

www.teesdale.u3a.org.uk

FORUM

MAY 2024

No. 24/05

u3a

CHAIRWOMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members and Friends

I write this, my last Chairwoman's letter, with a mixture of sadness and gratitude. Sadness because I have given a significant amount of energy and emotion to my various jobs within Teesdale u3a. My dear Jim died three years ago and being part of the inner workings of this splendid organisation, being part of a committed team and experiencing the kindness and friendship of my fellow members, has been massively important to me in surviving the ravages of loss and grief. I am immensely grateful for the support and positivity that I have received.

That sounds a little bit like a goodbye, but it isn't, there'll still be plenty of me around in a bunch of other stuff. On the subject of which, I would like to promote the summer picnic in June at the Cricket Club that one of our new co-Chairs, Julie Archer, is organising. Watch out for news about this at the next monthly meeting and see Page 39 for more details! We hope that many members and friends will join us with their own picnics, to enjoy one another's company, maybe al fresco – though our weather so far this year has been unfriendly to say the least – but if not, we have indoor cover.

I was interested in the publicity given during April to research about how perceptions of when a person is "old" have changed over the last century. In many ways this was another example of pointing out the obvious, that is, as longevity has increased so have ideas about at what age being "old" begins. As we reach the mature end of the lifespan, we do begin to favour an estimate of "old" as one that frames quality rather than quantity at centre stage. And that, my friends, is what leads me to my recurring theme – the u3a can be a plank in the raft that keeps us floating with a level of well-being that gives quality to our lives. So...

Carpe Diem!

Annie

Cover: Bird's-eye Primrose (*Primula farinosa*) – Photo by Andrew Lapworth

It's Your Forum

Editors: Annie Clouston, Ian Royston and Kate Bailey

This month's editor is Ian: Edition No: 24/05

e-mail: forumeditor@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

Phone: Annie **01833 637091**

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

DEADLINE for the next edition: Tuesday 11th June and next month's editor is Annie. Handwritten/typed contributions can be left in the u3a file in the library. Please phone to let us know if you have left a contribution in this file. If you want to receive a copy of the Forum but cannot make it to the monthly meeting, you can acquire one by:

- Viewing it online on Teesdale u3a website at: www.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**
- Back copies are in the u3a file in the Library or in The Witham Shop.

www.teesdaleu3a.org.uk

TEESDALE u3a Officers

Chair: chair@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

Membership Secretary: Tim Meacham memsec@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

Business Secretary: Liz Colley bissec@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

Treasurer: Hazel McCallum treasurer@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

APRIL MONTHLY MEETING

Andy Beck: The Wainwrights in Colour – Report by Ian Reid

Andy Beck needed no introduction to the audience at the April u3a meeting. After leaving the RAF, he became a full-time professional artist and ran The Teesdale Gallery on the corner of The Bank and Newgate, together with his wife and (then) two dogs. Being an outdoor enthusiast, he, like many of the audience knew well the works of Alfred Wainwright who produced those seven detailed walking guides, titled 'A Pictorial Guide to the Lakeland Fells'. The guides describe in detail the routes to the top of 214 Lakeland fells, with lovely and very accurate hand sketched images with fascinating descriptions. Wainwright took his photographs with a very simple camera and wrote up the descriptions when he got home using a dip pen and ink.

Andy speculated whether he could paint the exact views that Wainwright had photographed and wondered if the paintings would sell. It would be a serious challenge to do them all. He checked the copyright issues and met members of the current Wainwright family. Wainwright's two stepdaughters thought it was a great idea. So, Andy gave up the Gallery and began what was to be a 10-year project, without any sponsorship.

He then spent several years walking the fells and identifying as far as possible the exact spot that Wainwright had used, from which to take his photographs. In all Andy took 1509 pictures. He had to contend with a variety of predictable difficulties e.g. the changing weather conditions, a change in the landscape over the years, the fact that Wainwright was about 6 inches taller than Andy, and there were several instances of Wainwright using artistic license. Andy's most dangerous climb was at Hopegill Head when he was looking for the plant, *Viscaria Alpina*, but the project had become an obsession.

All of Andy's 1509 watercolour sketches are included in his pictorial book, 'The Wainwrights in Colour'. His work has been well-publicised and he has received numerous awards. The BBC produced the film 'Halin Fell' near Lake Ullswater, highlighting Andy's work. This was a mammoth project which took determination and self-belief, but which allowed Andy to pursue his interests both in the outdoors and in his painting. Andy gave a wonderful talk, delivered to a knowledgeable audience with enthusiasm and humour.

NEXT MEETINGS AT THE WITHAM

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

A look at the history of Spanish art through fifteen objects and will include works on display in the Spanish Gallery in Bishop Auckland as well as others from major international museums.

Morlin joined as Curatorial & Research Associate and has been based permanently in Bishop Auckland for over six years. In 2010, at the invitation of her former teacher Professor Nigel Glendinning, she joined the committee of the charity ARTES, which promotes the study of Iberian and Latin American visual culture and chaired it from 2015-17.

25th July - Richard Annis - Exciting finds on Palace Green, Durham

Dr Richard Annis, a recently retired Archaeologist at Durham University, will describe how he was involved in the discovery of numerous skeletons during construction work on the Palace Green. He reveals how they were found and the information that they provided from a history that extends over 350 years. We are delighted that he can share with us the excitement and fascination of this amazing story.

FUTURE WORKSHOPS

22nd June - Tour of Spirit of Yorkshire Distillery and Filey - There are 4 places available on the tour (£15) and lots of seats available on the coach if you would like to spend a day at the seaside/Filey. Cost of coach depends on final numbers. Contact Sue Overton **07512 368884** or email sueoverton@hotmail.com

6th July - Saturday Circle Dancing with Nic Worsnop

Several people have expressed interest in a Circle Dancing Workshop, so it has been arranged that Nic Worsnop will lead this on Saturday 6th July 10am - 12.00 noon in the garden at Hill Top Cottage, Boldron (or in Boldron Village Hall if wet) at a cost of £3.

Quite a few people have signed up for this but not many who had expressed interest in response to our earlier questionnaire, so if that is you and you would still like to do this, or anyone else who would like to come along, please contact Hazel Yeadon on **01833 638710** or hazelyeadon@hotmail.com and we will add you to the list.

