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SEIZE THE DAY

**FORUM**  
NOVEMBER 2023  
**u3a**

## Chair's Letter November 2023

Dear All

The wheel has spun and it's my turn to take up the baton of Chair for the next three months.

We had good attendance at the last two monthly meetings with excellent speakers - Keith Offord, a lecturer at Higham Hall illustrated his talk with stunning photos of birds in flight; and Gary Bankhead, an underwater archaeologist enthusiastically described his many finds in the river below Elvet Bridge in Durham.

The range of speakers this year has been exceptional and thanks must go to our volunteers in the Speaker Finders Team - Ian Reid, Pauline Fawcett, Elizabeth Formstone, Stella Kirton (and me!) – who work hard throughout the year to bring you such an informative and entertaining programme.

Our Teesdale u3a can only exist with the 'work' of members in various roles and I urge you to consider volunteering in some capacity to avoid overloading the few who always come forward.

Whether it's convening an Interest group or just supporting the group convenor, joining the committee or one of the sub-committees, e.g Workshops, Publicity, producing the Forum and lots more. Your ideas and skills will be very welcome.

Last chance to get your ticket for the Christmas Bash – details can be found on page 5 of this edition of the Forum – hope to see you at Headlam Hall on Friday 1st December.

With best wishes for the festive season and a happy, healthy 2024.

Sue Overton

**NEXT INBETWEENERS MEETING**  
**Thursday 11 January at 2.30pm**  
**The Witham Room, The Witham**

**Cover photograph: the woods near Cotherstone, by Celia Chapple**

## It's Your Forum

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

This month's editor is Celia: Edition No: 23/11

Next Month's editor is Kate

e-mail: [forumeditor@teesdaleu3a.org.uk](mailto:forumeditor@teesdaleu3a.org.uk)

Phone: Annie **01833 637091** Celia **07783 419067**

Ian **07818 046938** Kate **07867 683195**

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](mailto:forumeditor@teesdaleu3a.org.uk)

### DEADLINE for the next edition: Tuesday 9 January 2024

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](mailto: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.

[www.teesdaleu3a.org](http://www.teesdaleu3a.org)

**TEESDALE u3a Officers**

Chair: Sue Overton [chair@teesdaleu3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@teesdaleu3a.org.uk)

Membership Secretary: Tim Meacham [memsec@teesdaleu3a.org.uk](mailto:memsec@teesdaleu3a.org.uk)

Business Secretary: Liz Colley [bissec@teesdaleu3a.org.uk](mailto:bissec@teesdaleu3a.org.uk)

Treasurer: Hazel McCallum [treasurer@teesdaleu3a.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@teesdaleu3a.org.uk)

## 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

**Thursday 25 January** *The Importance of Rare Earth Metals*

**Speaker: Les Knight**

Russia is Europe's largest supplier of natural gas, providing around 35% of gas used across the continent. In Britain, we get 3% from Russia, yet, Russia's reduction in gas supplies is causing chaos to energy markets and real pain to households. Imagine the future where we have decarbonised our energy supply and are reliant on wind power and electric cars, which in turn, rely on the rare earths of which China has an almost complete monopoly. Will we ever learn!!

## Northumbria Region u3a

The latest edition of the Northumbria Region u3a 'Messenger' is now available on their website:

[u3asites.org.uk/northumbria](http://u3asites.org.uk/northumbria)

There are links to their events including a day at the Royal Navy Museum Hartlepool on 15th March 2024, and the u3a Festival 24 at York University 18th—20th July 2024.

## **u3a CHRISTMAS BASH** **Friday 1 December at Headlam Hall**

**COME AND CELEBRATE A GRAND YEAR WITH US**  
**A two course lunch with welcome drink and coffee and mince pies**  
**And ....TIM's QUIZ**

**Cost: £34. Details and how to book can be found on the website, at the monthly meeting, and by emailing Hazel McCallum, our Treasurer, [treasurer@teesdaleu3a.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@teesdaleu3a.org.uk)**

### A DAY OUT IN KESWICK

There are a few places on a Maude's coach going to Keswick for the day on Saturday 9th December, leaving Barney at 10am and returning at around 6pm. The cost is £12.

Enjoy the fantastic market with plenty of Christmas gift ideas, admire the Christmas lights and take advantage of the many great eating places.

To book a place contact Diana on:

01833 630469, 077 6262 69 12 or email [dianamarks813@gmail.com](mailto:dianamarks813@gmail.com)

Hurry as places are limited!

### Wrecks & Ruins 2024



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

## OCTOBER MONTHLY MEETING: Report by Ian Reid

We welcomed back Gary Bankhead, who had given a presentation



several years ago about underwater archaeology in the River Wear in Durham. Since then, Gary has graduated with an M. Phil from Durham University, become a research associate in the Archaeology Department, illustrated and

published papers and books, and been on TV programmes with Alice Roberts, Tony Robinson, Matt Baker, Bettany Hughes and Helen Skelton amongst others. We were delighted that he found the time to speak to us again about 'Dive into Durham' with new material.

Gary began excavating the river bed in Durham between the bridges, Elvet and Prebends. At the beginning of his excavations, under Prebends Bridge, he found a beautiful silver and ivory trowel. There were clusters of other valuable objects, which were apparently gifts presented to Bishop Ramsay, Bishop of Durham, during his many travels throughout the world. Since then, Gary has found thousands of other objects some of which were dated from Roman times. These excavations led to a research project involving students from the University. The items were subsequently arranged into groups, which were recorded and displayed in exhibitions in the Palace Green Library, and then published.

In mediaeval times there would have been dwellings and small business outlets on the bridges. The early bridges had recesses at each side. Some objects could have fallen into the river accidentally, whereas others might have been deliberately thrown in e.g. small coins, good luck charms and pilgrim souvenirs. The most prevalent group of objects were those associated with trades, situated on the edge of the river. The objects identified included lead trade tokens, buckles, cloth jettons, brass pins of various sizes, coins and seals. Durham University Archaeology Department now holds the largest collection of mediaeval seals in Europe. Some finds originated from other European countries suggesting that the city was heavily involved in European trade from mediaeval times.

Gary gave an engaging and enthusiastic presentation, and he continues to look for funding to continue his research. TV and film producers are approaching him about future programmes so it is quite likely that we shall see him again, this time on TV.

## FUTURE WORKSHOPS

### Saturday 2 December

#### ***Co Crafty at Christmas—an interactive workshop pooling ideas, skills and inspiration.***

There will be mulled wine!

Leader:- Hazel Yeadon

10am - 12noon at Boldron Village Hall

Cost: £5 includes refreshments

Contact: Hazel Yeadon - [hazelyeadon@hotmail.com](mailto:hazelyeadon@hotmail.com)

### Saturday 6 January 2024

#### ***Ann Lee: How to use a sketchbook (to fill in boring winter evenings)***

Convenor: Hazel Yeadon

10-12am Guide HQ, Birch Road Barnard Castle

Cost £5, bring A4 or A5 Sketchbook and pens, pencils or any preferred drawing implement.

### FEBRUARY—to be confirmed

### Saturday 9 March 2024

#### ***The Great Teesdale Sewing Bee Transformation Challenge***

Come and be playful with a range of materials to create a mystery (at least before you arrive) garment.

Convenor: Annie Clouston

10-12 Boldron Village Hall

Cost £5. Bring Sewing machines, sewing equipment, bits and bobs for decorative purposes (over the top preferred).

Contact—Annie [annie@cloustons.uk](mailto:annie@cloustons.uk)

**Any ideas you have for activities you want to explore will be gratefully received by the Workshop Group: Please contact Annie Clouston, Hazel Yeadon, Sue Overton or Hilary Dunnighan. No idea too left-field to be considered!**

### **Play Reading Workshop - Report by Hilary Dunnighan**

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Eight members came along to the play reading workshop led by Ronnie Lowery. Ronnie is a member of the Gainford Drama Group, formed in 1949, which has an average of 48 members, producing at least 2 plays

every year. A stalwart of the Drama Group for many years, she has acted, directed and produced many plays and we were lucky to have her leading us in her chosen play – J.B. Priestley’s “When We Are Married”. This play written in 1934, first produced in 1938, is set in Victorian England when Victorian moral values were to the fore.

