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FORUM

MARCH 2024
No. 24/03



u3a

CHAIR'S LETTER from Annie Clouston

Dear Friends

What a fantastic turnout we had for Chris Lloyd's excellently researched talk about Darlington's very own Paton and Baldwin's. Many of us locals have memories of working in or living by the enormous site, and our knitting grannies and mums were loyal purchasers of hanks of good quality yarn. (I seem to remember a grisly grey number my mum knitted for me – it never wore out - to accompany my grisly grey school uniform, relieved only by a particularly lurid daffodil-yellow square-necked poplin blouse.) Happily one member of our audience was sporting a fine, natty example of Paton's knitwear which was modelled and photographed, and featured in the Darlington & Stockton Times and the Northern Echo; good publicity for us!

Its coming up to the AGM and the committee is very keen to attract some of our new members to help run the organisation, keeping it fresh and lively. Fresh and lively are just about the only qualifications required alongside a desire to keep moving us forward as a self-help learning and social organisation. Our group convenors are doing sterling work too, and many have other group members who support them in arranging meetings.

All convenors would welcome offers of help so that the workload is shared and there is back-up in emergencies but also to build-in succession planning. If this is a way you can contribute speak up!

I'm most definitely not a morning person, but my horror at the very thought of 7am has been significantly assuaged by daylight arriving earlier, the precursor of Spring, my favourite season - for even if summer disappoints, new life in Spring gladdens the heart. As Christina Rossetti writes:

There is no time like Spring

When life's alive in everything

Carpe Diem!

Annie

Apologies. We had manifold IT issues last month and some reports were lost. We hope we have redressed the balance this month. Sorry.

**Need to renew your membership?
Go to Page 40 for details**



Cover: Dam at Cow Green Reservoir - photo by Pete Redgrave

It's Your Forum

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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 9th April and next month's editor is Kate. 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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MONTHLY MEETING AT THE WITHAM

Chris Lloyd, the February u3a speaker, asked the audience if they had ever been employed by Paton and Baldwins in Darlington. Although the factory ceased production in 1980, several members of the audience had fond memories of their time there. One member could even remember having a job application turned down.

Paton and Baldwin's was established as two companies in the 1770s by John Paton and James Baldwin. The companies merged in 1920 and by the mid 1930s had several factories in Northern England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In 1951, the manufacturing business moved to a 140 acre site on the outskirts of Darlington, the Lingfield site, and became the biggest wool factory in the world. In its prime, the factory employed 4,500 personnel and recruited 30% of local school leavers. 50 buses were hired daily to transport employees from across County Durham and Darlington's first computer was in the factory. There were extensive sports and recreation facilities for the staff and a dining room which could accommodate 1400 people. 60% of the wool manufactured on the site was exported to countries all over the world.

Many in the audience remembered the Paton knitting patterns, including some for swimwear, the products leaving little to the imagination when wet. Roger Moore was one of Paton's fashion models and he apparently earned the nickname, 'The Big Knit'.

In the 1960s and 1970s the demand for wool from the factory diminished. Cheap wool was being imported from overseas and artificial fibres e.g. nylon and terylene were becoming available. Also, fashions were changing rapidly and by 1966, the price of wool had dropped by 40%. Production on the site ceased in 1980.

Chris displayed a photo of the trademark Bakelite beehive (busy bees) which knitters used to stop their wool from getting tangled. Some of these are still to be seen in charity and antique shops.

Chris included the story of the brave RAF pilot, William McMullen who, in 1945, deliberately navigated his damaged bomber, away from the town, the crew having bailed out, and crashed it on the then vacant Lingfield site, killing himself but saving many lives in the process. McMullen Road is named after him.

This was a fascinating talk, full of local interest and delivered by Chris in his usual enthusiastic and tongue in cheek style.

Ian Reid 26th February 2024

MEETINGS AT THE WITHAM - Every fourth Thursday

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

25th April - Andy Beck - "The Wainwrights in Colour"

Andy Beck has been a professional artist since leaving the Royal Air Force Regiment in 1988 and is now well-known as a local author, artist and photographer. Andy gives his popular presentation on his unique ten year challenge to paint every single view in Alfred Wainwright's Seven Pictorial 'Pen and Ink' Guides to the Lakeland Fells. The talk appeals not only to those who know the work of Wainwright but also to lovers of the Lake District and budding artists.

23rd May - Jean Harrod - Life as a Diplomat

Jean Harrod spent much of her life working overseas as a British diplomat in Embassies and High Commissions in Australia, Brussels, the Caribbean, China, East Berlin, Indonesia, Mauritius, and Switzerland. She has travelled extensively around the world and writes about all the countries she had lived in, or visited. Jean is also known as crime writer and creator of the fictional diplomat and amateur detective Jess Turner.

27th June - Morlin Ellis - The History of Spanish Art in 15 Objects

Research Curator, Spanish Gallery and Library, Auckland Project.

ADVANCE NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Thursday 25th April 2024

The 16th Annual General Meeting of Teesdale u3a will be held on Thursday 25th April 2024 in The Witham Hall, Barnard Castle commencing at 10.30am. Doors open 10.00am.

All AGM documents will be sent out by email or post:

Nominations for Committee and Motions for debate must be received by the Business secretary on or before Thursday 28th March 2024.

WORKSHOP REPORTS

Birdsong Workshop - Report by Sue Overton

Many thanks to Andrew Lapworth for leading this very popular workshop which was attended by thirty members all keen to improve their skills in recognising the songs of our feathered friends.

Andrew's superb presentation of recorded birdsong and accompanying slides answered many questions – why do birds sing, how and when do they sing, where do they sing? – along with helpful tips/mnemonics as an aid to memorising the different songs e.g. the Great Tit sounds like 'Teacher! Teacher!' and the Wood Pigeon seems to say 'Take two shoes Taffy!'

The anatomy of birds includes a syrinx (Greek for pan pipes) with two voice boxes rather than our larynx/one voice box and this enables them to produce two sounds simultaneously.

Birds might sing to attract a mate, to declare their ownership of territory or as an alarm when predators are near. Our towns and gardens provide a suitable habitat for many of our well known birds such as robins who have different songs for the different times of year, blackbirds whose alarm call differs depending on what the threat is, blue tits who have a variety of high, thin calls and the wren, smallest and loudest.

Woods such as Deepdale are the chosen habitat for the warblers, bullfinch, marsh tit, nuthatch, redstart, pied flycatcher and the great spotted woodpecker with its distinctive call – 'tck,tck'. The blackcaps with their warbling song arrive with the spring equinox and the cuckoos can be heard from May – the female cuckoo has a 'bubbling' song.

Birds preferring the watery habitat of becks and the River Tees include dippers, kingfishers, oystercatchers, skylarks, lapwings, redshanks, snipe, nightjars and grouse both red and black.

To hone your listening skills, you can download apps such as Merlin: bird ID help for 8500+ species.

Or go to the website: www.xeno-canto.org which shares wildlife sounds from all over the world.

Or listen to 'Tweet of the day: a year of Britain's birds from the Radio 4 series.

Hand Bell Workshop - Report by Hazel Yeadon

It was a wet morning, when once again people braved the journey to Boldron, this time for our Hand Bell Workshop. Eleven participants were very impressed that six ringers (plus one wife) turned out to instruct us. My contact Helen Scott brought along Colin, Fiona, Katherine and mother and daughter, Caroline and Emma.

We started with a short introduction to English Change Ringing, before we had a demonstration and then we were allowed to have a go with the special bronze bells, with leather straps attached. The technique is not easy, involving flicking the wrist up - not too sharply, nor too gently but just right, as we found out - and then flicking down again. It felt very good to manage several different rounds from printed sheets, albeit with each bell's note marked with a number.