DAY TRIPS

Day trip to Hawes – Report by Jane Mathieson

Our day trip to Hawes & the Wensleydale Creamery was an enjoyable day out. It did not rain while we were there!

The museum at The National Park Visitor Centre was a very interesting place to look around showing farming, mining, access to a lead mine, and Victorian life in the home, doctors' surgery & dispensary. Different occupations in the area, clog, wood, & clock makers, tin & blacksmiths, & textile making. Their café made excellent cakes, the Bakewell tart being the best I have ever tasted, very almondy.



A lovely riverside walk, with old mining equipment to see. There were many places to look around, shops, jam & preserve makers, pottery, antique shops & a few pubs, cafés and a chip shop. In the afternoon we went to the Creamery for a cheesemaking experience with lots of cheese tasting, the Cranberry & Ginger being favourites. We were shown how they make

their cheeses now, being first made by monks in 1150, with every drop of the milk being used, e.g. butter, whey powder to makeup & producing green energy, saving their water use by 50 percent.

Lots of gifts to buy in the shop & a good café. Of course, there were lots of Wallace & Grommet figures around, the ones in the photo were knitted by 6 ladies over a period of a few months, very cleverly worked.

The drive there and back, although windy & narrow at times, was lovely, the scenery being beautiful with lots of lambs & verges full of primroses.

Everyone seemed to find something enjoyable to do.

FUTURE DAY AND LONGER TRIPS

Saturday 22nd June - Cumbria Woolgathering Fest, Milnthorpe,

There are 80 exhibits covering Knitting, Crochet, Dying, Spinning, Lace, Felting, Macrame & Embroidery. Selling yarns & everything to do with the above. There are workshops & talks through the day which must be booked & paid for in advance if you would like to attend them. There are cafes, on the level, workshops & talks are on 1st floor with lifts & loos.

We will leave Barnard Castle, outside Addisons at 9.15am Saturday, 22nd June, arrive around 10.30am, return about 4.00pm arrive back about 5.30pm. Cost £25.00 includes coach & entry.

Friday 20th September - Woodhorn Museum, Ashington

Leaving Barnard Castle at 9.00am returning before 6.00pm.

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.

21st June 2025 - South Wales

We will be staying at the Cliffe Norton Hotel in Tenby for 4 nights, dinner bed and breakfast and will visit St David's, Saundersfoot, Cardigan and Fishguard. The cost is £388 per person.

Anyone who has visited Tenby knows how lovely it is and keen to go back. There is a treat in store for anyone visiting for the first time.

Bookings: **Kyle Travel 01833 690303**

Details: **Dorothy Jameson 01833 637957**

AN APPEAL FOR PHOTOGRAPHS FOR THE FORUM COVER

Many thanks to all those of you who have responded with splendid photographs for the Forum Cover, we're building quite a collection but are happy to see more. Please let us have any pictures suitable for June or the summer months. Any topic relating to Teesdale and/or u3a.

GROUP REPORTS

ANDROID PHONE GROUP - Report by Martyn Radcliffe

Another month has rolled past very quickly and once again the intrepid explorers of all things Android gathered at the Guide HQ.

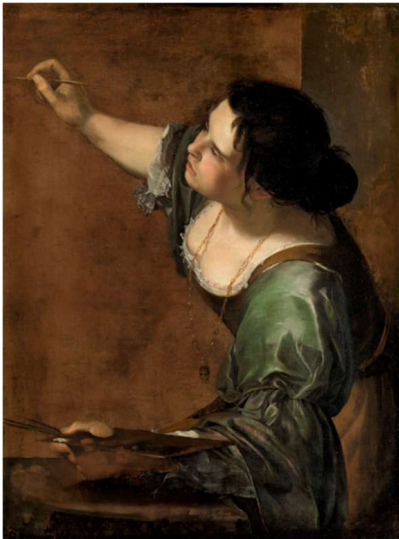
This month's session was to look at the downloading of Apps from the play store to the handset. There was discussion about what apps were, how to search and download. Discussion was had about sponsored adverts and paid for apps.

A crib sheet will be made available before the next session. Which will be on 6th June 2024.

ART APPRECIATION GROUP – Report by Tony Seward

Notoriously, the contribution of women has been badly neglected in traditional art history courses. For our April meeting, we focused on three of the most high-profile pioneers in what until the late 19th century was an almost entirely male-dominated profession.

Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1653) was one of the most accomplished Italian artists of the Italian Baroque. The drama and latent violence in many of her paintings reflect her life experience. Trained by her father, an established painter in Rome, she was raped by one of his associates, and struggled to establish herself in an independent career. The anger in a picture such as 'Judith Beheading Holofernes' or 'Susanna and the Elders' brings a new urgency to these conventional Biblical subjects, showing women not as passive subjects of the male gaze but as fully rounded human beings capable of decisive action. All these qualities come to the fore in her remarkable self-portrait, made in England when she and her father were working for Charles I.



Artemisia Gentileschi as the Allegory of Painting



Our next choice was the glamorous portrait painter Elizabeth Vigée Le Brun (1755-1842) who excelled in marketing and self-promotion. Like other female artists she generally asserted her professional status by painting herself with the tools of her trade – brushes, paints and easel. Her ‘Self-portrait in a Straw Hat’ puts her own spin on Rubens’ famous ‘Le Chapeau de Paille’, directly challenging comparison with the master. She prospered In France, gaining the friendship and patronage of Marie-Antoinette, but managed to escape the Revolution unscathed, going on to become a figure of European renown, much in demand for her charming portraits of mothers and children.

Le Brun: Self-Portrait in a Straw Hat



The third in our trinity of remarkable women was Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), the Swiss painter best known for being one of only two women founder members of the Royal Academy. She too enjoyed an outstandingly successful Europe-wide career, largely due to her skill in networking and her decision to concentrate primarily on history painting, the most prestigious genre. She took full advantage of the new technologies of reproduction, with her images being widely disseminated as engravings and on luxury objects such as porcelain. Her self-portrait shows her with a bust of Minerva, the goddess of wisdom.

Angelica Kauffman: Self-portrait]

Next up –June’s meeting will look at later women artists, including Laura Knight.