The farce is about three Yorkshire couples who were led to believe, as they are about to celebrate their silver wedding anniversary, that they were not legally married. Social embarrassment is followed by a dawning awareness that their lives have been overturned, however, it all ends happily ever after!

With the cast list being larger than our number, we had to double up on some roles: that and the attempt by some members to recite the script in a broad Yorkshire accent, often made us laugh out loud. In the play there is even a mention of the characters taking a trip to Barnard Castle!

Many thanks to Ronnie for a lively and entertaining afternoon. Thanks to Colin for taking the photograph and apologies to Joyce as she is missing from the picture.



### **ART APPRECIATION GROUP – Report by Tony Seward**

Our October meeting opened with Professor Kloss’s thoughts on Whistler and Degas. James Abbott McNeill Whistler (there’s a name to conjure with!) was, like Sargent, an American who spent most of his life in France and England. He was at the forefront of new developments in art, especially the discovery by European painters of the liberating effect of Japanese prints; also an accomplished etcher, bearing comparison with the greatest in the genre, including Rembrandt.



Kloss focused on the portrait of his mother, which is as much an abstract composition as a likeness of the sitter – indeed, his preferred title for it was ‘Arrangement in Grey and Black No.1’.



**Black Lion Wharf**

Degas’ painting ‘In a Café’ – also known as ‘Absinthe’ – is often mistakenly seen as a picture of the misery resulting from alcohol addiction. If it has a ‘message’ it is more to do with the isolation of the figures from each other, emphasised by the strange geometry of the table in the foreground, which distances the figures from the viewer and introduces a hard abstract edginess into the composition.

Sheila Kilgarriff then shared with us her longstanding love of Renoir’s paintings. She presented it as a personal journey: from first being attracted to his gorgeous colours and skilful rendering of flesh tones, through working on an embroidered version of one of his paintings, to deepening her knowledge of the man and his work over the years. She ended by giving us a detailed analysis of ‘Luncheon of the Boating Party’ identifying all the characters portrayed in it: friends, lovers, patrons and prominent figures from the Parisian art world.



We ended the session with some discussion of possible future directions for the group. We agreed to look at the contribution of women artists over the centuries, and that we should use the holdings of the Bowes Museum as much as possible to illustrate the topics we discuss. The group would also enjoy occasional

outings to museums and galleries in the region, and it is suggested that we start in Spring 2024 by catching up on the latest developments at the Auckland Project – the Spanish Art Gallery and Mining Art Museum, plus the newly opened Faith Museum.

**Next up** - Wednesday 6 December. Nativity scenes? – or any other ideas to celebrate the season... The first meeting of the New Year will take place on Wednesday 3 January.

### **AUTOMOTIVE GROUP Report by David Yeadon**

Autumn is a tricky time of year to take to the roads for pleasure. Our u3a members and their vehicles need to be in working order, the weather needs to be reasonable, and somewhere needs to be open for refreshments. (Tuesdays seem to be a rest day for much of the hospitality industry!) A day in mid-October ticked most of the boxes.

So six members of the group had a spin out over the top to Stanhope, in what turned out to be very foggy conditions over the fells, plus sheep on the roads licking up something tasty.

We had a good variety of cars on the run: a Porsche 996 Carrera from 1998; a rare Gilbern GT1800 from 1967 (fibreglass body, and based on an MGB); two BMW Z4s from 2003/4.



Enjoying the drive were (in the photo): David Yeadon, Martin Ingall, Jeff Crossley, Phil Crichton, Peter Colley, and, taking the photo, David Allinson.

Our next outing is planned for Monday 27th November to the Lakeland Motor Museum. All being well, we shall leave Barnard Castle around 9:30am. If you would like to

join the outing, please let Peter know. [petergcolley@icloud.com](mailto:petergcolley@icloud.com)

If there is sufficient interest, we plan to hold a motoring memorabilia morning on Tuesday 12th December in Barnard Castle. This will be an opportunity to bring along any keepsakes, books, magazines or whatever may be of interest. Refreshments will be provided and all members are welcome.



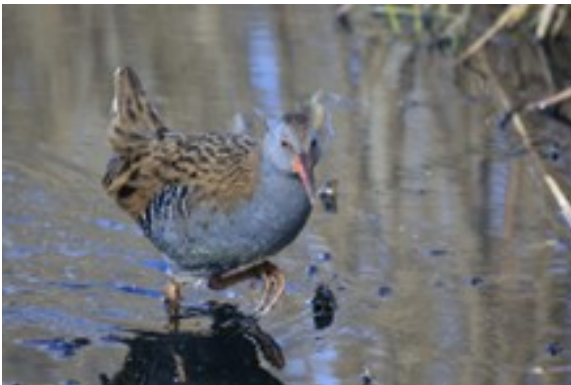
## BIRDWATCHING GROUP

### Report and photos by Andrew Lapworth

#### RSPB SALTHOLME & NORTH GARE 16 October 2023

Our group visit proved to be well-timed to see some special birds visiting our region. Starting in the RSPB's panoramic cafe, eleven of us enjoyed cakes and coffees while watching some interesting birds, including the smallest wading-bird in the UK, the appropriately named **Little Stint** (*Calidris minuta*). This little wader (slightly smaller than a Sparrow) breeds in Arctic tundra in Scandinavia and central Siberia, and stops off on our coasts, and muddy edges inland, en-route to Africa, south of the Sahara. It is tiny, we needed our 'scopes to see it.

There were the usual Redshanks and Little Egrets, numerous duck species, and some flighty small flocks of Common Snipe. At the feeders we enjoyed close-up views of Goldfinches, Greenfinches and Tree Sparrows, with Moorhens (and a rat) picking-up the spilt seeds.



We had reports that a **Spotted Redshank** (see photo left) was showing well from Phil Stead hide, and sure enough the long-lens brigade in the hide were soon helpfully pointing out this elegant bird, subtly different from the Common Redshanks.

Next stop was the Wildlife Watchpoint hide; we

stopped to hear a Cetti's Warbler scolding near the path, and one or two of us glimpsed this skulking wren-shaped warbler.

In the hide we didn't have to wait long before we all got good, close views of the shy and generally elusive **Water Rail** (more often heard than seen): slate grey, browns and a bright orange bill plus beady eye).



**Water Rail**

After lunch in the cafe we moved off the reserve to the coast and North Gare. It was warm and windless as we walked out to the Gare, seeing several Stonechats. The tide was coming in and before long we had lots to see: a murmuration of Knot, plus Oystercatchers, Sanderling and Turnstones; offshore: gulls, distant Gannets, Eiders, Common Scoters and a large flock of Great Crested Grebes plus one Red-throated Diver (perhaps only seen by me). In the Tees estuary were lots of auks bobbing about: most likely Guillemots and Razorbills but we couldn't distinguish them at such a distance. A seal occasionally showed itself, but we didn't see any Dolphins. In the distance inland we saw a skein of Pink-footed Geese high overhead. A small flock of Wigeon landed in the rough grass by the roadside.

We all enjoyed this delightful spot, with the waves crashing on the beach and lots of fresh sea-air! Overall we saw nearly 50 species during the day.

There is not a field meeting in December but we will have an indoor meeting to plan our future outings.

### **BOARD GAMES - Report by Hazel McCallum**

Seven of us met up in The Breakfast Room at the Old Well Inn to enjoy a fun afternoon of board game playing. We warmed up with a few rounds of Bananagrams. I'd like to say it was a gentle warm-up but I can't, as the competition was fierce!