We then had an involved exercise with each bell's number, tucked under a different coloured mat on the floor (actually carpet samples, which proved ideal for the purpose). Here people changed places with their neighbours, after ringing each time, resembling weaving. The concentration on everyone's faces was impressive and one person said she was certainly ready for her caffeine fix when we had a break. Our attempts were interspersed with demonstrations from the experts, who were able to use two different bells at once!! Their rendition of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star was delightful.

Everyone felt very pleased to have advanced to playing tunes, albeit with a different colour on the music for each bell, by the end of the morning, namely Wooden Heart and Joy to the World, so we are ready for Christmas! A big thank you was given to Helen and her team for a very enjoyable workshop

FUTURE WORKSHOPS

April 6th - History of Barnard Castle's Street Names - Is now full but this workshop will be repeated later in the year so all those on reserve list will be invited to take part.

May 18th - Cross Stitch - Places still available.

Contact **Hilary Dunnighan** hilary.dunnighan@gmail.com

June 22nd - Tour of Spirit of Yorkshire Distillery and Filey - The tour is now full but places are available on the coach for a day at the seaside/ Filey to do your own thing. Contact **Sue Overton** **07512 368884**

FUTURE DAY AND LONGER TRIPS

19th April - Hawes & Wensleydale Cheese Creamery.

Leaving Barnard Castle at 09:00, returning before 18:00.

Cost £21.00 includes coach & entry. There are a couple of seats still available

25th May - Pot Fest, Penrith.

Leaving Barnard Castle at 09:15 returning before 18:00.

Cost £19.00 includes coach & entry. There are few seats still available.

22nd June - Wool Fest, Milnthorpe,

Leaving Barnard Castle at 09:00 returning before 18:00.

Cost £25.00 includes coach & entry. There are a few seats still available.

20th September - Woodhorn Museum, Ashington

Leaving Barnard Castle at 09:00 returning before 18:00.

Cost £22.00 includes coach & entry. There are a few seats still available.

You can pay by cash or cheque made out to 'Teesdale U3A'.

Please contact **Jane Mathieson** **01388 710741** for more information.

2nd September Stratford, Lichfield and National Arboretum

There are now 19 of us booked on this trip organised by National Holidays. We will be staying at the Royal Court Hotel in Coventry, dinner, bed and breakfast for 4 nights, leaving on Monday, The cost is £299 per person and there is a single supplement of £70. There is one single room still available and there are 10 places left on the coach. We hope National Holidays will pick us up in Barnard Castle, otherwise Maudes Coaches will get us to the pick up point which will involve a small extra charge.

Bookings: **Kyle Travel** **01833 690303**

Details: **Dorothy Jameson** **01833 637957**

GROUP REPORTS

Android Phone Group - Report by Martyn Radcliffe

A good crowd of 20 people gathered on the 1st February at Guide HQ clutching Android phones of many makes and models.

Last time we had dealt with putting a pin or password on mobile devices and we continued that by discussing passwords and the need for them to be anonymised ensuring that they could not be guessed.

The issue of long difficult passwords was addressed with several options put forward for keeping them safe but accessible.

We discussed “the cloud” and how data is stored on servers across the world and how that data is kept safe. As well as emphasising the need for antiviral software on Android phones and tablets when accessing the web.

We looked at apps in general from downloading from Google Play and why free apps have advertising or premium versions allowing developers to offer free versions but allowing some revenue to be generated.

Lastly the group found, AVG free anti-virus software on Google Play (it was explained what the difference between a sponsored item showing in a search and one that appears from the search criteria entered). It was then installed on handsets and a scan done of the individual phone.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 4th April 2024, 2pm at the Guide HQ, Birch Road when we will look at backing up and downloading from Android to other devices.

Art Appreciation Group - Report by Tony Seward

We started 2024 in lively fashion with a talk from David Phillips on ‘the picture that shocked Paris in 1851’. The perpetrator of this subversive work was Gustave Courbet (1819-1877), and the picture his ‘Burial at Ornans’. Set in his home region of the Jura, it caused such offence because it treated a procession of mourners, made up of the local bourgeoisie and ordinary country people, with the monumentality hitherto only accorded to figures in historical or religious paintings.



(compare El Greco's 'Burial of Count Orgaz').

French Realism was a major new development sparked by the upheaval of the 1848 Revolution. Courbet, along with writers such as Zola, Balzac, and Flaubert, demanded that art should reflect the real lives of ordinary people, thus posing a direct democratic challenge to the existing social order. His 'The Stonebreakers' was even more controversial, showing the poorest of the poor, dressed in rags and engaged in the sort of backbreaking, dehumanising work to which they were condemned by their lowly status.



More acerbic was Honoré Daumier (1808-1879), whose output ranged from hard-hitting political cartoons, through magazine illustrations, to paintings of everyday life across the social spectrum., a good example being his contrasting depictions of railway travel, 'The First-Class Carriage' and 'The Third-Class Carriage'.

Courbet led the way. Others followed, with varying degrees of radicalism. They included Jean-Francois Millet, whose subject was also the rural peasantry but whose style was more traditional, following classical models and less 'in your face'. His images have a grace and nobility which were very powerful and, through prints and etchings, became immensely popular throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.

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The influence of Realism extended to Van Gogh in the 1880s. He especially admired Millet, and invested some of his key images, such as 'The Sower', with his own powerful sensibility. We rounded off the session with Professor Kloss's illuminating analyses of Van Gogh's 'The Harvest', which demonstrates his mastery of formal landscape composition; and of Cézanne's 'Card Players' in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, again a monumental study of ordinary folk.

Next up - Wednesday 3rd April we will look at pioneering women artists, starting with Artemisia Gentileschi.

Automotive Group - Report by Peter Colley

Winter is a time for car brochures and magazines rather than driving excursions. Many of our group have their P&J (pride and joy,) safely tucked away. Rain, salt and mud not being friends of older cars.

Given this, and in the spirit of u3a's educational ethos, we turned our attention to motoring quizzes. Thanks go to Phil Chricton, our quizmaster.

One round was particularly tricky.

Car Marques. e.g., what does BMW stand for?
Bayerische Motoren Werke.

Last year we enjoyed several good runs out and attended several meets and events. Nearby Croft Circuit hosts regular race meetings and track days.



This photo is one of our members participating in a track day there.

Birdwatching Group

Visit to Low Barns - Report by Linda Elliott

Our first outing of the year saw 11 of the group at Low Barns, one of Durham Wildlife Trust's main reserves and visitor centre near Witton-le-Wear. It was a sunny, clear but freezing cold morning (-5°C) and the group saw around 30 different species.

Low Barns is a wetland reserve, and although the surrounding trees held little, smaller birds attracted to the feeding station included Great, Blue, Coal and Long-tailed Tits. (and possibly Marsh or Willow Tits), Nuthatch, Dunnocks and Blackbirds. The lakes and ponds meant water birds were abundant and included Grey Heron and Little Egrets, ducks such as Wigeon, Teal, Mallards, Coots and Moorhens. Diving ducks were well represented by Tufted Ducks and a fine drake Goldeneye and a pair of Goosanders. Leaving the last hide Pauline spotted a male and female Reed Bunting. All in all a good start to our monthly field meetings.

Visit to Leighton Moss - Report by Andrew Lapworth

Eleven of us assembled outside The Bowes Museum to sort car sharing to go to the RSPB reserve at Leighton Moss, in Silverdale, Lancashire. We visited this lovely wetland reserve last summer, but we thought a winter visit would be equally rewarding and so it turned out to be.

After enjoying coffee and snacks in their excellent cafe we ventured out to their "Skytower" to take in extensive views across the reedbeds and lakes. Before we had a chance to climb the tower we enjoyed unbelievably close views of some feeding Redwings (winter thrushes) in the bushes above our heads. From the tower we soon enjoyed good views of several Marsh Harriers (both male and females). We soon heard, but did not see, two of the reserve's iconic birds: a Cetti's Warbler was singing below the tower but remained elusive; a small warbler with an explosive and loud call. In contrast we heard the booming calls of a Bittern, a secretive member of the Heron family. The sound is almost subliminal: easily overlooked or not noticed. We would hear the Bitterns throughout the day. The sound of a piglet being strangled told us a Water Rail was hiding in the reedbed too. Sometimes you just have to enjoy hearing birds rather than seeing them.