AUTOMOTIVE GROUP

The Automotive Group has enjoyed a number of gatherings and drives out through the dales and up the fells and we are finalising a schedule of activities for the remainder of the year and would like to hear from members interested in joining any of these.

Some of the highlights are:-

- Late May or early June: A 90-minute tour of the Nissan factory in Sunderland.
- 8th & 9th June: The Newby Hall Tractor Fest.
- 28th July: British Touring Car Championship at Croft

If you have an interest in coming along, please email the group convenor, Peter at petergcolley@icloud.com

BIRDWATCHING – Report by Andrew Lapworth

Foxglove Covert, Bolton-on-Swale and Scorton North Lakes

Gentle April showers? No, Monday 15th had gale force winds and when the group met outside the Bowes Museum it was already raining; en route to Richmond the car temperature gauge warned it was 3°C. It did not bode well.

Chris had expertly planned and organised our visit to Foxglove Covert nature reserve on the edge of Catterick Garrison. Once through the security barriers at the gates we drove in convoy through the camp; we reassembled on the parade ground but had to move on quickly because there was...a parade. Eventually we parked, and booted up and had a welcome talk from the reserve manager Karl, clearly very proud of this wonderful reserve of diverse habitats: lakes, pine woods, mixed woods, heaths and bogs and ponds, all connected by boardwalks (rendering our wellies and boots largely unnecessary). Rain? No, it held off most of the day and we had blue skies but it was extremely windy, which makes birdwatching tricky: birds stay low & out of sight and we get cold and our eyes water.

From the first hide over the lake, we had nice views of a pair of Bullfinches; the male's bright pink chest really standing out in the sunshine. All around us Willow Warblers were in song; Chiffchaffs were there too. Two Little Grebes on the lake showed well. In their well-equipped Field Centre, with

respice from the cold wind, we watched the seed feeders which were covered in Lesser Redpolls, until a Sparrowhawk blasted through and all the birds temporarily went to cover. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was also seen. Outside again we found a bush with more Lesser Redpolls, the males displaying their gorgeous pink breasts; for some of us these were the best ever views of these little streaky finches; a male Siskin looked smart too.



Male Siskin – photo by Andrew Lapworth

From the hide overlooking the gorse-covered heathland area we saw feral geese and watched a hovering Kestrel until it was chased off by 2 Jackdaws; later a Buzzard floated overhead. Foxglove Covert is a fantastic place for nature, and well worth the rigmarole of entry for a visit; there is much to see, including interesting plants and insects, especially dragonflies.

Most of us reconvened at the excellent Ellerton Lakeside Cafe for lunch and coffees and cakes. Chris then took us to YWT's Bolton-on-Swale lakes; before entering the little hide to escape the wind we had brief views of Tree Sparrows, and Reed Buntings along a hedge; a couple of us were startled to get an all too brief view of a Common Redstart. From the hide we saw large numbers of Sand Martins swooping low across the lake surface, over Tufted Ducks and a single Great-Crested Grebe. Jim found a perched female Kestrel; Charlotte pointed out a Reed Bunting feeding at the water's

edge. Island trees were full of roosting Cormorants (+ a single Little Egret). Finally, a large flock of Curlews settled obligingly on the opposite bank so we could 'scope them and compare the shorter-billed males from the longer-billed females.

Thanks to Chris for planning and organising a memorable day and to Roger for the bird list.

BOARD GAMES – Report by Jean Bartle

If you are looking for a quiet and serious afternoon working out and keeping religiously to sets of rules for various games, then the second Monday afternoon of each month is not for you. However, if you want an afternoon learning new games as well as playing familiar ones in an atmosphere of friendly competitiveness and fun please come and join us.

It was actually the third Monday of April that six people met in the Old Well for two hours of games and a cuppa. The session started with three games of Bananagrams, with calls of split, dump and banana. All won by the same person! This was followed by four games of Skyjo, a game requiring some skill, a



little cunning and an awful lot of luck. It is accompanied by many and various noisy reactions, such as cheers and groans, oohs and ahh's. There are the usual rules of course, and always someone to forget one (sorry), but always someone to point this out (thanks Sue). The winner of this game was first-timer Kate, who thought it was a fun game! If you want to know what Skyjo is, come and see!

To conclude the afternoon, it was decided to finish off with Bananagrams in order to get our own back on the winner of the first three, but she won one anyway, so we stopped. Another afternoon of enjoyment and laughs.

ROOM TO READ BOOK GROUP- Review by Celia Chapple

Old Baggage by Lissa Evans

Old Baggage (2018) is the 2nd book in Lissa Evans' 2014 trilogy, beginning with *Crooked Heart* and concluding with *V for Victory*. The energetic and flamboyant Mattie Simpkin's story continues, not in her youth, but in her middle age, the dark inter-war years, just before the 1928 Franchise Act is passed, giving women over 21 franchise equality with men. Mattie still wants to make a difference and sets up a club to encourage girls and young women not to waste the gain she and others had won for them. Some of the unkind youngsters call her 'old baggage' but it could also refer to her 'emotional baggage', which becomes apparent as the story unfolds and she discovers a niece she was unaware of.

She sets up a Youth Games between her girls, The Amazons, and the uniformed mixed group, The Empire League, the event being reminiscent of the 'freedom and equality' versus 'fascism' politics of the 1930s. In her desperation to win, Mattie's judgement falters and she is caught cheating. Dismayed girls disband, permanently. Mattie's external world crumbles and so does her emotional one as people she cares for leave.

There was a lively discussion as most of the group really liked this book for the history, the characters and Evans' prose style and humour. Mattie's slightly dark, humorous description of an old friend, Aileen, was: "The handwriting on the card careered downhill amidst a shower of blots; poor Aileen, clearly back on the bottle." This curt dialogue also illustrates what the group decided was Mattie's cruel treatment of Florrie, her closest ally, Florrie's unacknowledged contribution to Mattie's life, and Mattie's general attitude toward others.

The group discussed how the book danced inexplicitly around women's sexuality and went on to share their own experiences of Brownies and Girl Guides. Members were unanimous that the incongruous story ending was explained as a device to continue into the third book. Group recommendations out of 5: 4.5 for a book group; 4.5 to a friend; most members would read the whole trilogy.