We then tried a new game for many, Carcassonne which is a tile-based game where each player adds their tiles to the board to make settlements, roads and pastures, scoring points along the way - with Jane and Hazel emerging winners.

We finished the afternoon with a return to Bananagrams and Rummikub Word. Annie won at Rummikub Word and Sue won three times at Bananagrams

The next meeting will be on 11 December, so please get in touch if you'd like to join us. 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.

## **BOOK GROUP TWO Report by Maggie Cleminson**

This meeting was our first opportunity to try out our new format in which everyone brought a book of their own choosing to discuss. Each one gave a short summary of the book and explained why they had enjoyed it or found it interesting. The book choices were very varied ranging from a true Icelandic Murder from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent; a distressing tale of the Scottish Clearances of a woman being uprooted and her attempts to remain, *Consider The Lilies* by Ian Crichton Smith; the true history of Macbeth, King of Scotland, *The King Hereafter* by Dorothy Dunnett; the life story of a young pilot in the Second World War, *A God in Ruins* by Kate Atkinson. A stimulating discussion followed each presentation, with everyone participating by asking questions about each of the books. We decided to follow this format for every alternative meeting. For our next meeting we will all read Kate Atkinson's *Transcription*.

## **ROOM TO READ BOOK GROUP - Report by Kate Bailey** ***In the Midst of Winter* by Isabel Allende**

Some of the group were interested to read this novel, having enjoyed Allende's 'magical realism' debut 'House of the Spirits' (1986). However, with a choice of almost 30 novels and memoirs by this Chilean-American author, we did wonder whether 'In the Midst of Winter' was worth the effort of reading to the end. Two immigrants to the US describe their terrifying journeys across borders, with the undocumented Guatemalan refugee, Evelyn Ortega, ending up working for a gangster's family in New York. When, after an accident in the snow-bound city involving a taciturn academic, Richard Bowmaster, she discovers a body in the boot of her employer's car. She appeals to Richard and his Chilean lodger, Lucia Maraz, to help her.

All three main characters are anxious, fearful people and their sad stories are told in considerable detail. Political corruption, vicious drugs gangs and violent repression of indigenous people in Guatemala left teenager Evelyn with no option but to flee, leaving behind her beloved grandmother. Lucia's story of a bigamist father and a brother who vanished after the military coup in Chile (that resulted in the death of the author's uncle - President Salvador Allende - in 1973) led to her exile in Venezuela. Richard's melancholic thoughts are mostly of his own failures as a son, husband and father.

The shocking accounts of terror, violence and people trafficking in South/Central America and the economic and social struggles of immigrants to the USA are timely, in terms of current events around Europe and the

Middle East, but difficult to read. The back-stories of the female characters feel like a series of geo-political lectures that don't hang together very well. Potentially interesting secondary characters, including Lucia's daughter, Daniela, and Evelyn's disabled charge, Frankie, are barely sketched out and, after the body is discovered, the plot becomes increasingly unlikely. Towards the end the focus on the less appealing older characters leaves no space for an optimistic picture of young Evelyn's future life in Miami.

The group had mixed feelings about this book - some that it is unrealistic, not at all 'magical' and generally depressing, others that it provides a learning opportunity for readers who know little of South America's turbulent history. The final scores were 3.5 for a book group and 3 out of 5 for a recommendation to a friend.

#### **Future meetings:**

Wednesday 13 December Poetry and Room to Read Groups combined end of year special featuring favourites of the year

Wednesday 17 January Black Cake by Charmaine Wilkerson

Wednesday 21 February Members are bringing books that have had a significant impact on them

All meetings start at 10.30 and are held in Annie's house. For further information contact [annie@cloustone.com](mailto:annie@cloustone.com)

### **CLIMATE SOLUTIONS Report by Kate Bailey**

This month we discussed talks we'd heard on the subject of climate solutions and nature recovery.

#### **North Pennines AONB talk by Patrick Laurie (Tees-Swale Farming and Nature project)**

Patrick Laurie's family has farmed in Galloway with native black cattle for generations. He regrets that traditional landscapes have been altered by intensive dairy farms and commercial forestry plantations and is most concerned about the conservation of curlews and black grouse on upland farms. Curlews return to the same nesting site each year - if their nesting site is planted with trees they will still return there but eventually fail to breed. Laurie said we need to protect what we have in the North Pennines - once the curlews are gone they don't return.

#### **Oxford Martin School talk by Prof Erle Ellis (Humanity's shared aspirations)**

Prof Ellis's is optimistic about the future, believing that together we can make change happen. Collaboration enables us to shift social behaviour

and norms, adopt shared aspirations and establish a healthy relationship with nature. Urbanisation is an ongoing process shaping the planet. The myth of 'more people, more problems' is untrue as dense societies create more economic opportunities. Population in cities is levelling off as young people intentionally have smaller families. The total amount of agricultural land is the same as 25 years ago, it's just used differently.

As humans we know the natural world is fundamental to our health and wellbeing, industries are moving into a more sustainable future and energy systems are already changing - but public policies are lagging far behind. His advice on how to make a difference is to pressurise politicians to understand that voters want to live in a safe, healthy environment.

### **Oxford Martin School interview with Alok Sharma, leader of COP26 (Glasgow)**

Sharma talked about business communities that can see the economic opportunities created by Net Zero. Young people often look to work for companies that have made climate commitments. Science based targets are being adopted by stock markets. More than vague pledges, world leaders at COP28 need to demonstrate political will to meet emission reduction targets by 2030. Sharma said businesses are looking for certainty before making corporate commitments to invest for the long term. [COP28 will be held Nov 30th to Dec 12th in Dubai]



**This month's 'Good News'** is of the rediscovery in Brazil of a small, inconspicuous holly tree [*Ilex sapiiformis*] thought to be extinct for almost 200 years [[www.rewild.org/news/](http://www.rewild.org/news/)] and of the first baby beaver born in London for 400 years. The beaver reintroduction programme is part of a natural flood management project taking place across the UK [[www.bbc.co.uk/news/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/)]

## **CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS INTEREST GROUP**

### **Report by Sue Overton**

Eleven of us met on 11<sup>th</sup> October at the Guide HQ for our 4<sup>th</sup> session.

We began with a warm-up consisting of 15 anagram clues and 5 hidden clues before progressing to a new clue type – takeaways. These proved

a tad difficult for some of us – me included! But we persevered and completed them all, rewarding ourselves with a hot cuppa and a choccy biscuit.

After the break, we focussed on another quick Times cryptic crossword brought by Tim. Duly completed, it was time to finish and head home having adequately exercised our grey matter for another month.

Example of a Takeaway clue:

First off most harsh mountain (7)

Mountain is the definition.

Off indicates removal of first letter, in this case a word meaning 'most harsh' i.e. severest

So, the answer is Everest.

Our next meeting is 2pm at the Guide HQ Birch Road on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December and then one on 10<sup>th</sup> January, same location.

Contact me, Sue Overton 07512 368884 if you would like to join our group.

### **DISCUSSION GROUP Report by Glen Howard**

We had some excellent discussions this month (October) about a great variety of subjects including: the prison population; the Sycamore Gap; lottery cash being given for the heritage of Durham railways; future medicines at risk; freedom of speech; potholes; shoplifting; retirement flats; immigration; and bedbugs.

Our next meetings will be on 8th December 10.15am at Andalucia's. If you would like to join us, please get in touch.

Glen Howard 01833 631639

### **FRENCH CONVERSATION October Report By Sue Overton**

The set homework was French colloquialisms and a poem which we went through together.

Well, 50% of us forgot to do our homework! But we had lots of fun reading and translating a Comptine (nursery rhyme) written by Francois Guillaume Ducray-Duminil (1761 – 1819) called Mon pere m'a donne un mari.

This led to exploring the use of AI to produce simple French poems with their translation – a useful learning tool?

Our small group meets in the front room of the Old Well on The Bank



on the 4th Thursday of the month after the main meeting in The Witham. You don't have to be fluent in French and beginners are welcome.