We visited several well-placed hides along the boardwalks; water levels were very high after the rains. We enjoyed excellent views of many species of ducks, especially some handsome Pintails, Shovelers and small Teals. I really struggled to identify one unusual smart duck until someone in the hide told us it was a hybrid: a cross between a Shoveler and, from South America, a Cinnamon Teal (no doubt escaped from a collection) which we think was caught.

Next we watched hunting Marsh Harriers close-by, one harrying a Moorhen. Along the edges of the little islands we found Snipe and Redshanks; overhead: flocks of Lapwings and Oystercatchers.

In the areas around the visitor centre in the afternoon we all had good views of various small woodland birds, including Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Bullfinch and Siskins. In addition to 5 species of Tits we had good views of mouse-like Treecreepers going up the tree trunks and Nuthatches going down them.

We decided not to stay for the expected Starling murmuration; most of us had enjoyed our spectacular local one from the Demesnes over Startforth. In total 52 bird species were seen or heard on the day.



Drake Pintail - photo by Andrew Lapworth

A WhatsApp group has been set up for our group so members can share and alert others to interesting local bird sightings between our monthly meetings. For more details of this and the future events, please contact **Andrew Lapworth** on [07962 038052](tel:07962038052)

Board Games Group - Report by Jane Kenwright

A select group met at the Old Well and we started off with our now traditional warm up game of **Bananagrams**, which was won by Annie.

Our main game for the afternoon was **Azul**, which was new to almost all players. We played it twice. Azul (Portuguese for blue) is an abstract strategy board game. Based on Portuguese tiles called azulejos, in this game players are challenged to embellish the walls of the Royal Palace of Evora. Players collect sets of similarly coloured tiles which they place on



their player board. When a row is filled, one of the tiles is moved into a square pattern on the right side of the player board, where it earns points depending on where it is placed in relation to other tiles on the board. Extra points are scored for specific patterns and completing sets; wasted supplies harm the player's score. The player with the most points at the end of the game wins.

At first **Azul** appears simple and the rules are easy to understand. This is however deceptive and there are layers of strategy that come into play, which we only began to appreciate in our second game. The first game was won by Jane and the second by Jean.

We concluded proceedings with another round of **Bananagrams**.

The next meeting will be on 8th April, 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.

Room to Read Book Group Report by Hilary Clarkson and Annie Clouston

***The Women in Black* by Madeleine St John**

This book makes a fun holiday read should you be lucky enough to escape the Teesdale Wet Stuff. The writer is described by Bruce Beresford (who directed the film of the book) as 'sharp tongued' with a waspish sense of humour, and that comes across really well in her descriptions of all the characters. Set in the late fifties in Sydney, Australia, the novel reflects the sexist, ageist and xenophobic norms of the day. Men are shown to do little in the home, are sexually repressed, heavy drinkers. Foreigners and continentals were "Gawd awful", having radical ideas about politics, food and wine.

Women need to be at the height of fashion where possible and affordable. Women of 30 without children are past their prime and not fulfilling their expected roles. A university education is wasted on women. The young woman at the centre of the story, christened Lesley, but preferring Lisa as a more glamorous handle than a "boy's name", is supported by her meek but supportive mother in her application for a scholarship to university. Her father, a stereotypical dinosaur of the beer-drinking, horserace-watching variety, is against the idea. When Lisa's top marks in the entrance exam are reported in the paper his workmates congratulate him and he hasn't the first idea what they are talking about. No doubt the kudos conferred by his mates for her achievements helped him reluctantly agree to her taking up her university place.

On the second floor of the famous F.G. Goode department store, the best in town, in Ladies' Cocktail Frocks, Lisa gets a job as a temporary gofer during the Christmas and New Year rush. Her services are kidnapped by the (Continental) Magda in prestigious Model Gowns and here begins a relationship that could be described as cygnet-to-swan as Magda helps Lisa emerge from childhood into a more sophisticated Bohemian world—more ready for university life.

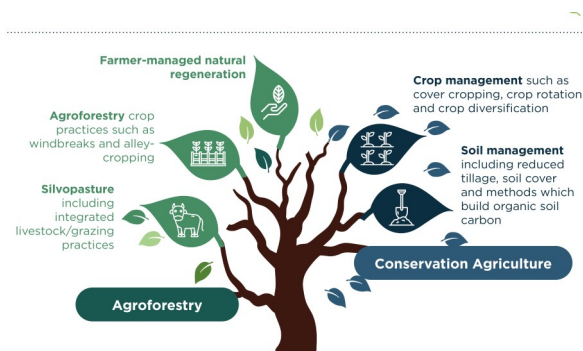
The relationships between the women on the second floor are richly drawn, and despite petty cattiness, the solidarity of the sisterhood is uplifting. There is humour and compassion as well as feistiness in the writing, redolent of Barbara Pym or Jane Austen perhaps, and most of us found it a good read. Scores on the doors – as a recommendation to other book groups, four stars (out of five) and to friends, 4.5.

The film of the book ***Ladies in Black*** directed by Bruce Beresford is available on Netflix. It is very true to the book and a definite feel-good watch.

Climate Solutions Group - Report by Kate Bailey

Because of members' holidays we had no meeting in March. However we agreed to start looking into various topics relating to the future health and fertility of our soils. The group has been challenged by the Geography convenor to research the assertion that the UK has only 50 harvests left and that local food production is under threat because of climate change and current agricultural practices. We have been exploring the theme of 'climate resilient farming' for a few months and have listened to talks to the North Pennines AONB and the Nidderdale AONB Farming Groups on the topics of sustainable food production, farm incomes and environmental subsidies.

In response to Gerald's challenge we have offered to prepare a presentation for the Geography Group later in the summer, when we will bring together our thoughts on various topics such as soil improvement, nature recovery, carbon capture using ground cover crops, rainwater infiltration and flood management, reduced soil erosion by tree planting and rotational grazing to encourage floral diversity.



Regenerative agriculture focuses on improving soil health: Image: IUNC

Watch this space for more information and in the meantime don't forget to take part in the Big Plastic Count 2024. Count all your plastic waste for a week and you'll have up until **31st March** to submit your results. <https://thebigplasticcount.com/>

Chess - Report by Diana Marks

We had our second meeting a week later than usual due to the convenor being on holiday. There were four of us which made life easy. Each team only managed one game each as we stuck to finishing at 4pm. It was a relaxed gathering (as relaxed as Chess can be!) and the more experienced players helped those less so.

Our next meeting will be back to our regular session of the second Thursday of the month on 11th April.

Cryptic Crossword Group - Report by Sue Overton

The group welcomed three new members before commencing a warm-up – ten anagrams, five all-in-ones and five mixed clue types – to focus our attention. We then moved on to a new clue type, the Double Definition Clue. This is simply two, or occasionally more, definitions of the solution side by side. There may be a linking word such as *is* or *'s*, but most frequently there is none.

Example: Eggs on toast (6)

Find one word meaning both 'eggs on' and 'toast'

Solution = CHEERS

Though no specific indicator is given, the clue type can often be guessed by its shortness plus inclusion of *and*

Example: Bit of butter and jam (6)

Find one word that fits both of the definitions – 'Bit of butter' and 'jam'

Solution = SCRAPE

After working through ten double definition clues we enjoyed a very welcome coffee break before finishing the session with another Times quick cryptic crossword.

Our next session in the Guide HQ is on Wednesday 10th April 2-4pm

Contact **Sue Overton 07512 368884** if you would like to join us.

Discussion Group - Report by Glen Howard

We covered a lot of ground at February's meeting.