Initially a junior doctor, Lissa changed careers to BBC Light Entertainment. She produced and directed several series including *Father Ted* for which she won a BAFTA. She has written several other books including *The Finest Hour and a Half* which was filmed in 2017. One can hear her wit in her titles! She has also written 4 children's books, such as *Web Wabbit*.

CHESSE – Report by Diane Marks

We had a relaxed afternoon with four of us playing. There was a bit of a blip when we realised we only had one chess board but the problem was quickly rectified.

Two members continued a game from last month, having photographed it. In the end stalemate was agreed! We could well be in the same situation next month as we again took pics of our unfinished game. Perhaps we need to brush up on our end game.

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS GROUP – Report by Kate Bailey

We all enjoyed a very interesting meeting, thanks mostly to our Geology Group contributor Martyn. We talked about global oceanic currents and atmospheric winds around the polar regions that have an impact on the UK climate. The changes of direction of the Polar Vortex, the 'cold-snap' fluctuations in the Jet Stream, the slowing of the Gulf Stream in the Atlantic, and the strengthening of the El Niño north-bound warm currents from the Pacific all affect our weather. Meteorologists predict longer, wetter and more dreary winters for our region, with the potential for unhealthy 'ozone spikes' at ground level.

We're all aware that ozone gas (composed of three atoms of oxygen: O₃, rather than the normal two: O₂) occurs naturally in the upper atmosphere, where it forms a protective layer that shields us from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. Ground level ozone or photochemical ozone is created by chemical reactions when pollutants emitted by cars, power plants, refineries, chemical plants and other sources chemically react in the presence of sunlight. Ozone is heavier than ordinary oxygen and is harmful to health for humans, vegetation and ecosystems. Even relatively low levels can have noticeable health effects as ozone irritates the airways and can cause asthma and lung disease, particularly in younger and older people.

Moving on from the negative impacts of climate change, we talked about the potential for us to support a wildflower and pollinators project in Teesdale, and the plan to visit flowering meadows near Ravenstonedale that will be at their best in June and July. We also discussed different ways of rewilding parts of our garden lawns and our successes and disappointments.

Thinking of climate solutions as always, Hazel led our discussion of readily available domestic products that are less harmful to the planet and reduce plastic waste. Products worth trying include Naked Sprout toilet paper (bulk buys online or from Ocado), Cheeky Panda paper and tissue products, baby wipes etc (online), Splosh cleaning products, with refills that are ordered online and diluted at home, Stardrops white vinegar spray that cleans everything, and Ecover eco-products. Suppliers include the shop 'The Orchard' opposite the Co-op in Barnard Castle that sells refillable bottles and refills.

And ending on a cheering theme, Annie talked about the 20-year global study that has demonstrated the positive difference that conservation projects make to wildlife, and the significant benefits provided by long-term funding for nature recovery and rewilding.



Image: Borders Forest trust at Carrifran

DISCUSSION GROUP – Report by Glen Howard

Unfortunately, we didn't think we could put the world to rights, but we tried. Subjects we discussed included WASPI women / pensions; standards in public life; defence spending; nationalising UK buses; climate change; jailing parents for son's gun crime; river Tees pollution; diverse casting particularly of actual people.

Our next meetings will be on Friday 14th June. If you would like to join us, please give me a ring on **01833 631639**.

GARDENING GROUP – Report by Kate Keen



Holker Hall – Photos by Julie Archer

In May we had our first outing of the year with a visit to Holker Hall & Gardens in the south of the lake district. The visit was very popular, so we had a large 52-seater coach which was tricky for our driver to manoeuvre through the narrow streets. We arrived safely and were greeted by a representative of the hall and garden. Most of the group made straight for the Courtyard Café for welcome refreshments.

Holker Hall dates back to the early 1600s and has been home to the Preston, Lowther and Cavendish families. The hall is still occupied by Lucy Cavendish and her husband Tor McLaren. We were able to tour the house and had magnificent views of the garden beyond.

The gardens are made up of formal areas close to the house. It was a wonderful day to visit with some beautiful swathes of pink and white tulips underplanted with white forget-me-nots to make stunning displays. The formal garden included topiary with cleverly pruned shapes including elephants. In the wider landscape there were rhododendrons and azaleas in flower underplanted with bluebells, camassias, wild garlic and wood anemones. At the centre of the estate sits the cascade and fountain flowing down from a statue of Neptune. The cascade has just been renovated over the winter and the water now flows freely. The wider gardens have a labyrinth and willow den with woodland walks and the deer park.

As the visit drew to a close, we were able to make purchases from the gift shop and farm shop. The visit was another wonderful day out with positive feedback from Members.

On 7th June we will be visiting the RHS Bridgewater garden.

On Friday 5th July we visit Brodsworth Hall and Gardens.

GEOGRAPHY GROUP - Report by Gerald Blake

A full house welcomed Jonathan Mitchell (formerly of the Foreign Office) for the third time in five years, who spoke with enthusiasm about the huge potential of interactive websites and online databases in geographical research and map drawing. To illustrate the powerful tools available Jonathan first outlined his groundbreaking research into the Tyne keel boats, and (after the break) his map-led efforts to trace the movements of 183 Field Ambulance RAMC in 1943-44 from Salerno to Casino, a unit in which his father served. Both halves of the afternoon were packed with interest and lavishly illustrated as we ventured into worlds we knew nothing about.

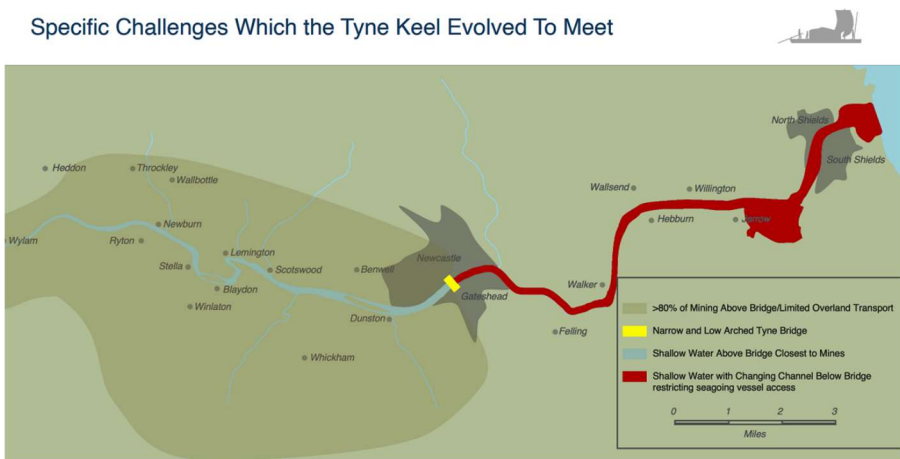
For two centuries the Tyne keels carried coal from numerous mines around the upper Tyne downstream to colliers docked in deeper water near the mouth of the Tyne chiefly for shipment to London. The keels had evolved to navigate shallow river waters, and to pass through the low bridge which spanned the Tyne until its removal in 1868. They were crewed by three men and a boy, who had to load and unload 22 tons of coal. In spite of the famous folk song "Weel may the keel row" oars were rarely used, the chief method of propulsion being the tides. In the early nineteenth century there might have been 800 keels on the Tyne and 2,000 keel men. Sadly, no keel boats have survived.

