful cars and the opportunity to show off your own armoured car and drive around the circuit firing blanks. (We hope they were blanks!)



BIRDWATCHING GROUP – Report by Andrew Lapworth Visit to Hurworth Burn Reservoir 21 August 2023

On a warm, sunny and breezy day, 10 of us met at this attractive and open reservoir site near Wingate. The path initially follows the old Hurworth Burn railway branch line to Castle Eden Dene.

From the car park we enjoyed great views of several calling Common Buzzards, and walking along the disused railway track path, we tried to get our eyes on and identify numerous small birds



actively feeding in the hedgerows; most likely mainly Chiffchaffs and Willow Warblers. We eventually had a good view of a Whitethroat that perched briefly but giving us time to see it properly. Speckled Wood, Red Admiral and Peacock butterflies provide colour along the wayside flowers.

On the reservoir itself were several Great-crested Grebes, many Coots and flocks of Black-headed Gulls; a Great Black-backed Gull flew over. We had good but distant views of big flocks of Greylag and Canada geese on the banks. Large flocks of Lapwings were flighty.

Further on we found the solitary and rather exotic **Egyptian Goose** in a field, that Linda had seen on her recce the previous week. It's not a true goose and not only from Egypt, but is related to Shelducks! It is widely distributed across much of sub-Saharan Africa, with its natural breeding range extending to the Western Palearctic at Lake Nasser in Egypt. It's an introduced bird in Britain, and is quite striking in flight. It is a rare vagrant to Country Durham from naturalised populations in the UK and Europe.



Egyptian Goose - photo by Andrew Lapworth.

Thanks to Jim Coleman for the action shot of us in the car park.

BOARD GAMES GROUP—Report by Jane Kenwright

It was a very wet afternoon outside, but a record eight players enjoyed a fun session getting to grips with the game of Rummikub. Two groups of four settled in, once Andy had briefly run through the rules. It is an easy to learn, fast paced game, which is similar to Rummy but played with tiles rather than cards. The “board” changes all the time as players adjust the tiles on the table, so you certainly have to think fast, which was more of a challenge for some of us than others! It combines luck and strategy with players taking turns in placing numbered tiles in runs and groups. Each round ends when one player gets rid of all their tiles.



The other players must total the value of their remaining tiles.

The winner is the player with the lowest score at the end of the session of play. Our scores ranged from an astonishing 11 to 117, with Annie and Sue proving clear winners.

You don't need to know how to play any of the games as all of the games have been new to some each time.

Our next meeting is on Monday, 9th October.

ROOM TO READ BOOK GROUP - Report by Gaynor Hemming

If nobody speaks of remarkable things by Jon McGregor

Having previously read and discussed McGregor's *Reservoir 13* for book group, we were prepared for an unusual and challenging read.

The novel is set in an ordinary and impoverished street in a northern city and starts with an almost poetic observation of the city noises, their brief night time cessation and the start of a new day. It then develops into an exploration of the lives of the street dwellers. Here we have minute details of the domestic existences of a multi-racial community which also leaves us tantalisingly deprived of certain pieces of information about them. Many things, some of them deeply sad, are hinted at, but not made explicit. There are many loose ends.

Narrated in part by one of these characters, the story slowly comes to a climax in a tragic event involving a child. Even then, the aftermath of this event is shadowy and inexplicable with hints of a miraculous recovery at the expense of another character. There is also a sub-theme, again less than explicit, around parent/child relationships, and about twins (there are 3 sets of twins in the novel).

We all agreed that it was difficult to remember which characters lived at which house and that it needed sustained reading, rather than dipping into.

One group member, having read the book some time ago, found it intensely irritating this time round, and we all felt that some of the writing showed too much obvious literary device, but others loved the lyrical style, and the portrayal of the extraordinary within the ordinary, which is there if we choose to see it and have the time to do so.

As a recommendation for another book group we scored it 4 out of 5 and the same for a recommendation for friends.

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS GROUP - Report by Kate Bailey

Just a brief report from our September meeting. We were delighted to welcome two new members of Teesdale u3a to the group, both of whom proved to be interested in and knowledgeable about climate issues. We enjoyed a wide-ranging discussion about various subjects including wildflower gardening, biodiversity loss, energy generation, vehicle fuels, home heating and insulation.

Our topic next month will be *Regenerative Agriculture* and local food production. We will try to identify farmers in Teesdale who are adopting this conservation approach by, for example, limiting disturbance of the land by ploughing, etc. so the soils can absorb more carbon and help to reduce downstream flooding, replacing chemical fertilisers with compost and manure to protect the health of watercourses, and growing companion crops and cover crops to increase biodiversity. Fingers crossed, we will be able to arrange a farm visit at some point to see 'climate resilient agriculture' in practice.

No news for now of the suggestions we've put forward for the creation of Pollinator Parks in Teesdale. *Climate Action NE*, the community interest company helping us to progress the initiative in Teesdale, is unable to report back to us until October or November as they're in the middle of talks with *Rewilding Britain*. We hope this means that they will soon be able to offer more support for projects like ours.



**Tree planting at
Acorn Bank**

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD GROUP - Report by Sue Overton

Nineteen members met at Enterprise House for our second meeting.

Not everyone had completed their homework...tut, tut, but no detentions were given! We worked through the 'homework' anagrams and hidden clues plus some new hidden clues before progressing to homophone clues.

Homophone clues are indicated by a word(s) which give an impression of sounding like another word e.g. 'we hear', 'it's said'. The solution sounds like another word given by the word play.

Example: Rent going up, it's said (4) Answer: HIRE

After working our way through 10 such clue types and faced with another 11, caffeine was definitely required so we had a refreshment break.

Again, as last session, Tim brought copies of The Times quick cryptic crossword for us to complete – I'm not sure if the word 'quick' is the right word here – and we worked on this - at first in pairs or small groups—before completing it as a whole group.

Unfortunately, or fortunately for those now experiencing severe brain ache, there was no time to start looking at sandwich clues, so we saved them for next session.

Despite straining dendrites and neurons, we do have fun, so if you would like to join us, contact me on **07512 368884** or email: sueoverton@hotmail.com

Please note change of venue: future meetings will be in the Guide HQ, Birch Road, Barnard Castle DL12 8JR – park on street or Hole in the Wall car park.

DISCUSSION GROUP—Report by Glen Howard

There were a few members missing in August but we had very good discussions of a wide variety of topics including: satnavs v eyesight; the way places change; the delay to students being given their final grades this year; the future of retail; passengers on space flights; the recent local murder; 20mph speed limit on side roads; and policing.

We were obviously all very keen in September because everyone arrived early. As ever, our discussions covered a wide variety of topics including: pensions; electric vehicles; tracking used clothing; crumbling schools; ticket scams; A&E provision; 'get a job' if on benefits; and green waste as fertiliser.