Contact Stella Kirton 01388 488919 for further details.

## **GARDENING GROUP**

### **October Reports by Julie Archer and Kate Keen**

In October the gardening group resumed the Friday afternoon talks at Stainton Village Hall.

Tim Marshall, Head Gardener of the Raby Estate, came along to talk about the plans for the redevelopment of the gardens. Tim proved to be an excellent speaker. He has led an interesting career including looking after the gardens of the King of Jordan.

Lord and Lady Barnard have a vision to transform the Raby Estate into a major destination and have called the development "The Rising" based on Raby's history as the home of one of Britain's most notorious plots, The Rising of the North. They have invited in 2 world famous garden designers to support the changes to the garden.

The extensive public areas of the estate have been redesigned by acclaimed landscape architect, Alistair Baldwin, based in Richmond, Yorkshire. The walled gardens have been designed by Luciano Giubbillei, an Italian garden designer. Both designers were featured on the Sky Arts "Art of the Garden" series.

Tim had an extensive set of photographs of the work in progress to date. Part of the garden includes a tiered performance area sculpted into the grassy bank. Mature shrubs and trees have been brought in. The original herbaceous border plant has been reused around the garden.

In November, our speaker was Ruth Starr-Kebble, a plant ecologist and botanist, who talked about the project to restore wild flower meadows in Teesdale. Since 2010, Ruth has worked at the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership on various projects connected with upland hay meadows. Ruth explained how she is working in conjunction with the farmers of Upper Teesdale to enhance the meadows to increase diversity. One of the projects that is having a positive impact is the creation of scrapes and small wet land areas; this has proved popular with the farmers and over 100 have been created over the last year. This encourages wildlife and is helping to sustain the population of lapwings and curlews.

We are fortunate in Teesdale to have wild flower meadows and Ruth is encouraging farmers to increase the range of plants in the meadows. Some meadows which have been managed to grow only grasses are now being reseeded to include wild flowers including yellow rattle, eyebright, red clover, meadow cranesbill, yarrow, plantain and many other local species. This is done by mowing a local meadow and spreading the seeds on the target meadow. Some of the larger or later flowering plants have not responded to this method as the meadows are cut for hay before the seed has developed.

To overcome this, plants such as great burnet and melancholy thistle have seeds hand collected (following Kew protocols) and these are germinated and nurtured for a year before being planted out in the meadows as plug plants. The wild flower meadows are surveyed for plant species and bees (to indicate the increase in pollinators.) The project is also restoring peat bogs in Teesdale and dealing with the impact of areas contaminated by lead mining.

The talk was well received by the group with lots of questions being asked afterwards.

In December we are planning a visit to Wallington Hall, a house with a Christmas theme. There will be no gardening group meeting in January but we will resume in February.

### **GENEALOGY GROUP - Report by Alan Swindale**

Very regrettably there will be no meetings of the Family History Group in January and subsequent months due to the ill-health of the current convenor UNLESS someone steps forward to organise subsequent meetings. They do not need to be a family history guru; there is plenty of material online to provide the educational element. However, someone is needed to select the online material, collect the attendance fees and pay the room hire. Writing a monthly report such as this one is a desirable extra. These tasks can be shared between individuals. If anyone feels they can contribute, please contact me.

### **GEOGRAPHY GROUP - October Report by Jane Harrison**

Professor Alastair Bonnett, of Newcastle University, gave a fascinating and amusing talk on "The Mapped and the Unmapped". He is the author of several atlases but is also well-known for his work on racism and the geography of nostalgia. His books have been translated into 19 languages.

He presented a selection of maps to challenge our conceptions about

them and how we perceive the world through them. Many early maps convey a sense of identity and belonging to a particular place. One of the earliest known maps, dated to the Neolithic, was found at Çatalhöyük, in Turkey, and appears to show the settlement and the twin volcanic cones of Mount Hasan. A much later, beautiful 3D 'stick chart' from the Marshall Islands used curving palm fronds and cowrie shells to show the relative positions of the islands and the directions of the currents.

Maps are used for navigation even more widely today as people use smartphones. Maps such as Open Street Map can now be collaborative. We may expect maps to be objective, but they often reflect the political interests and influence of their consumers. Google's maps of Kashmir, for example, show different borders for Indian and Pakistani markets. Some places are excluded from Google Street View. Hollywood celebrities pay for their streets to become invisible whilst the shanty towns of the poor are often forgotten. If you are unmapped, how is sanitation planned or the fire service dispatched? Humanitarian Open Street Maps helps to map cities such as Monrovia, Liberia.

Cartographic imagination has also grown. Some maps are now so complex that they are difficult to comprehend. A map of Shinjuku Station, in Tokyo, which tried to give a 3D view of the many different levels, entrances, and platforms, was utterly bewildering.

Maps today are also used as tools for communication and research. One map showed the spatial dimensions of the relationship between Douglas fir trees and *Rhizopogon* fungi. Another showed the potential of astro (or planetary) mapping showing the relief of Olympus Mons on Mars, which is a mountain the size of Poland.

At question time, we were curious to know about the geography of nostalgia. Alastair explained that memories and a yearning for the past are often linked to places of significance in childhood. We also learnt a new word "cartocacoethes" – an urge or compulsion to see maps everywhere!

Next meeting: Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January at 2.10pm in The Witham. Professor Nick Megoran (Newcastle University Geography): What happens when international borders suddenly appear? A village case study from Central Asia.

There is no meeting in December.

### **GEOLOGY GROUP Report by Bob Tuddenham**

We had a well-attended and very interesting meeting at The Witham in October which ranged from iron mining in the North York Moors to recent earthquakes and tsunamis across the globe!

Bob Tuddenham gave the second of his talks on the Iron Industry in the North East. This talk covered the Jurassic geology of the Cleveland Hills and the discovery of large quantities of ironstone in 1850 which led to the massive iron industry on Teesside and the rapid growth of Middlesbrough from a village to an industrial town. Over 300 million tons of ironstone were mined over 80 years! The technical and business challenges for the industry from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards were explained, and after more than a hundred years of iron and steel making on Teesside, the last blast furnace at Redcar has now sadly been demolished.

After the interval, Trevor Morse gave a talk about three cataclysmic geological events that have happened recently - the tsunami from the volcanic explosion on Tonga, the earthquake in Morocco, and the 'hurricane' in Libya that caused extensive flooding when two dams broke. Trevor explained the background to each event with dramatic photos showing how destructive these were.

Our next meeting will be held at The Witham on Monday November 27<sup>th</sup> at 10 am. All are welcome. From December to February our meetings will be on Zoom and the first Zoom meeting will be on Monday December 18<sup>th</sup> at 2.30 pm. Please contact the convenor for joining details.

### **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT October Report by Tim Meacham**

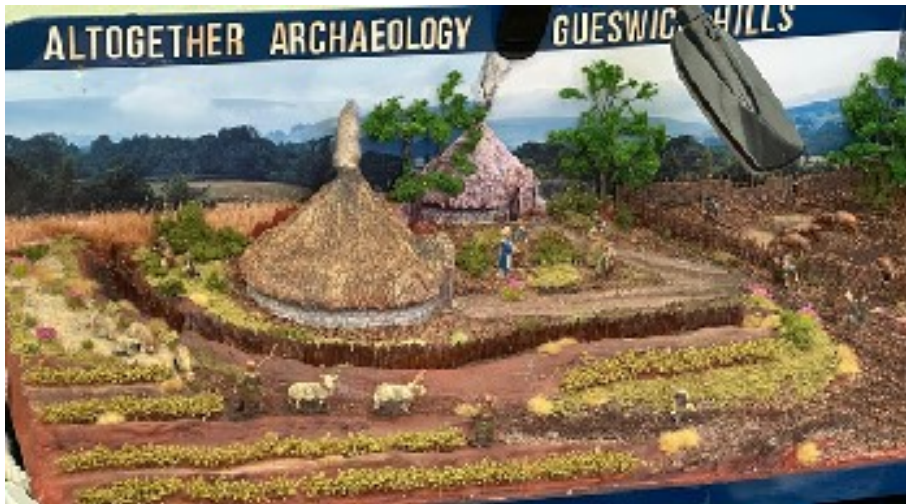
I reported recently on our visit to the Altogether Archaeology Gueswick dig and we were further fortunate that Rob, who was involved in the dig, brought along a selection of finds to show members. Rob accompanied these with an excellent PowerPoint record of the 2023 excavations.