Using tools freely available on the National Library of Scotland website our speaker used large scale maps of the Tyne region to reveal more about how the coal was moved. He retraced the original routes of the wagon ways (in pre-railway days) and drew profiles of their routes from pit head to riverside to show the effectiveness of gravity. He compiled a startlingly complex map of the coal mines, wagon ways, railways and staithes (coal loading and storage places) using NLS resources. We saw his map of the “keel killers” depicting the railways and river improvements which ended the era of the keels from the 1860s.

Jonathan’s painstaking research on 183 Field Ambulance in Italy in 1943 to 1944 is ongoing, but we were given some insights into what can be done using primarily Google Earth. His campaign maps using official war diaries are a revelation of detail. Transferring original map references to modern maps was tricky. Once a location where 183 FA had been stationed was established, it could be related to the landscape today using Google Earth images We were all captivated by a wonderfully informative talk, but regrettably we ran out of time before questions.

Jonathan Mitchell has kindly provided us with the links to the online resources he used (four interactive websites and three online databases) plus a reading list which has been circulated to members. I hope these will be used by some of us for future adventures!

Specific Challenges Which the Tyne Keel Evolved To Meet



Jonathan Mitchell, April 2024

NEXT MEETING: Thursday 20th June (2.00 pm in the Witham). Professor Peter Redgrave: “Where the Crawdads Sing”: a geographical travelogue of the southeast seaboard of the United States.

GEOLOGY GROUP – Report by Bob Tuddenham Field Trip in Upper Teesdale

In April we had our first field trip of the summer very ably led by Trevor Morse.

Given the indifferent weather, we limited the trip to Bow Lee Beck in Upper Teesdale. We walked from the car park up to Gibson's Cave and there was certainly plenty of interesting geology to look at.

Nine of us met at Bowlees Visitor Centre and over a welcome coffee, Trevor gave out some excellent handouts and explained the essential geology of Teesdale and the surrounding area highlighting particularly the faults associated with the Alston Block (an important granite intrusion). He also talked about the cyclic strata that we see of limestone, mudstone, sandstone and occasionally coal.

These are cyclothems that repeat numerous times. Trevor mentioned the more recent developments that relate the bedding planes to climate changes during the Carboniferous.



We then ventured to the Bow Lee Bridge and looked at the Cockleshell Limestone before moving up Bow Lee Beck itself. Trevor demonstrated what a geologist in the field looks for and can interpret from the evidence on the ground. For example, the small waterfalls of more resistant rocks and the presence of small faults. We went into the disused limestone quarry of Scar Limestone and also looked at the adit on the other bank of the beck that had been used to unsuccessfully look for iron ore. We could see ripple marks on the sandstone and a few of us went on up to Gibson's Cave. This impressive feature is the top of the Scar Limestone Cyclothem with the limestones of the succeeding Five Yard Cyclothem forming the lip of the waterfall.

It was a most enjoyable morning led by an expert geologist. Many thanks to Trevor Morse.

iPAD and iPHONE GROUP – Report by Mike Sweeting

Before getting onto the main topic, we talked about sources of free podcasts. This was followed by a discussion about the use of the extra functions of WhatsApp such as video and voice messaging, making the keyboard more accessible and incorporating photographs in the message.

The main topic was that of scams. The reason scams succeed is often the human factor and we must agree that this has been the case since groups of humans started interacting with one another. The outcomes do not change but the mechanisms do. After covering the various ways in which we might make ourselves vulnerable we went on to how we might protect ourselves in this modern age. There are means that are available to help, e.g. complex passwords and how to store them, new tools such as two factor authentication and passkeys, and the signs that might indicate an email, text or other communication might be intended to deceive.

Lots of information is available and everybody went away with a Barclays Little Book of Scams prepared in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 28th May at 1.30pm at Enterprise House.

LUNCH CLUB – Report by Jane Mathieson

We had a good early evening meal at Capri, Newgate. Large servings of Pasta Aragosta, Tagliatelle Salmone, Vegetarian, Tuna & Ziza pizzas, Pollo Diane & Pollo Parmesan, Risotto Fruit de Mare, Melenze Parmigiana, Lasagne & Seabass with King Prawns, some of us had starters of cheese garlic bread, which had to be shared as it was so large, Garlic Mushrooms, Bruschetta, Prawn cocktail & Chicken goujons. A few of us managed puddings, mainly different ice creams which 'were very cold'! An enjoyable evening was had by all.

The next meeting is on June 19th at the Black Horse, Ingleton, 5.30pm.

NEEDLECRAFT – Report by Glen Howard

In April we were all concentrating on our knitting. It is often difficult to visualise the size of the garment being knitted especially when the pattern measurements are given in centimetres. Most of us just know how inches will look but struggle imagining the metric equivalent, and the differences between 'old' and 'new' needle sizes and the effect that has on the finished item.

We decided that it would be good to visit the Bowes Museum 'Stories in Stitch' exhibition as a group when it opens later this year.

We often we all bring knitting to our meetings because it is easy to pick up and unless it is a complicated pattern you can knit and chat easily. However, in May there was also embroidery and patchwork being undertaken. As usual we talked about many things – health and safety, soup-making, hospital transport, car insurance amongst other topics.