Our next meeting will be on Friday 13th October, 10:15am at Andalucia's. Galgate. If you would like to join us, please get in touch with: Glen Howard **01833 631639**

GARDENING GROUP - Report by Julie Archer and Kate Keen

In September the gardening group visited Harewood House and Gardens on the outskirts of Leeds. As we arrived at Harewood House we were greeted by a representative who gave us an overview of the attraction and we were all given maps to make the most of the day. The representative had also arranged a shuttle bus to take those Members who preferred a lift to their initial destination.

Many of us started off at the Courtyard Café which had a well organised team with homemade treats available. In all, there were 3 places to eat including the Terrace Tearoom and the Bothy Teahouse.

At 11.00am some Members watched the feeding of the penguins which was very entertaining. Two of the penguins were moulting and apparently do not eat at this stage; one of the penguins was 30 years old. The penguins are moving off the site to a new home due to changes in animal welfare requirements.

When Edwin Lascelles started building Harewood House in 1759, he wanted nothing but the best for his new home. He employed the finest craftsmen of the time: York-born architect, John Carr, fashionable interior designer, Robert Adam, England's greatest furniture maker, Thomas Chippendale, and visionary landscape gardener, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Walking around the house, we were able to see Renaissance masterpieces, exquisite family portraits by Reynolds, Gainsborough, Lawrence and Richmond, as well as a fine collection of Sèvres china, among many other delights.

There were extensive paths down to the lake area. The walled garden at the far side of the lake was a delight with areas for growing vegetables, fruit herbs and flowers. Produce from the walled garden is used in the cafes including courgette muffins, soups and blackberry cake. The Himalayan Garden is a peaceful space with many fine trees, shrubs and flowers which would look different in each season. There is a fine terrace garden with an intricate parterre and a delightful herbaceous border which had an interesting display of dahlias and other late season plants. There is also a rather magnificent statue taking pride of place in the centre of the terrace.

On Friday 6th October, we will resume indoor meetings at the Stainton Village hall, starting at 2.00pm. Our speaker will be Ruth Starr-Kebble a botanist who will be talking about the project to restore wild flower meadows in Teesdale.

In November, we will have Tim Marshall, Head Gardener of the Raby Estate, to talk about the plans for their gardens.

In December we plan to arrange a visit to a house with a Christmas theme, details to be sent in due course.



Above: Himalayan Garden at Harewood

Photos by Julie Archer

Below: Chain Ferry at Harewood





Above: Herbaceous border at Harewood

Photo by Pete Redgrave

GENEALOGY GROUP Report by Alan Swindale

A dozen members of the group joined in a 'help your neighbour' session where members shared their skills with their neighbours round the table. In the course of this we discovered that one member was the second (?) cousin of her neighbour's husband! This is the second pair of cousins we have found within the group.

I wouldn't be surprised to find other cousin pairs within the group; many of us have at least some roots in Teesdale, Weardale, Allendale or Alston.

The next meeting of the Genealogy Group will be on Thursday 5th October at 2 p.m. at Enterprise House. Pam Taylor will give a talk entitled:

Ancestry in Concert

how Ancestry works and how to use it to build a tree but diverting to other sources when it is easier or faster to find the info needed.

This will be followed by another 'help your neighbour' session.

GEOGRAPHY GROUP - Report by Gerald Blake Field Trip to Mickleton and Romaldkirk with Professor Brian Roberts

This was an absorbing afternoon spent chiefly in Mickleton, a village which typifies the huge economic upheavals following the Norman Conquest after about 1070. Surviving Anglo-Scandinavian peasant farmers were concentrated into re-planned and re-organised villages to maximise production of stock and basic grains for bread, drink, and horses. New colonists were often brought in. Small communities (or townships) were grouped to form parishes. In Upper Teesdale, villages were designed to give each a share of arable, meadow and grazing, open land and woodland, with boundaries running from river to fell.

Mickleton was a large village comprising two rows of farmsteads, one high, one low, with a swath of open sloping green between. Here the "commonable" beasts were pastured and communal structures such as the smithy, wash house, and perhaps an ale house, were sited. Higher status farms probably occupied the lower row where former arable strips ("crofts") were attached to the house plots ("tofts"), while upslope were cottager's dwellings where day labourers eked out a precarious existence. The full-status farmers, mainly downslope, possessed arable strips and meadows of about 30 acres per farm. All rights, in the arable, in the hay meadows, in grazing the fallow, in taking fuel, and in the number of beasts allowed on the fells, were all rigorously controlled by the reeve or bailiff exercising power derived from the community and the more distant lord.

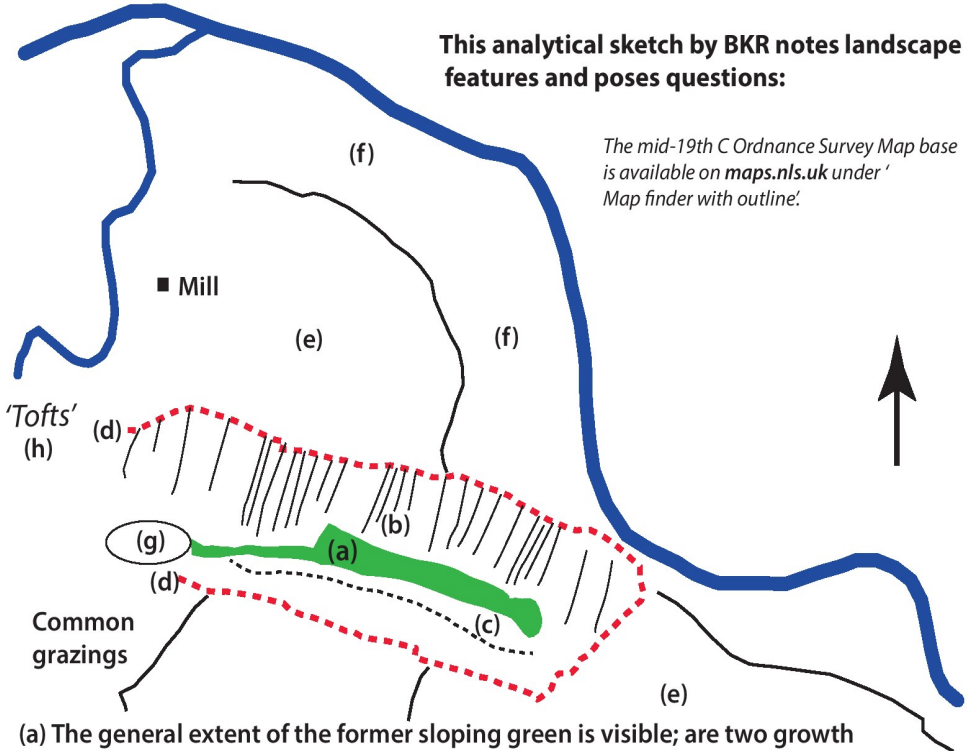
Over tea and scones in St Romald's church, Brian posed several perplexing questions about Romaldkirk. The original township was clearly carved out of Hunderthwaite, but why was a church placed there in Anglo-Saxon times? Why does Romaldkirk show so few traces of any regularity of plan? Why the dedication to such an odd saint? Its huge complexity may never be unravelled. At least we learnt something definite about the stone walls around the fields, and the two types of stone used: sharp-edged quarry stone common from the eighteenth century, and much older field stones, rounded glacial debris laboriously picked from the fields to make ploughing easier.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday 19 October in The Witham at 2.00 pm. Professor Alastair Bonnett, Newcastle University, on *The mapped and the unmapped*.