Subjects discussed included: Brianna and trans issues; Biden's memory versus Trump; Gardeners/horticulturists; smartphones for children; timing of general election; distrusting the police; NHS dentists and public transport.

There was again a lot going on in the news the first week in March

We discussed many of the hot topics: the Right to Protest; 2p reduction of National Insurance; by-passes; difficulties facing teachers of children starting school; Royal Mail; Donald Trump; Aid for Gaza; Transwomen; Carers in Homes.

Our next meeting will be on Friday 12th April and 10th May.

If you would like to join us please ring **Glen Howard 01833 631639**

Gardening Group

Report by Julie Archer, Kate Keen and Fran Hindley

2024 has seen a great start for the gardening group with several new members bringing the group total to over 100!

The group has a full programme for the year of talks and garden visits.

The February talk was the first of the year and our most popular event so far with a large turnout. Julie welcomed the new members to the group and our speaker Keeley Metcalfe. The subject of the talk was Garden Designs for Small Gardens. Keeley has previously spoken to the group around 3 years ago but was new to most of the members present.

Keeley trained at Leeds University in Landscape Garden Design, she was brought up near Boroughbridge and now lives near Northallerton.

Keeley told us about the stages of garden design:

Survey the site looking at soil type, drainage, aspect, existing features, boundary, views access. Consider a concept or theme for the garden, maybe a wildlife friendly garden. Start to put together a draft design and keep working on options until you have your Masterplan. Keeley uses lots of photos and plans out designs using tracing paper or greaseproof paper.

A common issue with small gardens is being overlooked by neighbouring houses and other dominant features, she suggested we overcome this by using “distraction techniques”. This could involve drawing attention to another feature of the garden such as putting a bench under a tree. We could also use paving to draw the eye to different parts of the garden.

Keeley also advised using Planting Accents, for example using plants and shrubs to frame the access to a path, maybe clipped box balls. For a square garden she suggested that symmetrical planting can work well. For small gardens she suggested that we could use fake doorways and arches, consider the angle of lawns and flower beds and put larger plants towards the front of the garden. The main point was to plan the garden in advance.

This was an interesting talk which was well received by the group.

In March our speaker was Peter Kirkland who talked about the design and maintenance of ponds and water features. We heard about the importance of the location of the pond, needing to be accessible, able to be viewed from the appropriate aspects, avoiding trees which drop leaves into the water, avoiding slopes and taking account of manholes and pipes. The types of pond may be for Koi, ornamental ponds with a fountain or water feature and wild life ponds. Other than wild life ponds a filter is needed and they can now be solar powered avoiding the expense of electrical cables.

The most popular type of system is pressurised especially one which can be dug into the ground and so hidden from view. Many of the systems have ultra violet light to stop the water from turning green.

Ponds can be dug into the ground to be flush with the soil or built up with bricks which requires less digging. We learned about the types of pond liner from the rigid structure and were able to sample the different grades of liner from PVC to Green Seal, Butyl and Firestone progressively stronger and more expensive. Maintenance of the pond needs to be considered at the design stage so as to make it as easy as possible.

Common problems are predation of fish by cats, herons and otters. Blanket weed can be cleared using an enzyme which does not harm wild life or plants. Duck weed is almost impossible to eradicate. We learned that irises do not need any soil as they take nutrients from the water but water lilies do need soil. Instead of plastic pots with slats there are now landscape bags which are being used for pond plants. Its best to check and trim any pond plants in spring, taking care not to puncture any liner.

This was another interesting talk which was enjoyed by the group.

Future Events

On **5th April** Mr K J Vincent, Chairman of the **Chrysanthemums and Dahlia Society** will be talking about growing these flowers in containers.

On **3rd May** we will be having our first coach trip **Holker Hall and Gardens** in South Lakeland.

On **7th June** we will be visiting **RHS Bridgewater** garden near Manchester.

Holker Hall and Gardens
Photo: Ian Royston



to

Geography Group - Report by Ian Royston

Thursday 15th February had been scheduled for a talk by Andrew Griffiths, the founder and director of Droneflight Ltd (UK) but unfortunately, Andrew was forced to withdraw, and it was left to stalwarts Gerald Blake, Richard Boothroyd and Phil Johnson to entertain a packed meeting in the Witham Room. Gerald began a captivating meeting by introducing several items from his “January Geography Scrapbook”.

Gerald had received Tim Marshall’s latest book: “The Future of Geography” for Christmas. He rated this book as highly as Tim Marshall’s best seller “Prisoners of Geography” and promised a review of the new work at a future meeting. It argues that we should become familiar with the geography of space, and with “astro-politics,” which seemed particularly pertinent in the week Putin’s intentions to deploy nuclear weapons in space was revealed.

With Christmas still in mind Gerald revisited the Journey of the Magi, using his original maps, tracing their 1,000-mile journey to Bethlehem via the fertile crescent. We were fascinated to learn that the return of the entourage to avoid Herod may have led them to ford the southern Dead Sea via the Lissan peninsula... Who knew?

Gerald confided that he was a member of the ‘Cloud Appreciation Society’ and shared with us some spectacular images of nacreous clouds which are rare and very high clouds, known mainly for the coloured light they reflect after sunset and before sunrise created by ice crystals...

Next, a glimpse at a map used for ‘old-school’ air navigation and huge admiration for the navigators of WW2 bombers who plotted their course on such maps with deadly accuracy using little more than compass, ruler and dividers in cold, noisy and dark conditions.

We heard about the 50 smallest states of the world by population, two thirds of them island states. Many island states have printed superb maps of their territories on postage stamps to assert their place in the world.



POSTAGE STAMP CARTOGRAPHY

(from the David Yeadon collection - photographed by Pete Redgrave)

Sealand, off the Suffolk Coast is the world's smallest unrecognised state (based on the former Maunsell Forts and declared independent by Paddy Bates in 1967). Gerald's interest in becoming a citizen stems from the fact that the flag of Sealand shares its colours with Collingwood College of the University of Durham!

Richard Boothroyd enlightened us with some stark details of the Dzd (or Zud, Djut etc.) an extreme weather phenomenon which afflicts Mongolia bringing extremely low temperatures, typically -40°C and chilling winds.

The White Dzd brings deep snow to a depth of several metres which may blanket much of the huge land-locked state, but it is the Iron Dzd, a period of snow-thaw-freeze which is most feared.

What had been a rare event, perhaps happening once in a decade now seems much more frequent. It can affect more of the country and extends into China.

Phil Johnson gave us a very comprehensive introduction to the use of drones in research, in part based on what he had learnt from building and operating drones with his son, Mark. It was a tasty appetiser for the postponed talk by Andrew Griffiths.

Though most of us are familiar with the idea of hobbyist drones and we have become more aware of the military importance of drones through their widespread use in the Ukraine conflict. However, we were intrigued to learn that the military application of un-manned aerial devices started in the eighteenth century and saw practical, though not widespread examples in WW1 and WW2.

Today military drones are largely autonomous but depend on the instructions of an operator perhaps thousands of kilometres away having the final decision to launch an attack.

Commercial drones which can employ specific spectrum photography can be used to identify particular plants or infestations, the health of crops, find leaks in pipelines, determine geomagnetic profiles and through LIDAR detect archaeological remains. They may also be used for air-sampling and entering hazardous zones. Similar autonomous technologies can be applied to ROVs operating underwater.

Whilst military and commercial drones are becoming increasingly autonomous and the same technology can now be found in relatively low-cost hobby drones, most still depend on an operator with a control pad and perhaps a 3D headset. Phil seemed particularly keen to try drone racing and he remarked that the job of 'drone pilot' could be one career path for the current generation of gamers to pursue.

Phil completed an informative and entertaining afternoon with a brief demonstration of his cartographic wizardry by using an ultraviolet pen to dramatically highlight railway lines on a Cassini (1903-04) map, having painstakingly traced them with fluorescent ink. This is part of the ongoing Railways of Teesdale project (with Tim Meacham & Ian Royston).