Rob set the scene with an excellent selection of maps; this was particularly useful for those who had not taken part in our dig visit. He went on to tell us that nobody had ever regarded the dig site with any interest until Altogether Archaeology did their first exploratory dig there in June 2019 featuring three trenches. He paid tribute to the Lamb family of Doe Park who have shown great interest and welcomed the group back each year despite COVID's best efforts in the early years.

In both the initial season and post-COVID in 2021, Magnetometry scans revealed a puzzling sequence of what appeared to be man-made trenches almost surrounding the hilltop. Attempts to expose cross sections of these suggested that these represented a wooden palisade,

but the real break-through finds were a multitude of butchered animals' bones. Taken in conjunction with a series of corn querns, a likelihood was emerging that we were looking at a fortified mixed farming 'village'. Animal finds in the depth of one trench were dated to around 1000 BC.

Much of the 2022 season was spent exposing and studying sections of what were clearly paved areas on the hilltop. These suggested a series of roundhouses and 2023 produced some further key finds. Rob showed us iron age pots, while most excitingly a Roman arrowhead suggested contact between our farmers and the Roman invaders. Further investigation of the paved areas allowed the construction of a model of how our emerging 'village ' may have looked (my picture below – previously on the front page of the Teesdale Mercury). Progress remains slow given the short seasons of digging, and the complexity of the finds, but Altogether Archaeology will be back there in 2024 and, with the continuing support of the Lamb family, we can look forward to further updates. This is a very exciting discovery and we feel fortunate to be involved. Thank you Rob for a most stimulating talk with great illustrations.



### **iPAD & iPHONE GROUP October Report by Mike Sweeting**

Our security focus this month was Trustpilot. It is a useful source of information on businesses but it needs to be treated with care. Businesses often show their Trustpilot star rating on their web site and this may not be genuine. Always refer to the Trustpilot web site itself before making your decision.

Apple issued the latest update of its operating systems in September; we had a look at the new features for iPhone and iPad. Most people had not yet updated but it does no harm to wait a month or two as Apple always seem to need to iron out a few wrinkles.

There is a useful facility in Safari for securely remembering log in and card details for web sites called Autofill. Personal information is also held in Contacts and in Apple Store. We talked through the use of this information and the importance of making sure all these security details are kept up to date.

The next meeting is on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November at 1:30pm in Enterprise House (note that this address is also accessible from Montalbo Road and is just past Castle Vets)

There will be no meeting in December.

### **LUNCH GROUP Report by Christine Watkinson**

Thirteen members of the Lunch group met on the 18th October, this time at Coghlands, which is situated in pretty Barningham, only about 20 minutes from Barnard Castle.

Coghlands have an award winning tea room as well as a Deli Shop and also do outside catering. They were especially busy over the Covid lockdown supplying "Dine at Home"!

The restaurant was very busy and we had a long table for thirteen. There was plenty of choice on the menu with "specials of the day" as well as their ordinary menu. The starter "specials" were fresh mushroom soup, ham hock terrine with salad garnish and chutney, or a smoked salmon and prawn salad. All were served with freshly baked artisan breads.

The main courses included fresh sea bream, chicken with a veloute sauce in a puff pastry case, a roast tomato quiche with salads. Nine of us were drawn to the sea bream cooked with a light lemon butter, Delmonico potatoes, Samphire, broccoli and sugar snap peas. Delicious, fresh and very light! The remaining members went for the quiche and the chicken specials, or a larger version of the smoked salmon and prawn salad, again all served with salads or cooked vegetables.

To finish the meal, if you had any room, there were beautiful light meringues with fresh strawberries and cream, or a clementine and lemon tart and apple tart with a walnut crumble. All looked very tempting!!

We would all say the food was delicious and would definitely revisit Coghlands another day.

The group plans to meet 15th November at The Fox Hole, Piercebridge, prompt at 12.00.

### **NEEDLECRAFT GROUP Report by Glen Howard**

This was our first 'working' meeting for several months as we cancelled last month's meeting because so many weren't well and we had our annual outing in September.

Ongoing projects included embroidery, crochet, and knitting. We talked about men doing macrame (with a sample to examine); childhood games and milk, as well as planning for our Christmas lunch which will be held in January instead of a meeting.

Our next meetings will be on Monday 4th December and 5th February 2024. Do get in touch with me if you would like to join us.

Glen Howard 01833 631639

### **PAINTING GROUP Report by Val Hobbs**

After what seemed like an eternity, what with summer holidays, bad weather, etc we all met up again, at last, at Startforth Community Centre, Friday 13th October.

We welcomed two new members, Irene and Karen, into the fold which increased the attendees to a healthy number.

The project of the day which Anne had prepared for us was to interpret/copy a painting of Beatrix Potter. We looked at several of her paintings to study her style of sketching and the application of watercolours over this, and the way she left many of the dark outlines showing.

Fervently, we sketched what seemed like a simple view of a garden and stone arch...nothing is ever that simple, though! We then applied colour,

and found that we needed to mix or dilute some paints to achieve the correct tones. A short interlude of coffee and biscuits gave us the opportunity to step back and analyse our work. Whilst none of us achieved anything like the level of the gardens of the Beatrix Potter



world, we had thoroughly enjoyed tapping into her world.

The next meetings will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> December then 12<sup>th</sup> January, 10am at Startforth Community Centre. New members welcome. Contact Val Hobbs on 07900497503.



**Photographs of paintings by Martin Page**



## PHILOSOPHY GROUP

### Report by Mike Gilsenan and Wallace Anderson

At our October philosophy group meeting we reviewed John Locke and Thomas Hobbes.

They were two of the most prominent political philosophers of the 17th century. Both philosophers had different views on the role of government and the nature of man in relation to the ethics of war & peace.

Hobbes argued that man's natural state is one of a "war of all against all" and that a strong central authority is necessary to prevent society from disintegrating.

In contrast, Locke believed that individuals would not perpetually be at war with each other, and that humans began with a state of natural characteristics of absolute freedom with no government in sight. Locke's view on war and peace was based on his belief in natural rights, which he believed were inherent in all human beings. He argued that the purpose of government was to protect these rights, including the right to life, liberty, and property.

Hobbes believed that individuals should give up their natural rights to a sovereign in exchange for protection and security.

In summary, while both philosophers had different views on the role of government and the nature of man, Locke believed in achieving peace through justice, while Hobbes believed in achieving peace through power.

What do you think?

Come listen and share your views on such philosophical matters at 10am on the fourth Tuesday of each month at Enterprise House, Barnard Castle.

No meeting in December. Next meetings: 28<sup>th</sup> November, 23<sup>rd</sup> January.

### POETRY GROUP October Report by Annie Clouston

The theme for this month was **Loss**. A great stimulant for poets and a great refuge for the sorrowing and down-hearted. Indeed, we began our meeting with a recording of the magnificent Roy Bailey singing **The Joy of Living** – find it here: <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=roy+bailey+the+joy+of+living+you+tube&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:dec165bd,vid:0jwuqoF6QX0,st:0>.

I defy you to keep a dry eye. We were all very moved, the words reminding us of those we have loved and lost.

**Nothing is Lost** by Anne Barbara Ridler continued, that comfort can be found in memories:

Nothing dies.