Mickleton in Teesdale ~ an Analytical Sketch

This analytical sketch by BKR notes landscape features and poses questions:

The mid-19th C Ordnance Survey Map base is available on maps.nls.uk under 'Map finder with outline'.



(a) The general extent of the former sloping green is visible; are two growth phases present? When, and why, did any expansion occur?

(b) Curving 200 m strips on the north side are probably to be linked to higher status tenant house plots (bondagers and then copyholders) - 'tofts' - and were enclosed from former open arable field strips - 'crofts'.

(c) On the green's south side, and delimited by a former back lane (now a footpath), are tofts that were once of 'cottage' status, occupied by lower status tenants.

(d) It is probable that this continuous outer line represents an 11th or 12th century (?) 'infield' boundary fence to protect the vital arable from deer, wild cattle, feral horses and even wild boar, together with straying domestic stock.

(e) Areas where the arable has been extended? (f) Meadowland and arable?

(g) There are signs of a small cluster here: is it later or earlier than the main village?

(h) The plural 'tofts' seen here may indicate the presence of former dwellings: these could have even been prehistoric or Romano-British.

Notable absences are a high status dwelling - a hall - and a church.

*del. BKR
Aug. 2023*

HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT - Report by Tim Meacham Visit to Altogether Archaeology at Gueswick Hills

We were very fortunate to visit the Altogether Archaeology Gueswick dig about halfway through their brief 2023 excavation period. Twenty-three Teesdale u3a members were shown round in two groups led by Tony Metcalfe and Rob Pearson. All of us were, I think, surprised and excited by the nature and scale of the current excavations. This huge artificial mound was largely unknown before Altogether Archaeology took an interest after viewing it from a separate venture across the valley in 2018. Quite why such a prominent hill had escaped previous serious study is difficult to understand but after successful negotiations with the Lambs of Doe Park, a small trial trench was excavated in 2019 before ... enter Covid. Resuming in 2021, and returning the following year, tantalising hints of a long-term substantial township began to appear. Magnetometry soundings suggested that a large area on top of the 'hill' had been surrounded by a trench and palisade, sample digging confirmed this, and a series of supportive experts looked at the finds of pottery, fish and animal bones etc. before coming up with some real surprises. At the bottom of a trench were remains datable to 1260 BC, while more generally this year's finds are pointing to genuine Romano-British contact here in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Perhaps best of all we were able to pass round a recently discovered fourth-century style Roman spearhead. Also this year, a paved floor has been revealed right where the previous years' digs suggested a settlement may have existed. This 'town' (jumping the gun rather but non-experts can be allowed flights of fancy) may well have been occupied right up until the 4th century departure of Roman troops from Britain, yet relatively little excavation has been possible so far, and so much remains guesswork, although the 18 or so volunteer diggers are increasing understanding daily. As Rob took us to a small sub-excavation and told us there were hopes that an old trench might be revealed there, one digger barely looked up as she told us they had indeed found this that very morning.

Rob will be addressing our October meeting with an end-of-season update. I and all who joined us for the morning at the dig will be very interested to hear what emerges in the second half of this season. With the continuing good will of Doe Park it looks almost certain that these excavations will continue in future years; dare we hope that before long a major Romano-British settlement will be confirmed within the boundaries of Cotherstone? In the meantime we offer our most grateful thanks to Tony and Rob for an inspiring visit, and eagerly await Rob's update in October. For details, check the Teesdale u3a website or contact Tim Meacham at simontimothyameacham@gmail.com

LUNCH GROUP Report by Jane Mathieson

We met at Runa Farm for our August venue. Sadly it was a mediocre meal with no one fully enjoying their choice. There were excessive amounts of bread with some choices and the chips I had looked and tasted like cardboard though the fish was nice, I sent my dessert back as it was inedible. I think there was a shortage of staff as there was a wedding on at the same time. The staff were pleasant and helpful.

Next lunches, all at 12:00 midday:

18th October, Coghlan's, Barningham

15th November, Foxhole, Piercebridge

6th December, Three Horseshoes, Barnard Castle

NEEDLECRAFT GROUP—Report by Glen Howard

This month we went on our summer 'outing'. We stayed close to home with a visit to The Bowes Museum, mainly to see the Vivienne Westwood exhibition. For those that don't know her name, she was a British rather avant garde couturier. We noticed that she put her emblem on the majority of her garments, not exactly discreetly, more as a decorative item rather than the modern trend of the manufacturer's name. Most of the garments on display were from the 1980's so we could recognise the style, but none of us had actually worn any of them.

We were fortunate in that one of our members is a museum guide so we benefitted from her knowledge of various exhibits within the museum. Particularly fascinating was a Japanese sedan chair. Do look out for it if you visit the museum.

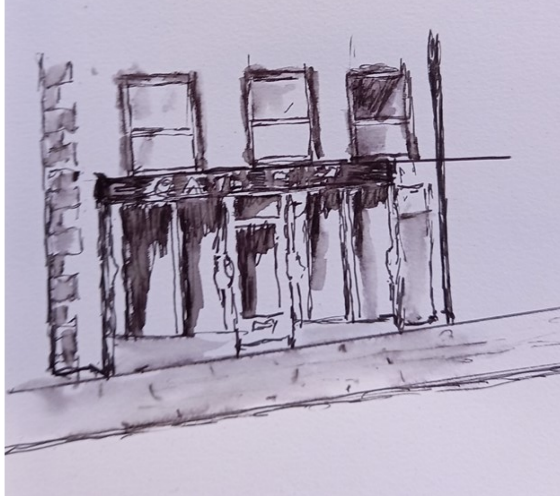
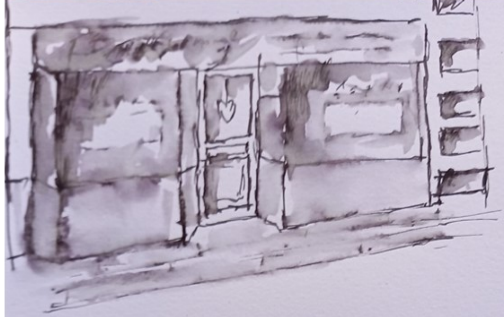
Our next meeting will be on Monday 2nd October. Do get in touch with me if you would like to join us. Glen Howard **01833 631639**

PAINTING GROUP

The group had decided in advance to paint outside despite the continual inclement weather. Hoping for a ray or two of sun on that Friday morning, we met at The Buttermarket Cross, hoping that if it did rain, we'd be sheltered! Ann had planned that we draw features from the surrounding architecture...or, indeed, the throngs, hurrying and scurrying like town mice.