Next Meeting: Thursday 18th April 2.00 pm in the Witham.
Dr Jonathan Mitchell: “The use of online mapping tools to unlock historical geography”. Jon will show examples from his own research.

Geology - Report by Bob Tuddenham

In February we had two very interesting meetings on Zoom.

At the start of the Feb 12th meeting, Trevor Morse outlined a couple of developments in Geology that had been in the news. The fossil of the largest pterosaur reptile ever found has been discovered on Skye. Named Dearc, it has a 2.5m wingspan and lived in the Jurassic period some 170 million years ago. Trevor also mentioned a further source of hydrogen that could play an important role in decarbonising our energy. This is ‘gold’ hydrogen which is native molecular hydrogen that does arise in some geological situations.

In the second half of the meeting we looked at an excellent Geological Society Lecture by Professor Sandy Hetherington about how roots on plants have evolved over the last 400 million years. The study into ancient flora seems to have taken second place to ancient fauna and this video showed that by systematic research, it is possible to explain the evolution of roots in plants and their vital role in the development of biological systems over last 400 million years.

In the meeting on February 26th, we looked at a fascinating Magellan video about plate tectonics which particularly focused on the Earth’s ancient continents. As well as covering the essential features of plate tectonics, the video showed that the idea of moving continents had been suggested by a number of scientists in the 19th century prior to Alfred Wegener’s theory of continental drift in 1912.

Next: On Monday 22nd April we have a field trip in Teesdale led by Trevor Morse. All are welcome to join us; please contact the convenor for details. **Bob Tuddenham 07812 378004**

Italian Conversation - Marie Jenkins

We meet weekly at Andalucía Café at 82A Galgate. Over coffee we talk in Italian about current affairs. We also read a passage of a book in Italian which we have already prepared at home, and then each person reads and translate part of the passage. Contact **Marie Jenkins** on **07754 205664**

Lunch Group - Report by Jane Mathieson

The Lunch Group met at Clarendon's in Barnard Castle this month, where we chose from a fairly extensive menu. Some of us chose Chicken with mushrooms & tarragon, Panini, Quiche of the day, Corned Beef and Potato Pie and Salmon & Prawn Open Sandwich followed by Crumble & Custard and Sticky Toffee Pudding or a cake for those who could manage more food. We all enjoyed the food and the service was good.

Needlecraft Group - Report by Glen Howard

Our meeting this month was held in a warm sunny room and we were all ready for spring! (Not sure the weather will accommodate this). Whilst we knitted and crocheted we exchanged information about air fryers and what they can be used for as well as other kitchen appliances. We also talked about miners and mining and the lack of a work ethic in some youngsters.

Our next meetings will be on 15th April as the first Monday in April is Easter Monday when many of us will be with family. However we decided to keep to the first Monday in May even though it is May Day and therefore a bank holiday. If you would like to join us please give me a ring.

Glen Howard 01833 631639



Painting Group - Reports by Val Hobbs and Martin Page

In January we all met up a week later than usual due to potential low attendance.

Swaddled in layers of warm clothes, we listened as Ann Lee set out the project for the day. She produced some graphite pencils and proceeded to demonstrate how to utilise them, using sea shells as the topic. The exercise was based on producing light and shade, by first using a graphite pencil, then producing the same with a water soluble fine liner, and then again, using one watercolour to achieve the same effect, either with different concentrates of the paint, or by Pointillism... creating light and dark by using dots.

Shells are rather complex forms with their beautiful concave and convex surfaces. Even sketching them in the first instance, was a lesson in itself, and to then create the light and dark shades was challenging and exciting! We were so engrossed that we almost forgot about a coffee break, but just managed to fit one in. Fantastic fun!

It had been snowing heavily the day before the meeting in February, so I did anticipate that some members may not be able to push through to Startforth... and yet most of the group stoically turned up.

Ann had decided on a Spring/Valentine's theme of flowers, which made us project ourselves forward to warmer and brighter days!

Following on from last month's workshop of using graphite pencils, we continued in this vein to produce sketches of flowers, focussing on the angle of light to locate the areas of shade. This certainly is a skill which needs plenty of practice, and once mastered, will be a valuable technique to apply to all medium.



After coffee and biscuits, we sketched the same flowers and, observing the light and shade, created the same, leaving white paper and using diluted watercolour for the lighter areas and heavier colour for the shade. A very beneficial lesson indeed!

For more details, contact **Val Hobbs** on **07900 497503**

Photography Group - Report by Pete Redgrave

Still Life at the Witham

The plans of rodents and humans don't always work out as expected....which, is exactly how I started my last photography report for The Forum. So, what happened this time? Last month the photography group was scheduled to have a still life session in the village hall at Stainton. Sadly, there was a communication mix up – no one was there to let our enthusiastic Still Lifers into the building. Consequently, the session was re-scheduled for this month's meeting at the always-reliable Witham.

Ten of us attended bringing all manner of strange objects that would happily sit on tables and have their photographs taken....without moving in accordance with the still bit of Still Life. The range of objets d'art was impressive and included, fossils, pewter pieces, crystalline rocks, dead leaves, a rose, a feather, glass crystal, an antique gyroscope, a wooden jaguar, chess pieces....



... ancient insects embalmed in amber
Pete Redgrave



... a wooden hummingbird
Anne Newton



... a fluffy dog
Phil Johnson



... a sea shell
Andrew Lapworth



... a reclining lady netsuke
Ian Royston

Pete's photo-tip of the month: long exposures to blur movement.

Though not part of the photography group's organised schedule this month, some of us have independently ventured to nearby lanes (The Lendings and Abbey Lane) to test our skills at photographing moving objects, namely, hundreds and thousands of murmuring starlings. We have all seen amazing media pictures and videos of intricate patterns formed during murmurations, however, what happens when, instead of using fast shutter speeds to freeze the flock in an instant, one uses a slow shutter speed? (In this case one whole second).



The answer is the swirls and patterns made by interacting groups of birds are interestingly preserved. Without doubt we have on our doorstep one of nature's awesome spectacles, which at the moment can be observed nightly free of charge between 5.45 and 6.15pm.

Next Photography Group Meeting will be on **2nd April** to **Richmond** – Castle and waterfalls on offer – and car sharing will be arranged.

Pickleball - Report by Ruth Lapworth

The group is now meeting at Shildon - Sunnydale Leisure Centre. We have had two successful sessions at this venue with numbers levelling out as individuals decide whether pickleball is the game for them. Members have made good progress with hitting the ball but the lack of any bounce is still confounding some. In addition, the tennis players among us have a tendency to move forward into the non-volley zone, also known as the kitchen which unfortunately counts as a fault.

As we are playing in a hall used for various activities another problem is the clarity of the lines delineating the playing area. The length of the court is 44' by 20' making it about the same size as a badminton court though the net is hung lower. The non-volley zone is an area 7' either side of the net. Behind the non-volley zone the right hand side of the court is known as the even side and the left hand side the odd.

Pickleball can be played either as doubles or singles with the doubles game more popular and this is our focus. A game is usually played up to 11 points and a team must win by 2 clear points. One significant difference from table tennis is that points can only be scored by the team that is serving. Serves are diagonal, cross court, with the server standing behind the baseline. The ball has to land in the opposite diagonal court behind the non-volley zone. The first server alternately serves from each side as long as his/her team win the point.

When a point is lost the second person serves until their side loses a point. This is known as a "Side Out." It is then the turn of both players in the second team to serve which gives them the opportunity to score. Unlike tennis, each server only gets one service attempt so a service fault by the first server results in the second player serving. Serves are played underhand with the head of the paddle below the wrist and waist.



If you would like to join please contact convenor **Ruth Lapworth** ruth.lapworth@hotmail.co.uk or **07787978696**.