Our next meeting will be on Monday 3rd June. New members are always welcome and you certainly don't need to be an expert to join us, just enjoy stitching with like-minded folk. Please give me a ring if you are interested.

Glen Howard: **01833 631639**

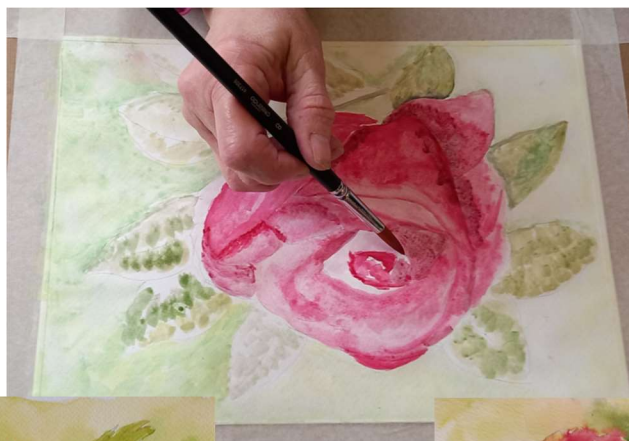
PAINTING GROUP – Report by Val Hobbs

Following on from mushrooms last month, Anne chose the theme of roses for the group to paint. She illustrated first, how to paint a rose with a wet-on-wet background, with the rose petals being painted individually with one colour. The different tones were achieved by lifting out (using a dry brush to lift some of the wet paint off) and then overpainting when dry. We all worked on this first stage following her instructions, and then Anne then showed us how to use Chinese calligraphy brushes for the leaves.

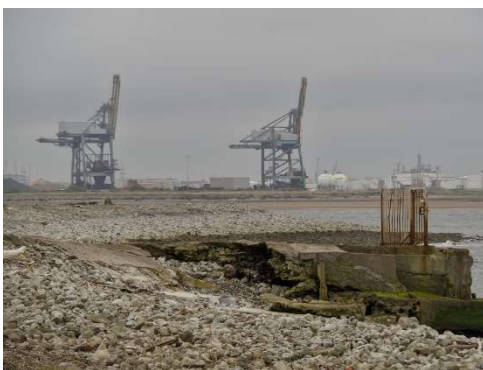
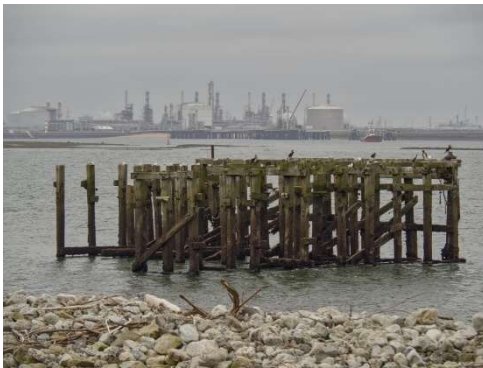
This was the first time we had used these delicate brushes and were delighted with the effects. Hopefully we will be trying these out again.

For further information, contact Val Hobbs on [0790 049 7503](tel:07900497503)

A rose by any other name:



PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP – Some Images from South Gare



Photos by Alan Kenwright and Robert Alabaster

PHILOSOPHY GROUP – Reports by Christine Price, Jenny Lee and Ruth Sansom

The session for March considered the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984).

Part One: Foucault's ideas about the construction of knowledge through discourse, and the relationship between knowledge and power led to some lively discussion (and criticism), as did Foucault's ideas about disciplinary power, which could be overt - in terms of institutional discipline (for example in schools, and prisons), and also more subtle forms of discipline exerted through the expectations and norms which encourage conformity and self-discipline. (NB social media, and the increased surveillance in everyday life)

Part Two: The second part of the session considered some of Foucault's well-known work, and its influence: 'Madness and Civilisation' (1961) and 'The Birth of the Clinic' (1963).

Foucault approached the concept of 'madness' from a broadly historical point of view, finding that early societies, such as the 'Renaissance' often tolerated the alternative to reason that madness presented and in circumstances where sufferers claimed visions or dialogue with God, they might even be venerated.

During the period of growth of 'rational' and scientific knowledge ('Enlightenment'), however, the 'mad' were more likely to be perceived as sub-human, deviant, and they could be locked and chained up in asylums (sometimes for the benefit of paying visitors).

In the nineteenth century, the efforts of Pinel (France) and Tuke (York Retreat) ushered in a more comfortable and kindly approach to encourage sufferers of mental disorders to moderate their behaviour. Foucault disagreed with the perception that this represented a more humane approach, writing that '...the mad are freed from their chains but they are imprisoned in a moral world...'

Foucault was also critical of the basis on which later psychiatrists claimed authority over the 'mad' (the exercise of Knowledge/Power as discussed in part one).

'The Birth of the Clinic' was the last of Foucault's work to be discussed. This identified how doctors had previously ignored the patient as a whole and simply focussed their 'Medical Gaze' on the physical cause of an illness ('the gall bladder in bed three'). Foucault's work (amongst others)

highlighted the need to take a more holistic view of factors influencing ill health and there had been a gradual shift in health care to put the patient, rather than their disease at the centre of care.

Again, this generated a lot of discussion (and digression!) about current practices and attitudes to mental ill-health and health care.

In our latest meeting we discussed Glen Scrivener's book 'The Air We Breathe' which had been recommended as a starting point for discussion on several aspects of life today.

He contends that modern values such as equality, compassion, consent, enlightenment, science, freedom and progress are not natural and universal, but have been brought about by the Christian revolution.

We chose to examine compassion first, and defined it as:

- a strong feeling of sympathy or sadness for those suffering, resulting in offering help through action;
- a sympathetic consciousness of others' distress, together with a desire to alleviate it;
- taken from the Latin 'com': together with, and 'pati': to suffer, compassion means 'suffering with'.

We chose to research compassion as practised before Christ, and after Jesus.

Pre-Christian compassion:

It soon became clear that there was a lot of evidence of compassion well before Christianity came about. A growing body of evidence suggests that both human beings and other animals have an inbuilt "compassionate instinct." A number of pre-Christian religions such as Buddhism and Judaism place compassion very high up in their priorities and both ancient Greece and ancient Rome worshipped goddesses of compassion. Ancient philosophers such as Confucius and Socrates both valued compassion highly, even though many of the practises carried out then would be, in today's thinking, barbaric. There was a great deal of discussion about that and what in perhaps 1000 years' time people might consider barbaric in our customs and practises.