However stoic against the cold and damp, the bitter wind whipping down the street drove a chill into our bones and our stay was foreshortened. With frozen fingers, we wended our ways home, no doubt for hot drinks.

Contact Val Hobbs on **07900 497503** for more information.



Painting Group sketches from The Buttermarket Cross

PHILOSOPHY GROUP — Beauty and the Brain Report by Pete Redgrave

At the August meeting of the Philosophy Special Interest Group (Tuesday 22nd) I gave another presentation on the Philosophy of Art. Rather than discuss the whys and wherefores of what is, and what is not, art – Roman philosopher Lucretius observed, “One man’s food is another man’s poison” – I chose instead to think about why we think some things are beautiful.

Certainly, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but it turns out that within the population of beholders, there’s surprising agreement. It seems several features – simplicity, repeating patterns, rhythm, symmetry, certain juxtapositions of colour, and certain ratios and geometries – visually, are generally pleasing. Why so? Because recent brain imaging studies have shown images that are judged to be subjectively attractive increase levels of activity in neural circuits associated with pleasure, reward, and reinforcement. That is, things that are personally considered beautiful tickle the parts of the brain that give rise to subjective pleasure, whether it’s Monet or Jackson Pollock doing the tickling. In the case of humans (and other creatures), an important aspect of beauty is symmetry, both in terms of morphology and movement.

Studies have shown that in terms of mate selection, symmetry is widely taken as an observable sign of good health, and desirable, since good health has profound evolutionary significance.

Thus, an acute appreciation of symmetrical beauty, over the millennia and through processes of natural selection, has been burned deep into our neural circuits. So that’s why I think Susan Sarandon is lovely!

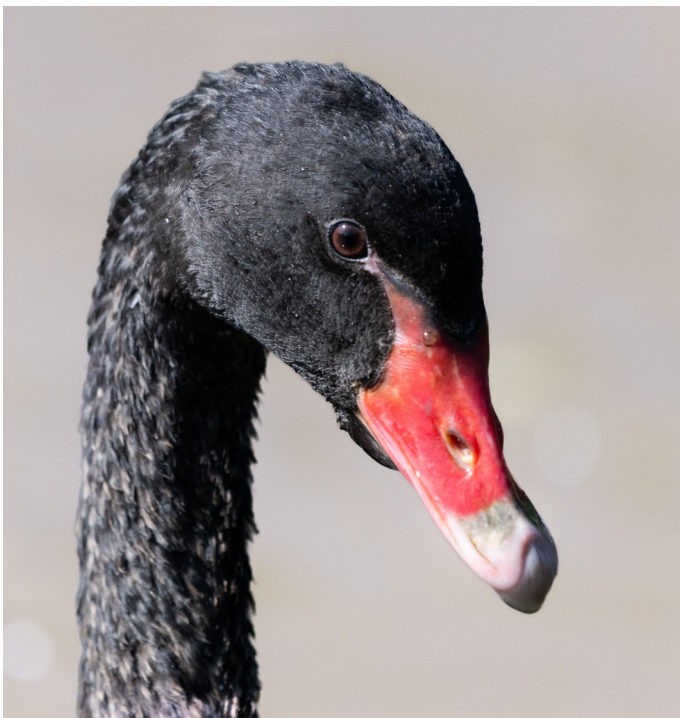


PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP Report and pictures by Pete Redgrave

Trip to Washington Wetlands

On a beautiful and unusually warm day, eight of the photography group visited the Washington Wetlands Centre close to the River Wear (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/washington/>). This is a wetland conservation area and is the seasonal home of numerous wildfowl, captive and wild, along with otters and amphibians. Although it was a good day for photography, September seems to have been a quiet season for visiting wildfowl. The Terns and Gulls that breed there in late spring early summer had all gone and the winter visitors had yet to arrive. That said there were still some interesting photo opportunities, and lessons to be learned.

For example, Ansel Adams, the famous photographer, once said “If your photographs aren’t very good it’s because you’re not close enough.” For many of the resident Wetland birds (those with the primary wing feathers trimmed on one side to prevent untimely escapes – think rowing a boat with one oar) getting close was not a problem. To get the picture of the Black Swan I had to move back from the edge of the pond as the lens I was using won’t focus on subjects closer than 6 feet, and the inquisitive swan decided to move closer. Many of the other birds and otters were also well within close-up range for most of our cameras.



Pete’s photo-tip of the month:

Another piece of advice given frequently to photographers is to emphasise your subject. One way of doing this is to have it/them stand out from the background. Most modern digital cameras have a cunning way of doing this. They have a setting that enables the photographer to switch the camera exposure (how long the shutter is open) from being determined by light from the whole scene, or just from where the camera is being focused, i.e. the subject.

The latter setting has the effect of making the subject stand out, especially when the subject is darker or lighter than the background. Thus, when the exposure was appropriate for the dark swan above, the lighter background was over-exposed and appears lighter than it actually was. Alternatively, if the subject is lighter than the background then correct exposure of the subject will mean the background is under-exposed and will appear darker than it was, as was the case for the Black-tailed Godwits.

In both cases the subjects are emphasised....which was the aim of this particular game.

Next Photography Group Trips

Tuesday 3rd October, Meeting at Tees Barrage & moving to Transporter Bridge, 11am

Tuesday 7th November, Night photography from the Sage, Gateshead, 6pm



POETRY GROUP— Report by Terry Whitfield

For our August meeting, nine of us gathered at Annie's welcoming house to look at poems about animals.

We started with John Clare's *The Frolicsome Old Dog* (a condition we all aspired to - 'Forgetting, in his joy's excess, his frolic puppy-days are done').

Ferlinghetti's *Dog* was another independent spirit as he passed through the streets of San Francisco ('He doesn't hate cops He merely has no use for them'). The third canine poem was the comic *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog* by Oliver Goldsmith which was more amusing than the title suggests as 'The dog, to gain some private ends, Went mad and bit the man'.