Please note that all are welcome, but note a reasonable level of fitness is required with good hand-eye coordination and ball skills.

Poetry Group - Report by Robert Alabaster

Love was in the air when the poetry group met in Annie's house on Valentine's Day. Group members had chosen a wide range of poems which explored the contrasting moods and emotions associated with 'Love'...

Does Love entail the subjugation of the ego? or is it selfish, urgent and all-consuming? William Blake ponders this question using, as metaphors, a soft, malleable clod of earth and a hard, unyielding pebble.

The extremes of love are illustrated - passionate wooing by a shepherd is described by Christopher Marlowe. Caroline Elizabeth Sara Norton protests that she is not in love, even though her friends can see otherwise! Delicate, gentle love between parent and child is imagined to be as light as a feather by Maura Doole. R S Thomas gives thanks for five decades of forbearance, service and affection which he experienced in a passionless but quietly loving marriage.

In contrast to the spare prose of Thomas, Elizabeth Barrett Browning describes in full-on Victorian hyperbole how she loves supremely and eternally...whilst Christina Rossetti relates that her lover comes to her and surpasses her wildest birthday wishes. John Cooper Clarke describes clearly and unambiguously in "*I wanna be yours*" how he wants to be...hers!

Prompted by Wendy Cope's poem (below) we debated the meaning of Valentine's Day. Is it just exploitative, vacuous, commercialism, or is there something more to it?

Another Valentine by Wendy Cope

Today we are obliged to be romantic
and think of yet another Valentine.

We know the rules and we are both pedantic,
today's the day we have to be romantic.

Our love is old and sure, not new and frantic.

You know I'm yours and I know you are mine
and saying that has made me feel romantic,
my dearest love, my darling Valentine.

Scrabble Group – Report by Ray Thompson

We met at Judith's on 12th February. There were five of us. Judith, Phil, Lillian, Ray and Paula.

We split into two teams for the first games, Judith, Paula and Lillian in one and Ray and Phil. Paula won their game with a score of 255.

Ray won the other game with a score of 358 including a 7 letter word (ROAMING) for 71 points. We then stopped for tea/coffee and biscuits.

For the second round all five of us played together. Ray won this game with 259 points getting two 7 letter words (INSTANT & ABLUTION) for 71 & 66 points respectively. Thanks to Judith for hosting the meet and the lovely refreshments.

The next meet will be at Lillian's on April 8th, please phone **01833 650150** if you would like to join us.

Table Tennis Group - Report by Pete Singer



We have now settled into our new home in Mickleton Village Hall, to which we have re-located during the refurbishment of Teesdale Leisure Centre. This is obviously a longer journey for members based in Barnard Castle, but much more convenient for those lucky ones based further up the Dale. It is, however, a very pleasant drive for we urbanites, despite having to negotiate the standing water on various sections of the road. The views of the majestic, albeit waterlogged, fells

are wonderful and remind us how fortunate we are to live where we do.

We look forward to better weather now that Spring is upon us (table tennis players are ever optimistic – we have to be or we would just give up) and to the return of much-loved friends, including curlew, lapwing, oystercatchers and others. What they would make of table tennis is another matter. That long, downward-curving bill of the curlew would cause problems on the backhand side, although the lapwing would be pretty agile around the table and oystercatchers have a stout enough beak to give the ball a fair old whack. But they won't be bothered with such mundane pursuits as the breeding season gets under way – unlike our happy band of third-agers!

The village hall itself is a splendid venue, with two good tables and is smaller than the rather cavernous main hall of the leisure centre, so less chasing after stray balls. It is also warmer and altogether more cosy, which is important for those of us who have to coax our stiffening limbs into action.

We hope that it will be quieter than the leisure centre, where the rain drumming on the roof can make communication difficult (“yours, no yours”, “how did I miss that”, “oops”, “not again”, “you cannot be serious” etc.). Anyway, we will see how we go and at least we are sure of a welcoming place to continue playing for the duration of our exile.

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 or **07508 663998**). All are welcome, whether you play regularly, have not played for some time or have never played before.

Wildflower Group - Report by Anne Thomson

Thirteen of us met at Deepdale Woods on Wednesday, 14th February. Whilst we were congregating we noticed Snowdrops, Aconites and Dog’s Mercury in flower, a short way in we spotted Lesser Celandine.

Gavin was our excellent leader and guide imparting his extensive knowledge and expertise on how to identify trees in winter.

There are various ways of identifying trees in winter: bark, colour and texture; twigs, buds and catkins. Buds are staggered or opposite, predominantly opposite in Britain as is displayed in Deepdale.

Coppicing is a traditional method in woodland management where trees and/or shrubs are repeatedly cut at the base to create a ‘stool’ encouraging new shoots to grow in order to provide a sustainable supply of wood. At Deepdale this forms a hedge round the Forest School, species found here include Hornbeam, Hawthorn, Elder and Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*). The latter three are beneficial to birds with their red berries, Waxwings are attracted to the Guelder Rose berries.

Deepdale has a very old Willow thought to be as much as 200 years old.

We came across Scarlet Cup/Scarlet Elf Cups (*Sarcoscypha coccinea*) a British fungi which grows on decaying sticks and branches in damp spots and beneath leaf litter on the woodland floor.

Our next walk will be on Wednesday, 10th April we’ll be looking round the Egglestone Abbey area.

Wine Group - Report by Tim Meacham



At last towards the end of February the weather allowed us to hold our January meeting, although too late for members to take advantage of the Majestic sale from which the wines were procured. We did however enjoy the four French white wines which emerged. **The Denis Marchais Chenin Blanc 2022** (12.5%; £6.99 - down from £9.99) was perhaps the least favourite of the four. The lack of any real ‘finish’ supported the wine critic who described this wine from Gascony as ‘nice enough although rather bland.’

The **Les Chenaudieres Chardonnay** (13%; £10.99 – down from £14.99), a basic Burgundy, brought more favourable comments - ‘very drinkable’, ‘real flavour’ etc. – although again there was general agreement with the critic who called it ‘nothing remarkable.’ The third example, a **Menetou-Salon 2022 Sauvignon Blanc** (12.5% ; £11.99 – down from £17.99), really reflected its higher price tag. Fully-flavoured and with a long finish, this Vin de Loire from a small terroir near Sancerre displayed a crisp acidity matched by its citrus undertones: perhaps the white wine of the day. Finally our **Domaine Passy LeClou Petit Chablis 2022** (12.5 % ; £14.99 down from £16.99) allowed us a rare opportunity to taste an affordable Chablis. Despite mixed critics’ reviews (‘excellent crisp acidity’, against ‘downright unpleasant’) we found this a drinkable middle-of-the-road wine, certainly refreshing enough with its slight minerality. Overall the four white wines were pleasant but unlikely to result in many members’ orders now that the sale price has come and gone.

The two reds were chosen from the same sale but at lower prices to fit our overall budget. Perhaps surprisingly, both found considerable favour: firstly **the Bordeaux Claret 2022** (14% and £8.99 – down from £10.99) which showed a rich flavour at a good price, then the **Corbieres 2022** (14%; £9.99 – down from £11.29). Despite its higher price, the Corbieres was described as ‘an exceptional wine’, and ‘bargain of the day’, impressing even our hard core of non-red drinkers. This blend of Carignan, Grenache and Syrah had real clout: a good wine with which to finish.

Yoga Group - Report by Merrion Chrisp

U3A's Yoga Group is led by Angela Griffiths, who is a retired British Wheel of Yoga teacher.

The 75-minute sessions are a Mindful practice of breath work, yoga postures and relaxation for a healthy body and a calm and peaceful mind.

Participants MUST have a non-slip (sticky) yoga mat.

N.B. This is a floor based practice and unsuitable for those who have had no previous yoga experience.

The next term begins on 25th March & 8-29th April, 5 sessions at a fee of £15.