The cells pass on their secrets, we betray them

Unknowingly: in a freckle, in the way

We walk, recall some ancestor,

And Adam in the colour of our eyes.

Schubert's song cycle **Winterreise** (Winter Journey) with words by Wilhelm Muller found us again listening to haunting music – find it here:

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Good+night+Winterreise&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:68b64fcf,vid:-poo-hBtl2E,st:0>

Not all was gloom – an injection of ironic humour from Elizabeth Bishop in **One Art** brought some light relief, and not a little recognition of the human capacity (mine) to waste vast amounts of time looking for lost things (I must be St Anthony's greatest disciple):

The art of losing isn't hard to master;

so many things seemed filled with the intent

to be lost that their loss is no disaster

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster

Of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.

The art of losing isn't hard to master.

We also considered Simon Armitage's poetry emerging from his recent visit to the Arctic, in particular, *The Summit*, in which he confronts the environmental catastrophe unfolding. It ends:

When I met the glacier face to face

there was no close encounter

of ancient snow and body heat

just weepy clouds and a washy sky

hanging upside down

in a zinc-coloured lake, and the eyes

staring out of the water were mine.

Simon Armitage's **Poet Laureate in the Arctic** is available on BBC Sounds.

To counteract this predominately melancholic session – and the lessening light and the onslaught of winter - we unanimously agreed that we would be searching for **Joy** in our next month's meeting.

### Science and Technology: Between the Ears Report by Pete Redgrave

The October meeting of the Science and Technology Special Interest Group (Monday 9th) was beset by organisational issues. Perhaps, due to the absence of our gallant organiser (Roy T), or a spurious coincidence of commitments, there was sparse attendance for my talk on the brain. Consequently, rather than giving the intended presentation, we had a neuro-discussion. This proved invaluable since it became clear, parts of my prepared talk could usefully be omitted (details of ion movements across a neurone's semi-permeable membrane during the action potential), while other ideas could helpfully be expanded (the key and lock metaphor for neurotransmitters and their receptors). If I'm called upon to give this talk again....it will be all the better for Monday's neuro-discussion.

### SPANISH CONVERSATION Report by Michael Harris

Our monthly meeting continued with Roald Dahl's *Matilda*, in Spanish. As you may surmise, being written by Dahl, it contains some curious words and phrases that don't translate exactly.

The demon headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, yells at a child, 'You witless weed! You empty headed hamster! You stupid glob of glue.'

The alliteration doesn't appear in the Spanish version and so 'witless weed' becomes 'stupid ass'. 'Empty headed hamster' becomes

'knucklehead' and 'stupid glob of glue' becomes, well, nothing! Dahl's cruel humour is both lost and absent in translation.



Spanish 'Smile of the Day' with a little help.

Éxito = excitement

Siempre = always

Parece = seem

## TABLE TENNIS GROUP Report by Peter Singer



The table tennis group continues to ping and pong regularly on a Friday afternoon - jousting, jeering and jabbering in equal measure and with great vigour (well, a bit of vigour occasionally, but mostly rather gently). During the main part of the holiday season, our numbers are inevitably reduced and some weeks we have had only two members turning out. This is great for practice at playing singles, but can be exhausting and exerts some strain on the finances as well as on the players. Now we are into Autumn, numbers are increasing again and last week we had two tables of doubles and two players sitting out on rotation, which worked very well all round. This included two players trying the group out for the first time, which was great.

Three of our members recently took advantage of an invitation from the Barnard Castle table tennis club to attend a free taster session at their regular Wednesday evening club night. How brave (or foolhardy) was that? BCTTC currently have two teams in Division 1 of the Darlington Table Tennis League, which is a highly commendable achievement for a relatively small club in a relatively small market town like Barney.

We were made very welcome by John Heaviside, the club organiser and the members who were there. Apparently, a number of their league players were on holiday, but those that we met were of a very high standard and it was fascinating to watch how they played. Not surprisingly, they were way better than us, so we mostly played between ourselves, but the couple of games we had with some of their players showed how important spin is in the game – all we have to do is work out how to return a serve that is shooting off the table at right angles (any geometry experts out there who might be able to advise?). It was, however, great to have several buckets full of table tennis balls available, so we could just carry on playing without having repeatedly to run the length of the hall to find our ball.

Overall, it was enjoyable and instructive and we shall go along again to see if we can pick up a few pointers to improving our own games. Watch this space!

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

### TRIPS – HAMPSHIRE Report by Dorothy Jameson

The trip started well. Twenty of us were picked up in Barnard Castle, and there were another 7 people who had been collected from other parts of County Durham.

The journey went well and we were delighted with the hotel. Originally a lovely Manor House, then student accommodation for Southampton University, lucky students. It then became a stunning hotel.

Our first visit was to Winchester, a delightful city with a magnificent cathedral. The next day was into Southampton where several of us visited the Titanic Museum.

A day in Portsmouth followed with a visit to Mary Rose. The following day we had a drive through the New Forest and on to Beaulieu House. Apart from the motor museum there were lovely gardens to visit.

Then it was back home. We all agreed that it had been a great holiday. The weather had been kind to us, only a couple of showers and these occurred when we were in the coach.

Lots of requests as to when the next holiday will be, so WATCH THIS SPACE!

### WINE GROUP October Report – South African Wine By Tim Meacham

Eight of us met at Stella and John's to revisit the wines of South Africa. We had not visited this subject for a number of years since being most disappointed with a previous selection, but a recent trip to Majestic saw the staff member telling me how much South African wine has improved recently – and they were having a sale event focused on South Africa. So, it was decided then and there, we would give them another try. All wines are from Majestic.

We kicked off with four whites: the cricket lovers among us were pleased to see the **Men In White Coats Viognier 2020** (12.5% and £8.99) from The Gabb family who, according to Wikipedia, 'were instrumental in putting South Africa' on the wine map. This was a pleasant smooth white (not like the astringent examples we tried last time). We may not have wanted to pay £8.99, but it was a pleasant fairly full-bodied number featuring the Viognier grape. The **Zevenwacht Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2022** followed (13% and £7.33); most members preferred this as it had an immediate 'zing' although the finish was mildly disappointing. The group did not spot it as typical Sauvignon Blanc.

Our third white, a **Leeuwenkuil Grenache Blanc 2022** (13% and £8.66) was quite different. From a newly discovered wine area around Paarl (although the makers the Dreyer family have been in situ since 1850) this strong number had a heady mineral flavour; as usual opinions were mixed but a number of us saw this as our favourite white. Finally came our **Dane De Wet Chardonnay 2022** (13.5% and £8.66) which again surprised – ‘a drinkable Chardonnay’ as one member remarked. This was really quite good with its ‘ripe flavours of apple and lemon’ coming through to offer a surprising nutty finish. We finished with two reds, a **Pringle Bay Pinot Noir 2021** (13% and £7.99) which one critic called ‘among the best value wines he’d tried over the year.’ We were not so convinced although we agreed the price was a good one. Better though was the **Vinologist Merlot 2020** (14% and £6.66) which had the craziest label ever seen. This put us off but when we tasted it ... well, this was a fruity delight and the cheapest of the day.

So, come back South Africa. We will not be waiting four years before we try you again! Thanks John and Stella. Next meeting: Tuesday 19th December at 2.00pm at Tim and Mandy’s. Subject: ‘Bring and discuss a bottle.’

### **YOGA GROUP - Report by Merrion Chrisp**

Teesdale u3a’s new yoga group is led by the excellent Angela Griffiths, who is a British Wheel of Yoga Teacher.

We have completed our first term and are looking forward to the next. The 75 minute sessions cover breath work (pranayama), postures (asana) and relaxation.

The classes are at The Hub on Monday mornings. Numbers are limited and the class is full, but if you would like to be added to the waiting list, please contact Merrion Chrisp - <mailto:mfchrisp@gmail.com> We shall then contact you when a place becomes available.