John Clare's *The Badger* was much darker and described the horrific baiting of a badger by dogs and men. The tough badger fights hard to survive and 'Though scarcely half as big, demure and small, he fights with dogs for hours and beats them all'. He is defeated in the end only by weight of numbers.

Cats were popular too, and represented by T S Eliot's *Macavity: The Mystery Cat* ('he's called the Hidden Paw') and 'For I Will Consider My Cat Jeffrey' an extract from a long eighteenth century poem by Christopher Smart called *Jubilate Agno*.

White tigers, lambs, fallow deer and oxen all figured in poems by RS Thomas, Philip Larkin and Thomas Hardy.

Birds were not forgotten. Ted Hughes' *Hawk Roosting* is implacable - 'There is no sophistry in my body: My manners are tearing off heads'. 'Toroa: Albatross' is described by the New Zealand poet, Hone Tuwhare - 'Day and night endlessly you have flown effortless of wing over chest-expanding oceans far from land'.

Finally, we were moved by *Owl* written by our own Mike Catling:

'I heard the owl call,
much like God does,
distant and unseen.
Tempted as I am
to leave the well-
trodden path in twilight,
I know he will remain
elusive, hidden, calling
always from one tree
further into the distance
as I seek to approach.
Looking down at me as
I cannot look up at him.'

SCRABBLE GROUP – Report by Ray Thompson

We met at Lillian's on the 11th September and there were six of us, Lillian, Phil and Judith, Paula and Ray and Jeanette. We split into two groups of three for the 1st two games. Judith won her 1st game with a score of 204 playing against Lillian and Paula. Paula scored a 7 letter, (SUBDUED) for 75 points. Phil won his 1st game with a score of 223 and a 7 letter, (FOOLINGS), which scored 92, playing against Jeanette and Ray.

We then had a break for tea and coffee, a variety of cakes and a delicious Victoria sponge, all made by Lillian.

Refreshed, we started the 2nd round with the two winners of the first games with the next highest scorer, (Ray) making up that team while Paula, Lillian and Jeanette made up the other.

Paula won her game with a score of 231, including a 7 letter (RODENTS). Ray won his second game with a score of 334 with two 7 letter words, (SHOOTER) and (CHEATING) scoring 67 and 80 respectively.

Many thanks to Lillian for letting us meet at hers and for the refreshments.

There is no meeting in October as people will be away.

The next meeting will be November 13th at Judith's,

Please call **01833 650150** if you would like to join us.

SPANISH CONVERSATION – Report by Michael Harris

Once again, Stella Kirton kindly hosted our last meeting. We should really call ourselves the Spanish Translation group as we plough our way through Roald Dahl's book, *Matilda*. On mainland Spain, as opposed to the Spanish spoken in Latin America, all **V (ees)** are pronounced as **B (ees)** and all **Z (eds)**, **CI** and **CE** are pronounced with a **TH** as in the word **THIN**. So please and thank you are pronounced as **graTHias** and **por faBor!**

Fortunately, we can all make a good guess at around 1,500 English nouns, known as cognates, that sound very similar in both Spanish and English. Words such as 'actor' and 'doctor' need not be altered. All words that end in -tion in English will end in **-ación (-aThion)** in Spanish. Thus, preparation becomes **preparación**, remove the **-ación** and add **-ar** and we have the verb - to prepare, which is **PREPARAR**. Remove the **-ar** and replace it with **-ado** and we have **preparado** = prepared, replace the **-ado** with **-ando** then **preparando** is formed which means, 'preparing'. Add **-é** to **preparar** to make **prepararé** which means, will prepare. And so on, by adding different endings the result is being aware of tens of thousands of Spanish words with an English stem just by knowing a little Spanish verb conjugation.

As for the rest? Well they are not so easy! Memorising words and phrases is just a hard slog for an ageing brain that is trying to push aside a lifetime of trivia to make room for a completely new language.

and finally...

The class of children were learning how to name body parts in Spanish.

Teacher to child: “¿What is the Spanish word for nose?”

Child: 'No sé!'

('No sé' is Spanish for 'I don't know'. The nose in Spanish is 'la nariz!')

TABLE TENNIS GROUP - Report by Nicky Grace



The group has continued to meet every week throughout the summer. Numbers have varied but everyone has always been enthusiastic. As well an opportunity for exercise and testing 'hand eye' co-ordination, the session creates laughter and moments of hilarity. This month, one player returning a stray ball from the adjoining table managed to bounce it off the top of another player's head! We also discovered a way of getting a rest between points – hit

the ball into the adjoining equipment cupboard and wait (quite a while) for a fellow player to find it.

At the last meeting there were just three players and we played the old fashioned way i.e. up to a score of 21 with the server playing 5 serves before changing. The modern format is up to 11 and 2 serves. Once you reach 10, all the service rotates with each player. My personal highest score, so far, is 18 but I still lost!

We have welcomed a new player who is left handed so that adds an additional element of challenge. For me, every time is about learning. I bought my bat from Bribar and recently received a catalogue. My eyes lit up at discovering a robot – unfortunately not to replace you as a player but to act as an opponent and chuck balls at you. In the description of bat rubbers, I learn about ones that suit high-speed attacking shots, spin powered forehand loops, offensive topspin, catapult reaction, chops and blocks, float and reverse spin. I think I shall just keep trying to get the ball back somehow but they are something to aspire to.

If you would like to have a go at taking up the sport or refreshing long forgotten skills do contact Peter Singer pandjsinger@btinternet.com
07508 663998

WILDFLOWER GROUP—Report by Kate Keen

On the 9th August, the wild flower group met for a walk starting from the gate at the entrance to Widdybank Fell. The weather forecast for the afternoon was pleasant and cloudy and dry with some sunny spells. 9 of us turned out on the day. We followed Harwood Beck: at the start of the walk we were delighted to see Grass of Parnassus in flower and we saw many of these in the afternoon. We were also pleased to see fairy flax, lots of sneezewort and Northern Bedstraw.

Following the beck towards Saur Hill Bridge we noticed that the meadow had been changed since our last visit and a new scrape had been created which had filled with water and had a young coot swimming in it; this will be great for the wildlife.

We followed the beck along over the bridge and were rewarded with plants we had not seen earlier including fragrant orchid and sea plantain.

In total we saw 61 different flowers which is the most we have seen on our walks this year.

We ended the afternoon by having refreshments at the Langdon Beck Hotel. A very pleasant afternoon.



Grass of Parnassus at Harwood Beck

WINE GROUP—Report by Tim Meacham



For a change, we looked eastwards to taste a few wines from outlying European countries trying to break in on the France/Germany/Italy monopoly. Our six wines were all supplied by Majestic in Darlington: the responses of the group were mixed!