The following term runs 13-20th May & 3-24th June, 6 sessions. There may be further terms during the summer.

The classes are at The Hub on Monday mornings. Numbers are limited and must be pre-booked but if you would like to be added to the waiting list please contact:-

Merrion Chrisp: mfchrisp@gmail.com or

Angela Griffiths: angelagriffiths5@icloud.com

u3a Coffee and Chat

(formerly "The Inbetweeners")

The Witham Gallery

Thursday 11th April at 2.30pm

All welcome, not just u3a members.

WALKING GROUPS



Shorter Walks - Report by Sue Overton

Our happy band of 18 walkers met in the centre of the village of Ingleton. We detoured south past the village hall and traversed the recreation field – good place to bring grandchildren but also has a cricket pitch and sturdy outdoor gym equipment though nobody in the group was tempted to have a go!

A brief walk along the road before crossing a rather boggy field and over a relatively easy stile before heading down to Killerby Beck – a short, steep descent, but well signed and not difficult to negotiate.

The path now became a long ascent through fields until reaching the minor road which runs from Morton Tinmouth to Hilton. Here we took a left turn heading towards Hilton until we reached the Way of Life route, part of the Northern Saints Trail.

The views from this point were magnificent – would have been even better with less cloud – and made the walk back south to Ingleton very rewarding.

The final trickier stile due to high fencing was a bit of a challenge but did not phase group members whose varied styles of mounting / dismounting were both impressive and entertaining!

Our next walk will be on Monday 22nd April

Contact Convenor,
Liz Colley 01833 695197 if you would like to join us.



Photo: Ian Royston

4-6 Mile Walking Group – Report by Lynda Bares

We started the walk from the fountain in Middleton-in-Teesdale, first crossing the bridge and passing the Mart where there was a major sale of cattle and calves in progress, which slowed some of us down somewhat! Then steady up to Kirkcarrion where we stopped briefly to admire the view. Unfortunately at this point one of our group was feeling unwell so we lost two members who decided to take it steadily back down.

We continued the climb by the wall, which was still covered in snow at the lower parts, and then joined the Pennine Way for a couple of fields until we had sight of Grassholme Reservoir.

As the weather was quite windy and rainy we decided to return without going up Harter Fell, a climb for another day. We returned on the Pennine Way back to Middleton where some of us then went for drinks and cake in one of the cafés there.

Next Walk: Tuesday 9th April



Photo: Ian Royston

7 – 9 Mile Walking Group - Report by Chris Burton

‘On A Good Day’

Eleven brave souls gathered at Aske Hall, home of the Marquess of Zetland, near Richmond, in fairly awful weather conditions. All up for the challenge we set off through the estate grounds, passing the very grand stable block, boating lake and main hall, then on through waterlogged woodland paths and fields to Richmond golf course – not a golfer in sight!

Crossing the Richmond to Ravensworth road we headed on to the old racecourse. Active from the early 16th century to late Victorian times the course hosted major races such as the Queen Anne Gold Cup and King’s Plate. There is a hope that the derelict grandstand may be renovated.

Following a coffee break we went on through the hidden valley of Coalsgarth, continuing by the famous Jockey Cap woodland landmark – so famous only two people recognised it! Near some derelict mine works we crossed a ford and made our way up a very slippery hill path – fortunately there were no casualties! Surprisingly there were no takers for the nearby ‘Adrenaline’ assault course.

Going on through a forested area we stopped for lunch on a very convenient log, before passing Gillingwood Hall and some impressive follies in the field. The home straight meant crossing muddy fields before ending with a very welcome dry out and hot drink at the Mocha coffee house. A mini quiz based on the walk proved trickier than expected, but Phil ‘the quiz’ Clarke came good on music!

PS The title, ‘On a good day’, refers to the views we **would** have had, weather permitting!

The April walk will be on Wednesday 17th April. and will be led by Phil Clarke. Setting out from Muker it will take in Thwaite, Kisdon Hill and Keld, returning to Muker along the Swale.

New members are always welcome – contact the convener, Nicky Grace

nickygrace729@gmail.com



Photo: Judith Coleman

Fell Walking Group - Report by Annie Clouston

This month's walk, led by Lynda Bares, found us out in the Howgills on a blustery day with a sky that threatened rain from purple-black clouds. It did rain, half-heartedly but nevertheless wetly, after lunch. It was agreed that though a bit of a drive the Howgills is a destination that is highly worthwhile, rarely crowded (we saw only two other walkers), and magnificently bleak, with moody skies and wide vistas.



Seven of us set off from Sunbiggin Tarn (where there was some discussion about its attractions as a destination for open water swimmers) to head over to the spectacular limestone pavement. The unfairly named Lousy Brow was to the west as we carefully manoeuvred between, and up and over, great slabs and clints and grikes to Little Asby Common and the eponymous village. From there we clambered down the steep slopes of the Potts Valley and followed the beck until we made a short sharp ascent under Hazzier Scar up on to Crosby Garrett Fell turning west to return to Sunbiggin Tarn. Ten miles in all and most enjoyable. Many thanks to Lynda for steering us safely across the wild and beautiful terrain.

Our well-deserved treat was to be had in the Church Gallery in Kirkby Stephen where coffee and good cake was greatly appreciated.

ANOTHER MONTH IN THE ARCHERS

These last weeks have been dramatic by Ambridge standards, Avid Ambridge-watchers will have been shaken out of the torpor normally induced nightly (except Saturdays) with tales of terror, marriage sabotage, and Hooray Henry Entitled Hoodlumism. Remember, I listen martyrlike, so you don't have to, so I'll flesh out these tantalising themes.

Firstly, the terror: you will recall that Kenton, was mutilated by an XL Bully in the pub carpark. It seems this was linked to Jolene's past life as a Country and Western singer. Turns out that a Brummie mobster who met her way back has turned to extortion and terror in the leafy lanes of Dorsetshire and is threatening Jolene because she can identify him. It's astonishing how alike this bloke – let's call him Brummie BadGuy – sounds to Matt the Abattoir Guy, Elizabeth Partridge's paramour, the only guy in whom Jolene has confided about the BBG's identity. It seems like a cash-strapped BBC may be economising here. This cliffhanger will leave us dangling for some time to come, although unlikely to be exciting enough to ensure must-do listening.

Unless, of course you combine it with the typical Ambridge romance (i.e. a potboiler that has the frustrated audience yelling "Just get on with it, you idiot") between almost-past-it Alistair and his veterinary nurse Denise. There's been more stop-stall-starts in this relationship than an L driver on The Bank on Market Day. A surprisingly censorious Jazzer has been uncomfortable with Alistair's declaration to him that he has feelings for this married woman, whereas a surprisingly liberal Jim has in effect told Jazzer to lighten up; "We all deserve some happiness!" (But perhaps not Denise's husband.)

And if those two plots haven't got you hooked, there's Hooray Harry, Alice's erstwhile unctuous and patronising boyfriend. Who knew he was too good to be true? - Well me for a start. Harry has shown himself to be a fully-paid up member of Dorsetshire's answer to the Bullingdon Club, with a serious inability to manage himself when in his cups. Who, coincidentally, is on the beat when HH is doing his drunken best, but Ambridge's Sergeant Burns. In an attempt to protect Alice and her daughter from the risk of being in a car with a potential drink-driver, he reluctantly spills the beans to Alice and now his career is blighted because HH, now dumped by Alice, is threatening to make a formal complaint for breach of confidentiality.

If anyone out there feels like putting an end to my martyrdom and wants to give their take on a month in Ambridge, in the words of the immortal Engelbert Humperdinck, please release me, let me go!

BARNARD CASTLE BOWLING CLUB TASTER DAY

SUNDAY 7th APRIL 2024
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.



What
makes
them
bend?



Whats
happening
here? More
technical
than you
think



How heavy
are lawn
bowls ?