Compassion since Jesus:

Scrivener opens this chapter by quoting Richard Dawkins (an outspoken atheist), 'a woman should abort a faulty foetus and try again.' (2014)

Several philosophers have written about compassion, and we noted that Schopenhauer (1788 – 1860) declared that compassion is the main drive towards ethical behaviour, and as other people aren't external to me, I should care about them. Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) said that pity needs to be overcome as it 'thwarts the law of evolution, which is the law of selection.'

This led us to define the difference between pity and compassion (the latter taking action in response to others' distress).

Scrivener argues that compassion comes from another realm than what is natural, the 'super-natural'. Much of the teachings of Jesus in the gospels is based on the story of the Good Samaritan, 'go and do likewise'.

More discussion to come in our future meetings. Do come and join the philosophy group at our next meetings on Tuesday 28th May (when we will be looking at Equality) and Tuesday 25th June (Science) at 10am until 12 noon at Enterprise House.

PICKLEBALL – Report by Ruth Lapworth

Two of our pickleball sessions this spring have been cancelled due to bank holidays which makes the month-long gap between sessions frustrating for those of us addicted to the game. The consensus of the group is that we look at changing the frequency of sessions on our return to Teesdale Leisure Centre.

We are following rules for playing the game issued by the International Federation of Pickleball of which Pickleball England is a member. These rules are designed for playing as a recreational sport, in an organised league or for competitive tournaments.

The rules specify the game is played with special balls and paddles. The plastic balls come in various colours and are designated for either indoor or outdoor use. Each ball must weigh between 22.1g and 26.5g with 26-40 circular holes. Those used for indoor play have larger size holes (and are lighter) compared to those used for outdoor play. We have noticed a slight variation in weight of different coloured balls, so we hope to purchase a new set of uniform colour later in the year.

INDOOR



OUTDOOR



The paddle used for playing pickleball is a distinctive rectangular shape. They can be made of wood, graphite or with an inner honeycomb structure of polypropylene sandwiched between 2 fibreglass faces and price varies according to material and manufacturer. The paddle itself is about 15 inches long with an approximately 5-inch handle. A number of players have now bought their own paddles which means we can make good use of 2 courts.

As we become more familiar with the various rules and scoring it makes for better games and more fun (an underlying principle of the game).

If you would like to join our group to learn the game, please contact Ruth Lapworth ruth.lapworth@hotmail.co.uk or **0778 7978696**). All are welcome, but please note a reasonable level of fitness is required as although pickleball is not as demanding as tennis, it does involve physical movement, good hand - eye coordination and ball skills.

POETRY GROUP – Report by Chris Golds

Leading up to the April meeting, all things were well. A broad subject area is used each month to stimulate the selection of poems and these were being forwarded to Annie. The established routine would run smoothly as normal. As the date of the meeting approached, information came through to members causing some consternation – there was to be a guest joining the meeting. But then two visitors, followed by a third...

You will be relieved to hear that the adjustments needed to accommodate all of this – the seating arrangements, delay at the start for media interview and photographs - were managed with good humour, cooperation and patience.

Our Teesdale bard, Meg Peacocke, was the invited guest. Two members of the Third Age Trust, the u3a umbrella organisation were also welcomed – Liz Thackray, currently national Chair and a representative from NE region, Jean Cubbin. Stuart Laundry was invited to record this special event for his local radio programme and the Teesdale Mercury (featured 27th April).

The theme for the meeting was Walking. It brought forth, as always, an interesting array of poems, some familiar, some completely new, but better understood following the group discussion which can bring responses of pleasure, sometimes confusion and occasionally delight.

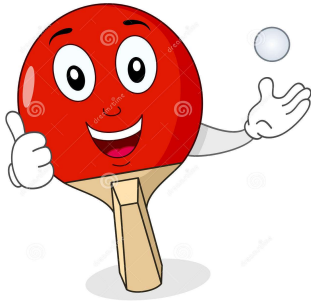
Hearing Meg read her own poem *The Old Roads* with a quiet, calm, but assured voice, was something special. The closure of this short poem “...this jolt of severance where no words find a footing” might stimulate an interest in members to search out this poem. In the first stanza you can feel the Teesdale air.

An appearance of two poems by Robert Frost was not a surprise: *A Lake Walk* and *The Road Not Taken*. His solid structure and rhyme create powerful images. The mood of the poems was very much weighted to a melancholy note. Was this reflecting the mood of the members when making a selection or does the topic lend itself to that injection? No answer, of course, it could simply be the weather or certain world matters in play, and no shortage of those.

However, as a contrast, humour was brought into the room with *Excelsior: the Shades of Night* by A E Housman. Peter was certainly equipped with his personal experiences of the church to offer interesting anecdotes provoked by this parody of a Longfellow poem. A small anthology *10 Poems about Walking*, compiled by Sacha Dugdale (publisher Candlestick Press), brought three of the poems to the meeting, including Meg's *The Old Roads*.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 12th June when the theme is *Absence*.

TABLE TENNIS GROUP – Report by Peter Singer



The table tennis fun and games continue unabashed at Mickleton Village Hall on Friday afternoons. At a recent session, we had eight players at two tables, which meant that we were able to play uninterrupted doubles without anyone having to sit out. In fact, there were one or two water breaks and pauses to catch our breath, chat about the weather, other u3a groups we were involved in, holidays etc. We also interspersed a few singles games for variety and to give some of us another opportunity for a much-needed rest. Of course, also brought out the competitive streak in some of us, with a few serious rallies, big hits and meaningful glares being bandied about.

Mickleton is proving to be a very enjoyable venue whilst we are excluded from the Leisure Centre. In A Topographical Dictionary of England (1848 – coincidentally exactly 100 years before my birth), Mickleton was described as “a township in the parish of Romalldkirk, union of Teesdale, wapentake of Gilling West...”. A wapentake was apparently the equivalent of the Anglo Saxon hundred in the northern Danelaw. A hundred was a division of a shire (then North Riding of York) for military and judicial purposes and was required to pay geld to the Vikings as protection money, which was probably more than the £1 per head we now pay to the village hall. It’s surprising what you can learn playing table tennis, so why not give it a go?