For our furthest-flung example we headed for Georgia. We tasted their **Tbilvino Quevris Rkatsiteli Wine 2021**: (12.5% and costing £11.99). This example of the home favourite Rkatsiteli, claiming to combine 'rich apricot flavours, alongside notes of beeswax and walnuts' was appreciated by two members but rejected by a majority ('not very nice'; 'what is that?' are typical responses), so we moved quickly to Romania. Here the undated **Incanta Chardonnay Vin Varietal** (again 12.5% but £7.99) found much more favour ('that's more like it!'); the label claimed this was 'incredibly fruity' and the consensus was that 'fruity' was right. Despite a feeling that the finish tailed off a little, this was perhaps the discovery of the day. The less said about Hungary's **Royal Tokaji Dry Furmint 2021** (13% and £10.99) the better (although Phil liked its off-beat dry Furmint flavour!) but our final white was again a success. Slovenia's **Krasno Pinot Bianco 2021 (13.5% and £8.99)** confirmed that as with the Incanta above, lowish prices do not mean lack of quality. This Pinot Bianco from the Brda region was very drinkable and could give neighbouring Italy a run for her money.

We finished with two reds: the **Solomonar Reserve** (14% and £8.99) boasted Romania's home-grown Feteasca Neagra grape, but even with the backing of the more traditional Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot grapes, this lacked distinction and was seen as second best to the cheaper and more basic Slovenian Merlot, our **Colliano Estate Bottled Merlot 2021** (13.5% and £11.99). Again from Brda, the fruity bouquet suggested ripe cherries and raspberries and was the unanimous choice of our red experts. This was an interesting session but did not perhaps suggest that our 'Big 4' European producers have much to fear yet from these relative newcomers. We will continue to monitor the situation.

For our September meeting we will be visiting the Ryedale Vineyard in Yorkshire, which should be different!

WALKING GROUPS



SHORTER WALKS - Report by Sue Overton Headlam Circular

We enjoyed ideal walking weather as 7 members of the group set off from Headlam Hall (Georgian, once the seat of Lord Gainford) across the golf course – signposted. The grassy track on the golf course crosses Headlam Beck (no dippers sighted) and ends at a stile into wheat fields. The path towards Dyance Farm is usually a well walked path but on this day, in parts, large nettles had flourished, threatening in particular those brave enough to don their shorts! The path follows the edge of wheat fields which were being cut by gigantic machines as we neared the farm. The track from the farm was edged with beautiful field scabious as we continued on to Cock Lane. Here we turned right and walked about half a mile up the road before taking a signposted track on our left towards Gainford. Instead of going into the village, we continued on the path to our right through the fields towards Balmer Hill.

Deciding to avoid the road, we turned right and went over a stone stile into a field where the path clearly climbs to another stile (good views and photo opportunity!) before a slow descent following the field edge. These fields of rape had already been harvested leaving surprisingly thick, dried stalks.

After crossing the last field, we made it to the final stile onto the road and turned right towards Headlam Hall. A right turn into the main driveway opposite Headlam Green took us back to the car park and the option of tea and cake in the café! Did anyone



4-6 MILE WALKING GROUP – Report by Gillian Barnes-Morris

Gillian & Sandra lead the 4-6 mile walking group on a 4½-mile circular walk from Bowlees via Newbiggin. There was a decidedly autumnal feel as we set off from Bowlees car park and headed through a small wood to cross the B6277 and then take a footpath leading to the river. We turned left at the river and walk along the bank side through several fields and over a variety of styles of stiles. There was a frisky bull in one field and a herd of young, lively cows in another that hadn't been there on the reccies but all eleven walkers managed to survive.

Eventually we walked back to the B6277, turned left and walked along the road for a short distance before turning onto a farm track. The walk up the track was steep but we stopped several times to "admire the view" before

enjoying a coffee break at the top. After climbing over the wall at the top of the hill the terrain became easier again.

Passing through a small wood and encountering a number of fallen trees hindering our way the views opened up to lovely landscapes in all directions. From here a grassy track lead us back to our starting point in Bowlees.



Above: a welcome stop for coffee.

Right: the view across to Holwick.

Photos by Ian Royston



7 – 9 MILE WALKING GROUP Monk's Moor - Report by Nicky Grace

Seventeen of us gathered at the fountain at Middleton-in-Teesdale for a varied 8-mile walk taking us up to Monk's Moor and returning through Hudeshope valley. Leaving the road just by the last house out of Middleton on the Eggleston road, we started ascending through fields. The way was steep but the sun shone and the views across to (and above) Kirkcarrion were excellent. Our coffee stop west of Snaisgill signalled the end of the sunshine. Traversing the edge of Brown Dodd, we gained views across Grassholme and to the west – and black clouds. We kept near to the walls, often walking single file on sheep tracks. The young curlew and grouse seen on the recce were no longer in evidence – possibly put off by the thud of 34 feet or more, probably having left the nesting grounds. As we crossed the stile on the edge of Monk's Moor, the rain started and it continued the entire time we walked on this open access land. The top of Monk's Moor at 565m, with its striking but not very useful shelter received little attention as the rain meant we kept our heads down.



We descended to cross the moor and when we reached the gate, the rain had stopped and we could admire the views to Coldberry Gutter and beyond. A variety of styles were adopted to get over the locked gate and within minutes we were enjoying our lunch by a shooters' hut.

From there it was downhill all the way to reach Hudeshope. In sunshine we returned, at different paces, through the woods to the middle of Teesdale. This was a very varied walk with woodland, riverside, pasture land and open moor with some great scenery.

Arn Gill - Report by Nicky Grace

On Wednesday 16 August, we gathered at the base of Copley chimney. The effect of saying that there was very limited parking was that everyone arrived early! We just fitted all our cars into the space. On a dry day following heavy rain, I led the group of 12 up the hill and ended up walking up a stream rather than a path! Just below, the River Gaunless was rushing past belying its supposed derivation i.e. 'gormless' for not having enough power to drive mills. South of Woodland, after crossing Foul Sike, we came upon evidence of the considerable coal mining in the area - waste heaps, the brick lining of one of the shafts and the concrete base of the steam engine.

After negotiating a muddy gate and inquisitive cattle, we stopped for coffee by Hindon Beck. We reached Hill House Farm and walked along to the road to Hindon Edge and descended to Arn Gill. En route we were concerned to find a buzzard caught in a ladder trap.