Why not come along and have a go?
PLEASE BRING FLAT SOLED SHOES/TRAINERS etc.
The bowling green is situated in The Bowes Museum grounds
behind the Museum
DL12 8NP
Tel 01833631900

THE QUIZ

The theme of this month's quiz is "Back to School" as if you went to school around the same time as I did (and if you're in u3a that cannot be far from the truth) you used to know the answers to all of these questions.

1. An incised meander in a mature river gives rise to what kind of lake?
2. Derby, Crewe, Darlington and Swindon grew through their involvement in which industry?
3. Expand $(a+b)^2$
4. From which language do we get the words Chutney, Bungalow, Loot, Shampoo and Guru?
5. Gregor Mendel is considered the 'Father of Genetics'. On which common plant species did he conduct his experiments?
6. In which of Shakespeare's plays would one find the stage direction "Exit, pursued by a bear."
7. Mr. Edward Fairfax Rochester is a character in which novel?
8. Sellar & Yeatman wrote their definitive work: "A Memorable History of England, Comprising All the Parts You Can Remember, Including 103 Good Things, 5 Bad Kings and 2 Genuine Dates" What was its title?
9. The current Danish city and castle of Helsingør is associated with which Shakespeare play?
10. By what unusual method was the much longed-for son of James II delivered?
11. What branch of mathematics is associated with the angles and lengths of sides of triangles?
12. What comes next? Amo, amas,
13. What is the chemical formula for ethanol (alcohol)?
14. What is the common factor of 143, 242, 495, 682?
15. What occupations were held by those crucified either side of Jesus Christ?
16. What part did Thomas Farriner play in London's redevelopment?
17. Which ancient but still current world religion was founded in Persia?
18. Which Black Country town was associated with the manufacture of chains?
19. Which element was discovered on the sun before it was found on earth?
20. Which solution is used to detect the presence of carbon dioxide when bubbled through it?

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The 2024-25 membership year is now under way with our groups up and running, our general meetings recently attracting over 150 members and a full programme of Saturday workshops taking place, while our new improved 'Coffee & Chat' sessions started this month.

Thank you to over 300 of you who have already renewed your memberships since my message last month. To those who have not yet got round to it, please accept this as a gentle reminder that your £20 membership fee is now due (£16.50 if you are already a member of another u3a).

The easiest ways to renew are as follows:

By cheque made out to '**Teesdale u3a Number 2 Account**' and posted to me at:

Tim Meacham (Teesdale u3a Membership Secretary)
1A Station Terrace
Cotherstone
Barnard Castle
Co. Durham,
DL12 9PZ

By direct Bank Transfer (BACS) to the following account:

The Teesdale U3A
Sort Code: 20-83-73
Account Number: 23470873

If you wish to speak to me about any issues, or have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me by email:

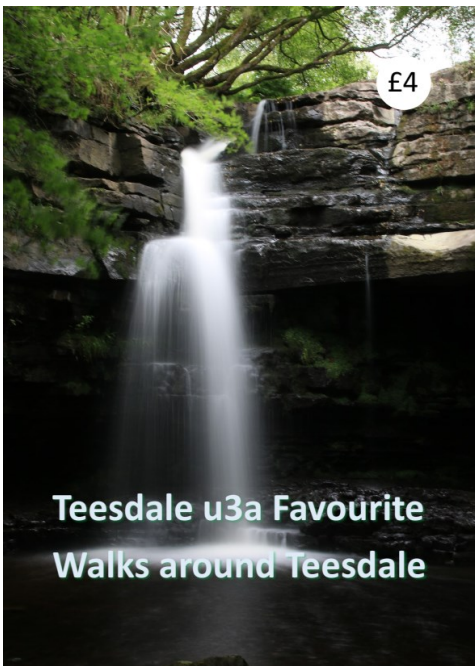
simontimothymeacham@gmail.com or by phone on **01833 651845**.

With very best wishes

Tim Meacham (Membership Secretary)

THE ANSWERS

1. Ox-bow lake
2. Railway workshops
3. $a^2 + b^2 + 2ab$
4. Hindi
5. Peas
6. A Winter's Tale
7. Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre
8. 1066 and All That
9. Hamlet
10. A bed-warming pan
11. Trigonometry
12. Amat (amamus, amatis, amant)
13. C_2H_5OH , though most chemists would write EtOH
14. 11
15. Thieves
16. Owner of a bakery in Pudding Lane where a fire started the Great Fire of London
17. Zoroastrianism
18. Dudley
19. Helium
20. Lime Water / Calcium hydroxide solution



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.

Group	Meeting Time	Contact Details
Android Group	1 st Thurs pm	Martyn Radcliffe 07975 970088
Art Appreciation	1 st Wed pm	Tony Seward 01833 630050
Automotive	3 rd Tues am	Peter Colley 01833 695197
Birdwatching	3 rd Mon am	Andrew Lapworth 07962 038052
Board Games	2 nd Mon 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 am	Annie Clouston 01833 637091
Chess	2 nd Thurs pm	Diana Marks 07762 626912
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
Genealogy	1 st Thurs pm	INACTIVE
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

Group	Meeting Time	Contact Details
Photography	1 st Tues am	Alan Kenwright 07731 122399
Pickleball	1 st & 3 rd Mon pm	Ruth Lapworth 07787 978696
Poetry	2 nd Wed am	Annie Clouston 01833 637091
Science & 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 Fri 3pm	Peter Singer 07508 663998
Theatre	Varies	Elizabeth Formstone 07979 204212
Travel & day trips	Varies	Jane Mathieson 01388 710741
Understanding Classical Music	4 th Fri 10am	Bill Heyes 01833 640885
Wildflower Group	2nd Wed 2pm	Anne Thomson 07928 594404
Wine Group	3rd Tues pm	Tim Meacham 07847 182554
Yoga	Every Mon am	Angela Griffiths 01833 630170
Walking Groups		
Shorter walks 3-4 miles	4 th Mon 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, Theatre, Travel, 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.

Thurs 28 Mar 7.00pm	SCREENING – National Theatre Live: The Motive & The Cue (15) Mark Gatiss and Johnny Flynn star in this funny and fierce new play.
Fri 29 Mar 7.30pm	THEATRE – Howerd’s End Hugely acclaimed play about Frankie Howerd by Mark Farrelly (<i>Quentin Crisp: Naked Hope</i>)
Sat 30 Mar 2.00pm	FAMILY FILM – Wonka (PG) With optional live storytelling at 1.15pm
Sun 7 Apr 2.00pm	CLASSICAL – Royal Northern Sinfonia: Mozart’s Dissonance Quartet
Tues 9 Apr 2.00pm	FAMILY – Morgan & West’s Massive Magic Show for Kids
Thurs 11 Apr 2.30pm	FAMILY – The Ultimate Bubble Show
Fri 12 Apr 7.30pm	MUSIC – The Fureys One of Ireland’s all-time most acclaimed and influential middle of the road folk and traditional bands.
Sat 13 Apr 7.30pm	TRIBUTE – Explosive Light Orchestra A powerful tribute to ELO and a celebration of the music of Jeff Lynne and Electric Light Orchestra.
Fri 19 Apr 8.00pm	MUSIC – Strictly Smokin’ Big Band: Ella & Ellington featuring Alice Grace Bringing to life the timeless music of Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington.
Sat 20 Apr 7.30pm	TRIBUTE – Jerry Lee Lewis Rock n Roll Songbook
Tues 23 Apr 7.00pm	SCREENING – National Theatre Live: Nye (12A) Starring Michael Sheen.
Wed 24 Apr 7.15pm	LIVE SCREENING – Royal Opera House: Royal Ballet – Swan Lake
Thurs 25 Apr 7.30pm	THEATRE – Hound of The Baskervilles Live on stage, Colin Baker (<i>Doctor Who</i>) and Terry Molloy (<i>The Archers</i>) play Holmes and Watson in a spectacular radio play.