## **WALKING GROUPS**

### **SHORTER WALKS GROUP October Report by Sue Overton**

Skies were overcast as 14 members met opposite the Bridge Inn, Whorlton (now closed sadly) and set off on a 3-mile circular walk. Recent rains had made the hard stony tracks slippery and the field paths quite muddy.

Turning right from the main road, the concreted/stony track passes Hill Top Cottage before crossing Whorlton Beck with its noisy waterfall visible on our left. Bearing left at a fork, the track continues past farm buildings becoming narrower with high hedges before emerging into open fields. We turned sharp right at a metal gate (very badly signed here) to progress down the edge of a field towards the river where we turned right to join the well-used path high above the River Tees. The steep drop down to the river required extra care – mud and landslips potential hazards here.

Leaves on the trees were starting to change colour, the hawthorn bushes were heavy with bright red berries, and we could see Wycliffe on the opposite banks of the river.

The path then joins with the concrete track at the fork from the beginning of the walk and we were soon back to our cars parked near



the village green. Such a shame that the Bridge Inn was not open – a cuppa would have been most welcome at this point!

Our next walk will be on Monday 27th November.

**Photo: Ian Royston**

## **7-9 MILES WALKING GROUP Report by Lynda Bares**

Wednesday 18th October, Bleabek Falls, 8 miles walk

There were 18 of us starting out from Holwick as we had to change the start point due to road closures in Middleton, but we all managed to get there ok. Initially we walked down to cross the river at Wynch Bridge and then up to Bowless and onto the old carriage road past Dirt Pit Farm and up, turning left just before Ettersgill. Through the fields to Hanging Shaw car park where we stopped for a bite to eat and coffee. It had been a bit windy up to then but the wind had been on our backs, now we would be changing direction, into the wind.

Next we walked down to Cronkley bridge, passing some delightful cows, and joined the Pennine Way all the way to the Quarry, with views of Bleabeck falls on the way. Climbing up the side of the Falls was exhilarating and we had to be careful in places as we were quite close to the edge.

Getting to the top we joined the footpath over some wet ground but soon joined the shooters track which, after a second stop, took us back to Holwick and a chance to have a good natter on the track back to the cars.

We were lucky with the weather on the walk, no rain, though quite strong winds, so we could enjoy the views.

Thanks to Lynda for leading the walk and Alan for the photograph.

We will join the 4 -6 mile walking group for Christmas fare on Tuesday 12 December.

Wishing all the group members the compliments of the season and some happy walking over the holiday.

Our walk on January 17th will be led by Margaret and likely to be in Richmond/Swaledale area – contact Nicky for further information. [nickygrace729@gmail.com](mailto:nickygrace729@gmail.com)



### **FELLWALKING October Report by Annie Clouston**

Driving over the Stang to the start of our walk gave us a hope of a bright and sunny day. The view from the top into Swaledale was so beautiful it made me gasp. But in Reeth, ten minutes later, the prospect that loured before us was considerably less bright, and by the time the nine of us



reached Calver Hill the downpour was steady and unrelenting. The views our walk-leader promised us were lost in low cloud, and any poetry in my soul was reduced to *"Twas brillig and the slithy tothes..."* and slithy it indeed was. The footpath down from Calver Hill into Arkengarthdale is steep and perilous, and thus it was, that I fulfilled my personal mantra – "it wouldn't be a fell walk without a fall" and once again I was covered in mud. Why do some walkers look as tidy and fresh when they finish as when they start? And why do I look like a walking cow-pat?

Happily, the rain took a break as we were debating whether or not to finish our intended route up to Fremington Edge, and so we achieved our second tough ascent of the day, and found a good spot for our snap. Where else should a fellow celebrate his birthday? And so it was that the cork was popped and the beetroot brownies were downed and the song was sung for Jim.

He's very spry for his age... (whatever it is).

Our route took us back into Reeth to cross the Swale, remarking on a strange vehicle at rest in the garage by the bridge; an armoured vehicle with gun turret, lately pensioned off from a war zone (Northern Ireland?)



**Jim's birthday celebration on Fremington Edge**

We ended our walk at the ice-cream parlour on the Green, where the coffee, the cake and the companionship were greatly appreciated. Thanks to Phil for leading another splendid walk.



**Q: What is the difference between a Hippo and Annie?**

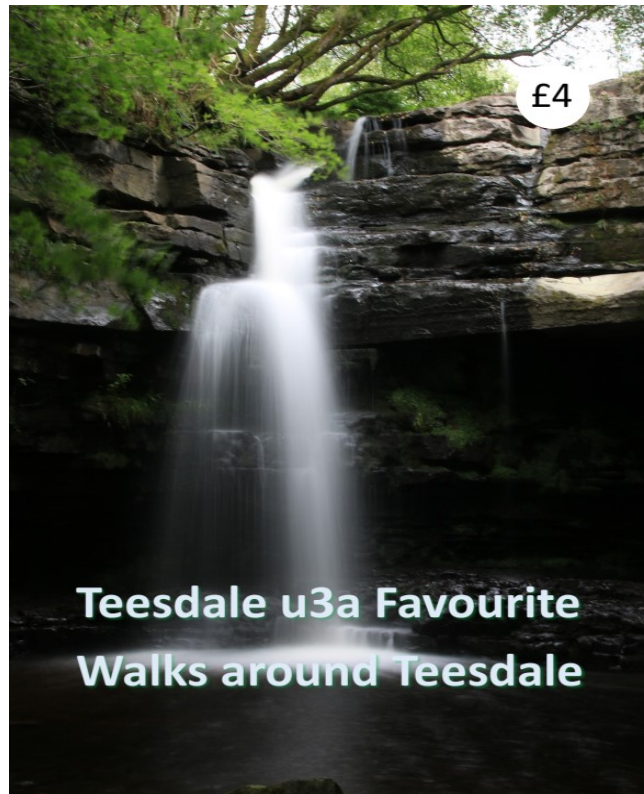
**A: Hippos like to wallow in mud.**

## NOVEMBER'S ALLSORTS QUIZ

1. What number month was 'November' in the Roman calendar?
2. How many UK Prime Ministers has the 21<sup>st</sup> century seen?
3. What is the name of the C19<sup>th</sup> Gothic novel in which Svengali is a main character?
4. Raw uranium is not radio-active. True or false?
5. Who did Yvonne Goolagong Cawley beat in the 1971 Wimbledon final?
6. Who wrote the song/rhyme *Monday's child is fair of face*?
7. Where is St Lucia Day always celebrated?
8. What are the start and finish dates of autumn in the meteorological calendar?
9. Name two Charles Dickens' Christmas stories.
10. Which colours does a dog see?
11. How many US states have banned abortion (as of going to press)?
12. Which two areas does the magazine, *Northern Life*, say it celebrates?
13. What is called *The Old King of May* in an ancient fertility rite on 1<sup>st</sup> May in south-west England?
14. What is *The Fertile Crescent*?
15. Whose army defeated the Scottish army led by King David II in 1346?



Hazel McCallum and Ruth Lapworth on our stand at the Eggleston Show



**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.**

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. 9
2. 7
3. *Trilby* (by George du Maurier)
4. False (it is weakly radio-active)
5. Margaret Court
6. Unknown. 1<sup>st</sup> printed source in A E Bray's *Traditions of Devonshire*.
7. Scandinavia
8. 1<sup>st</sup> September to 30<sup>th</sup> November
9. *The Chimes, The Cricket on the Hearth, The Battle of Life, The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain, A Christmas Carol*.
10. Grey, brown, yellow, blue.
11. 14
12. Lancashire and Yorkshire
13. The hobby horse
14. Western Asia (formed by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and the Mediterranean Sea)
15. Lord Ralph Neville



### WANTED

A volunteer with some knowledge of how to get the best from Android mobile phones.

You don't need to be an expert, a basic understanding of how to use them would suffice.