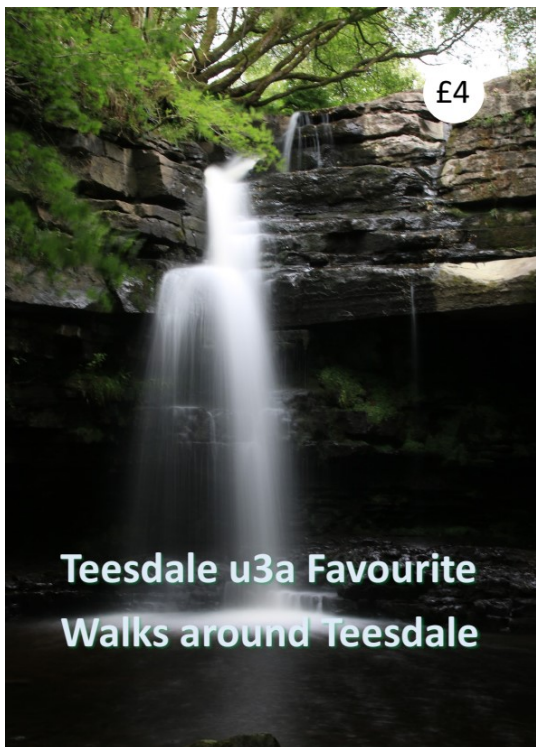


Langley Viaduct - photo by Ian Royston

We crossed tramways which used to serve the collieries and ascended the south side of the Gill. Aiming for Beckside, we found a broken down stile – however, one of our number had experienced this before and we managed to get round this. We turned away from our furthest point and found a peaceful pastoral spot for our lunch with a fine view of Langley Viaduct which served the Bishop Auckland to Barnard Castle railway. We descended into Arn Gill where a buzzard circled overhead and returned to Hill House Farm. From there, we walked along the Steele Road back to Copley. This was the route that linked Eggleston and the smelt mill at Copley bringing ore payable to the Raby Estate to be smelted, named for the silver colour of the track due to dropped lead ore.

It was a day of kindnesses, from those who offered lifts, to the participant who secured the release of the trapped buzzard, to our cow whisperer, and to all of you for tolerating the walk leader.

On Wednesday 18 October Lynda will lead a walk from Hanging Shaw. Please contact nickygrace729@gmail.com



Teesdale u3a Favourite Walks around Teesdale is now on sale.

A booklet of maps, guides and illustrations of 14 walks in and around Teesdale which are familiar to members of Teesdale u3a and which are written from first-hand experience.

This new, 2023 edition is available at Monthly Meetings for only £4.

Ideal as a present for visitors to the dale and for walkers of all ages and abilities.

FELL WALKING GROUP—Report by Annie Clouston

Nine of us had a brilliant, and not particularly strenuous, ten-miler from Grinton over Harterfell and back along Apedale to Grinton. It was a clear and sometimes cloudy, sometimes sunny, day when the heather was gorgeously purple and Swaledale stunningly green. Our views were exceptional, highlighting the predations of humankind on the landscape and the fauna. The ancient architecture of the lead mines was all about us, in old shafts, pits, flues and spoil heaps. In places, recovery seemed slow, and dozy sheep were about picking at pathetic bits of grass where just a few metres away the ground was rich with lush grass. The architecture of the shoot was all about us, though happily the gunners were not near, and the delightful bobbing of little white legs and accompanying “go back, go back” was testament to today’s safety for the grouse. Who could shoot them for sport? (Well, it seems anyone with £250 per brace to spare!)

Let’s not be total hypocrites - we did make use of a shooters’ bothy for our mid-morning snap. But at lunchtime, it was possible to imagine ourselves, while all sitting in a row on a long low ridge overlooking Apedale, being taken out like grouse napping on a dry stone wall, by a marksman on the other side of the valley. My imagination (darkly) runs away with me sometimes. Incidentally, we pondered the derivation of Apedale, and lo and behold, we came upon a plethora of beehives - and copious pesky bees - in the valley (and no chimpanzees). Quad erat demonstrandum!

We wrapped up a great day at the Bikers’ Cafe by the river where our company caused meltdown in the ordering of refreshments such that we may in future be banned.

Thank you to John for leading such a great walk.



ANOTHER (TURBULANT) MONTH IN AMBRIDGE

As Robin is to Batman, it turns out George (I did warn you about him) Grundy is to the demonic Rob Titchener. What a to-do there was in the Tea Room as a result of this gruesome twosome. Helen, ex-wife and victim of the unspeakable Rob, went flying off her rocker in full public view, targeting George, who had facilitated contact between the unspeakable and her eldest child. George, now recognised as a full-blown Andrew Tate disciple by some at least - even his mother is getting a hint of his misogyny and general toxicity – responded by recording the encounter on his phone and putting it on Facebook. Of course, his less than conciliatory responses to the metaphorical bullets being fired at him were also on record. Not edifying, not edifying at all!

There are pending proceedings that Rob, previously denied all contact by the court, has launched to enable him to say hello/goodbye to their child, Jack. The gaslighting continues – is this madwoman a fit mother? - has Rob changed now he has a malignant tumour about to snuff him out? I guess it could go either way with the whimsy of the ever-shifting scriptwriting team.

Elsewhere, Pip is getting the hots for Stella and her parents are being ever so understanding about it. All I can say, it's a good job that Peggy isn't around with a lemon-sucking face on her. Whenever I conjure up Peggy, my Aunt Nance appears in my mind's eye. Four foot cubed with an indomitable will and a less than liberal attitude to what she would see as the pretensions and sillinesses of her sisters' children, who specialised in them just to provoke her (or so she thought). I remember once telling her I was a vegetarian, to which her response was "Oh no, you're not!"

And finally, the on-going saga of Trace and Jazzer continues. Their first time around wedding was missed on account of them having pre-nuptial how's-your-father. At the time of writing, the second attempt at the ceremonials is wobbling as Jazzer, in a fit of generosity, offered an ex-girlfriend a couch to sleep on in the Horrobin household for as long as she needs it. Jazzer must surely be several trotters short of a functioning pig.

There we have it, tea room tantrums, a gay kiss (not the first in Ambridge) and marriage mayhem. Whatever next? My money's on George Grundy becoming Trace and Jazzer's marriage guidance counsellor.