We already have a list of members eager to learn and there is support to assist in organising the new

#### **Android Phone Interest Group.**

For more information contact Sue Overton **07512 368884**

or email [sueoverton@hotmail.com](mailto:sueoverton@hotmail.com)

### Anyone for CHESS?

From beginners to experts, all are welcome to join this new Interest Group.

Contact Sue Overton **07512 368884**

or email [sueoverton@hotmail.com](mailto:sueoverton@hotmail.com)

### And Finally...PICKLEBALL

... is looking like a goer. Watch this space!

## ANOTHER MONTH IN AMBRIDGE (November 2023)

### Review by Annie Clouston

If it wasn't for you, dear reader, I'd be giving up on The Archers. What can have had such an impact on your lifelong (almost) listening habit, Annie? Well... just lately I have been having a sense of being in an alternative universe; what planet, for example, is Mia - she of the impossibly ridiculous passion for pulling up ragwort with the too-wet-to-hang-out Brad – on?

Lately the scriptwriters have miraculously transformed her from mouse to tiger, and frankly the mouse was the better of the two, and now she's slinging fire-crackers at the old dears in the village if they refuse to sign her petition to ban the Ambridge traditional Fireworks on the Green. As an old dear in-the-making, I take exception to this kind of bullying and harassment of the vulnerable, and think this young lady needs the clip-round-the-ear favoured by some members of my generation delivered by an old-style Peeler of the Dixon of Dock Green variety. Step up Sergeant Burns!

Not to mention the Road to Damascus well-travelled by ex-misogynist, George Grundy. A listener cannot help but feel that the furrow ploughed by this storyline is very shallow indeed. However, it pales into insignificance when compared to Psychopathic Rob's sudden need to be baptised before he gets to be a dead cert for the fires of Hell. One good thing though: Tony, Rob's ex-father-in-law, has gained an understanding that Rob's evil ways had a backstory. At long last we get to meet the even more dastardly father who spawned such a demon, and his character is drawn with the subtlety of Brian Blessed. I was so disappointed that the riot I predicted failed to materialise. Just another Ambridge storm in a pint of Shires.

Meanwhile, Alistair's love-life takes a turn for the better when he is predicted, via a ring embedded in a slice of Clary Grundy's Barra Brith, of a marriage within the year. In which case, Denise – the only possible marriage candidate – had better get her adultery-skates on and ditch Him-Indoors pronto-sharpish.

Bullying, Conversions, and the promise of How's-Your-Father, it's all there in an everyday story of country folk. I'm still irked there was no riot...

*Annie's forthcoming book **How to become an Archers Scriptwriter: A Manual** will be published by LoadzaNonsense Press on 1 April 2024.*

Group	Meeting Time	Contact details
Art Appreciation	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed pm	Tony Seward 01833 630050
Automotive	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday am	Peter Colley 01833 695197
Birdwatching	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday am	Andrew Lapworth 07962 038052
Board Games	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday pm	Hazel McCallum 01833 316484
Book Group 2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Mon pm	Maggie Cleminson 01833 640801
Book Group 3 Room to Read	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed pm	Annie Clouston 01833 637091
Climate Solutions	1 <sup>st</sup> Thurs am	Kate Bailey 07867 683195
Cryptic Crossword	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed 2pm	Sue Overton 07512 368884
Discussion	2 <sup>nd</sup> Fri am	Glen Howard 01833 631639
French Conversation	4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs pm	Stella Kirton 01388 488919
Gardening	1 <sup>st</sup> Fri pm	Julie Archer 07774 903377 01833 637576
Genealogy	1 <sup>st</sup> Thurs pm	Alan Swindale 01388 488348
Geography	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thurs 2pm	Gerald Blake 01833 650899
Geology	4 <sup>th</sup> Mon am	Bob Tuddenham 07812 378004
Historic Environment	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thurs 10am	Tim Meacham 07847 182554
iPad & iPhone	4 <sup>th</sup> Tue 1.30pm	Mike Sweeting 07565 925412
Italian Conversation	Every Wed am	Marie Jenkins 07754 205664
Lunch Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed noon	Jane Mathieson 01388 710741
Needlecraft	1 <sup>st</sup> Mon pm	Glen Howard 01833 631639
Painting	2 <sup>nd</sup> Fri 10am	Val Hobbs 07900 497503
Philosophy	4 <sup>th</sup> Tues 10am	Ruth Sansom 01325 401850
Photography	1 <sup>st</sup> Tues	Jane Mathieson 01388 710741
Poetry	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed am	Annie Clouston 01833 637091

Group	Meeting Time	Contact details
Science and Technology	2 <sup>nd</sup> Mon am	Roy Tranter 01833 638288
Scrabble	2 <sup>nd</sup> Mon pm	Lilian Smith 01833 650628
Spanish Conversation	3 <sup>rd</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> Friday 10am	Bill Heyes 01833 640885
Wildflower Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed 2pm	Kate Keen 07880 741151
Wine Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tues pm	Tim Meacham 07847 182554
Yoga	Every Monday am	Angela Griffiths 01833 630170
<b>Walking Groups</b>		
Shorter walks 3-4 miles	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday pm	Sue Overton 07512 368884
Walking 4-6 miles	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues 10am	Gillian Barnes-Morris 07941 852165
Walking 7-9 miles	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed 10am	Nicky Grace <a href="mailto:nickygrace729@gmail.com">nickygrace729@gmail.com</a>
Fell Walking	4 <sup>th</sup> 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. shown in the table.

**Coming up at your local  
Community Arts Centre**



<b>Fri 24 Nov</b> 7.30pm	<b>THEATRE – A Christmas Carol with Guy Masterson</b> Guaranteed to get you into the Christmas Spirit!
<b>Tues 28 Nov</b> 8.00pm	<b>COMEDY – Angela Barnes: Hot Mess (14+)</b>
<b>Thurs 30 Nov</b> 7.00pm	<b>SCREENING – National Theatre Live: Skylight (15)</b> Starring Bill Nighy and Carey Mulligan.
<b>Fri 1 Dec</b> 7.30pm	<b>FOLK – The Furrow Collective: We Know By The Moon</b>
<b>Sat 2 Dec</b> 7.30pm	<b>MUSIC – Carols by Candlelight</b> Concordia, Canticus and noaddedsugar! Choirs.
<b>Mon 4 Dec</b> 4.30pm	<b>FAMILY – The Polar Express Experience &amp; Film (U)</b> Includes storytelling & hot chocolate and film.
<b>Tues 5 Dec</b> 7.30pm	<b>MUSIC – Carolling &amp; Crumpets with John Kirkpatrick</b>
<b>Fri 8 &amp; Sat 9 Dec</b> 7.00pm	<b>TURRETS YOUTH THEATRE – ‘Twas The Knife Before Christmas (12+)</b> Includes festive three course meal.
<b>Fri 15 to Sun 24 Dec</b> Various times	<b>PANTOMIME – The Wizard of Oz</b>
<b>Sat 16 Dec</b> 2.00pm	<b>MUSIC – A Ukulele Christmas Bash with the D’Ukes of Scarth</b>
<b>Mon 18 Dec</b> 6.30pm	<b>FAMILY – Santa Rocks!</b> Magical family theatre show, with ‘Nice List’ Certificate for each child.
<b>Sat 13 Jan</b> 7.30pm	<b>COMEDY – Mark Simmons: Quip Off The Mark (14+)</b>
<b>Thurs 18 Jan</b> 7.30pm	<b>SWING/JAZZ – The Jive Aces: Keeping The Show On The Road</b> Includes space for dancing!
<b>Sat 20 Jan</b> 7.30pm	<b>MUSIC – Izzie Walsh</b> A blend of country, bluegrass, folk and Americana.
<b>Wed 24 Jan</b> 6.45pm	<b>LIVE SCREENING: The Royal Opera House - Rusalka</b>

[www.thewitham.org.uk](http://www.thewitham.org.uk) **Box office: 01833 631107**