SEPTEMBER'S 'BY ANY OTHER NAME' QUIZ

1. What is Elton John's real name?
 2. Which Nordic city was previously known as Kristiania?
 3. Which Teesdale settlement did the Romans know as Morbium?
 4. Which African country was previously known as Eswatini?
 5. Which Scottish city is known in Gaelic as Obar Dheathain?
 6. What is the three-letter IATA code for Teesside International Airport?
 7. What was the previous name of Barbican station on TfL's Metropolitan and Circle Lines?
 8. Which Asian capital was once known as Edo?
 9. George VI, King from 1936 to 1952 was known to his family by his first name. What was it?
 10. The Japanese car maker now known as Nissan was previously known by what name?
 11. Which actor was born Maurice Joseph Micklewhite?
 12. What was the Roman name for Ireland?
 13. Which Welsh town is known in Welsh as Y Fenni?
 14. Which famous actor Anglicised her name from Ilyena Lydia Vasilievna Mironov?
 15. The Republic of the Congo is now known as The Democratic Republic of the Congo but what was its name in the interim?
 16. What was the colonial name for the city now known as Harare?
 17. Which non-working royal is usually known by their second name?
 18. What are the sweets previously known as Opal Fruits now known as in the UK?
 19. Which island ceased to be known as Van Diemen's Land in 1856?
 20. What was the former RAF name for Newcastle Airport?
-



Don't forget!

**The Inbetweeners
get-together**

**An opportunity to meet other members of the u3a
informally for a chat, a cuppa and good company.**

**Thursday 12 October at 14:30 &
Thursday 9 November at 14:30**

Why Philosophy? - A perspective from James Dykes

We had a philosophy group meeting the other day, and, while driving home, I found myself reviewing the experience. I had found it very pleasant but, now being a “*budding*” philosopher, I needed to ask myself **why** I had enjoyed it. You see, that’s a thing amongst philosophers, budding or not, we are taught, nay we are **required**, to ask questions. There may never be an answer, but the question must be put.

In order to address my question, I had first to start with what had been my hopes on my first joining the group. I’d always considered myself a thinker, and I was reasonably proficient at “brain games” etc. I didn’t much care for history by rote, but I was quite interested to hear it explained by the thought processes being applied.

And, having retired from a job which required my brain to be applied fully, I felt less than satisfied by a crossword and Sudoku a day. I wanted to be stimulated. I think that is the feeling I came away with from this meeting.

We had spent a year or two going through some of the more common topics in any philosophy “*larn yersel*” book, and we had duly thought about God/No God, Morality, Animals, Politics, Science and the Mind etc., and all these topics, given a half decent presentation, did occupy my brain to a reasonable extent. But strangely, it was when we moved on to Art as a topic, that I suddenly found myself really stretching my thought processes, and, again strangely, it was the inclusion of a fascinating talk by a scientist with a knowledge of the way the brain physically functions which gave me my damascene light moment.

Suddenly all the banal opinions I had previously held were in urgent need of re-examination. Suddenly the perspectives from which I had previously viewed topics were challenged and often ditched in the light of the actualities possible when we learnt how the brain actually does the myriad of things that it does. Free will – previously a nail-on - was suddenly under challenge. Nature v nurture – previously an unprovable emotive decision – became fundamental to my interpretation of any motive or intention.

At the meeting, we spent a good hour examining the concept of Respect. If anyone had told me I would be riveted by that presentation I would have scoffed, but riveted I was and remain – thank you Peter.

I can only suggest that if any u3a member considers themselves a thinker, then my earnest recommendation is they join our little group. It’s a couple of hours a month plus as much or as little time as you care to spend in between times. We found ourselves touching on a host of topics from holocaust denial to woke speech, and even to Biden or Trump and cheating. I’m going to have a good G & T and then sleep soundly tonight. It’s been a good day.

SEPTEMBER'S QUIZ—ANSWERS

1. Elton Hercules John (changed legally from Reginald Dwight in 1972)
 2. Oslo (sometimes styled Christiania, after King Christian)
 3. Piercebridge
 4. Swaziland
 5. Aberdeen
 6. MME
 7. Aldersgate (Since 1968)
 8. Tokyo
 9. Albert / Bertie
 10. Datsun
 11. Michael Caine
 12. Hibernia
 13. Abergavenny
 14. Helen Mirren
 15. Zaire
 16. Salisbury
 17. Rachel Megan, Duchess of Sussex
 18. Opal Fruits (Starburst 1998 - 2021)
 19. Tasmania
 20. Woolsington
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Wrecks & Ruins 2024



**Teesdale u3a Photography Group Calendar
now on sale - Only £6.50
Available at monthly meetings
or by contacting Jane Mathieson**

Group	Meeting Time	Contact details
Art Appreciation	1 st Wed pm	Tony Seward 01833 630050
Automotive	3 rd Tuesday am	Peter Colley 01833 695197
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
Cryptic Crossword	2 nd Wed 2pm	Sue Overton 07512 368884
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 Tue 1.30pm	Mike Sweeting 07565 925412
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	2 nd Mon pm	Lilian Smith 01833 650628
Spanish Conversation	3 rd Thurs 10am	Michael Harris 07799 051389
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	2 nd Wed 2pm	Kate Keen 07880 741151
Wine Group	3 rd Tues pm	Tim Meacham 07847 182554
Yoga	Every Monday am	Angela Griffiths 01833 630170
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 Photography, Walks and occasionally other groups 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.

**Coming up at your
Community Arts Centre**

Fri 29 Sept 7.30pm	COMEDY– Markus Birdman: Platinum (14+) Edinburgh Fringe show nominated for the 2023 Chortle Awards.
Sat 30 Sept 7.30pm	MUSIC – China Crisis: The RETROspective Tour Eddie London, Gary Daly, Jack Hymers (keys), Eric Animan (sax).
Tues 3 Oct 7.30pm	SPOKEN WORD/MUSIC – Bob Harris and Colin Hall: The Songs The Beatles Gave Away Includes rare archive from Bob Harris' collection of interviews with Lennon & McCartney.
Wed 4 Oct 7.30pm	COMEDY – Charlie Baker: 24 Hour Pasty People (14+)
Thurs 5 Oct 7.15pm	LIVE SCREENING – Royal Opera House: L'Elisir D'Amore
Sat 7 Oct 7.30pm	MUSIC – Starlite & Campbell
Mon 9 Oct 7.00pm	MUSIC – Barnard Castle School Music Scholars' Concert
Tues 10 Oct 7.30pm	FOLK – Andy Irvine
Thurs 12 Oct 7.30pm	COMEDY – Stephen K Amos: Oxymoron (16+)
Thurs 19 Oct 7.30pm	SPOKEN WORD/MUSIC – Beware of the Bull: An Audience Without Jake Thackray John Watterson performs songs, anecdotes and readings from the first ever biography of the Yorkshire chansonnier.
Fri 20 Oct 7.30pm	THEATRE – Beyond Caring (12+) A powerful new play that takes a frank, humorous and heart-breaking look at life behind the doors of a care home.
Sat 21 Oct 8.00pm	COMEDY – Jo Caulfield: Here Comes Trouble (16+)
Thurs 26 Oct 7.00pm	FILM: The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry (12A) Starring Jim Broadbent and Penelope Wilson