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

Four of us met at Egglestone Abbey. We set off in rain which soon turned into a pleasant dry afternoon, we even had some sunshine that was surprisingly warm. As we walked down from the car park we could see the yellow flowers of gorse at the other side of the River Tees. We ventured down to the Tees riverside where we identified Butterbur, Forget-me-not, Primrose and Wild Garlic.

Back along the lane on our way to the woods we saw Dog's Mercury, Moschatel (town hall clock), Toothwort and Yellow dead-nettle also known as Yellow Archangel/golden dead-nettle/aluminium plant. As we crossed Abbey Bridge and entered the woods we were greeted by Wood Anemones and Bluebells on the bank. Due to very muddy conditions underfoot we didn't venture very far into the woods.

Arriving back at the car park it was suggested that we took the public footpath across towards the houses. We descended a bank of primroses into the meadow where we found Golden Saxifrage growing at the water's edge and Dog Violet at the gate.

Future walk: Wednesday, 12th June - Hannah's Meadow.

WINE GROUP – Report by Jane Mardon



In the absence of our convenor Tim, a few of us agreed to meet up in April for a slightly different wine appreciation session. We each took a wine we liked to share with the group. Each person also presented information on their wine and that was followed by everyone sharing short stories of their experiences in and visits to the countries of origin. Most informative and entertaining. This was something new to the group meeting as sadly we didn't have Tim's quiz to hand as we normally do.

Whites

Austrian Gruner Veltliner 2022 12.5% on offer Morrisons at £8.00 Zingy packed with lemon and apple notes.

SE Australia Limetree Chardonnay 12.5% Co-op £7.00. Subtle tropical fruit flavours with a splash of citrus.

Reds

Portugal, Animuis Duouro Reserva 2021 13.5% £6.99. The Animus Douro basic one is £5.49 and very quaffable. Tinta and Touriga grapes, red fruits and plum flavours.

Italy Valpolicella Ripasso 2021 13.5% Lidl £7.99. Northern Italy - dark fruit flavours, made with partially dried grape skins. The Corvina grape is usually the dominant one in this red wine blend.

All wines were well liked though probably the top for all being the Austrian Gruner Veltliner as two of the tasters didn't really like the strong tannins in the red wines. The other two did!!!

It was a splendid session with lots of tasty nibbles to complement the wines as well as good conversation.

YOGA GROUP - Report by Merrion Chrisp

u3a's Yoga Group is led by Angela Griffiths, a British Wheel of Yoga Teacher.

The 75-minute sessions are 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. This is a floor-based practice and unsuitable for those who have had no previous yoga experience.

The remainder of current term runs 3rd to 17th June.

The following Term runs 24th June to 15th July.

There will be no sessions in August but we hope to resume in September with dates to be confirmed.

All the current places are booked but if you would like to be added to the waiting list please contact:

Angela Griffiths – angelagriffiths5@cloud.com or

Merrion Chrisp – mfchrisp@gmail.com

WALKING GROUPS



SHORTER WALKS - Report by Liz Colley Springtime in Teesdale

A hardy bunch of walkers met on a disappointingly soggy afternoon in Eggleston for a 3 mile walk from the Village Hall. However, we were rewarded by enjoying the early signs of Spring. Learning to recognise trees by their buds and seeing conifer flowers. There were banks of primroses to appreciate and even a few violets dotted in the grassy banks.

This walk started down Balmer Lane to join the Teesdale Way where there are usually good views across the Tees Valley, but it was all rather misty. The next stage took us on a steep climb up the tarmac road to the Stanhope Road. Using this road to cross the Blackton Beck we then stopped to learn more about the history of lead mining in this area. We then crossed the impressively high Blackton Bridge which had been built so that the pack horses carrying lead ore had an easier route up to the smelting mills. More information was to be found on the display board next to the Saddle House on the road to Middleton but just before we reached the Saddle House, we passed a line of dead moles hanging from the fence, evidence that the mole catcher had done his work.



A mole-catcher's evidence of work done – photo Ian Royston

Heading back to Eggleston we took the pack horse route, crossing the twisting Eggleston Burn by footbridges rather than the traditional cobbled ford. Then returning by the route we had set out on we were rewarded by super views over the dale as the mist had lifted. In all a gratifying walk-in good company.



The group at Saddle House – photo Ian Royston

Our next walk is on Monday, 24th June.

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

In spite of rain and gusty winds five intrepid walkers – Ruth, Janet, Liz, Pete and I decided that notwithstanding the forecast we were ready for some exercise and company. The plan was to meet in the car park at Bowlees, walk to High Force and to return via the High Force Hotel.

The rain began just as we walked towards the Wynch Bridge. Crossing over the river we couldn't help but notice that the force and volume of the water was just amazing. None of us had seen the river moving so fast. The path was, as expected, a little slippery but the river was captivating and there was plenty of new growth on trees and bushes and clumps of primrose to distract us from the weather conditions.

As we reached the second bridge, we took a poll to see who wanted to continue and up to the Force and who was ready to turn back. Three of us couldn't resist carrying on to see just how spectacular the top of High Force was, while two decided to return via Holwick Head, thereby missing having to trek up the many steps to the High Force Hotel.



The weather seemed to take a turn for the worse as we carried onwards, with harder wind and rain so it we stopped for just a short while to admire the view and take a few photos before turning back to join the others.

I had never taken the Holwick Head route, which takes you past Holwick Lodge, Hield House and Holwick Head House. It's a shorter route but one that offers a different perspective from the High Force Hotel route as you are able to look down to follow the bends in the river until eventually arriving back at Low Force.

Once the visitor centre came into sight it was a race to see who could get there first for a welcoming hot drink and a bite to eat. Although we were rather wet and little cold at the end, we agreed that the effort had been worthwhile.

7-9 MILE WALKING GROUP – Report by Phil Clarke

After a couple of monthly walk cancellations due to the dismal wet and windy winter ten of us managed a springtime walk but NO it definitely wasn't a Spring-like day in Upper Swaledale. It was cold but thankfully dry. 7°C a hat and gloves Spring walk!!

We left the pretty village of Muker and walked in single file as the sign informs you towards the River Swale where we crossed it at Ramps Holme bridge. The route now is fairly flat towards the bottom of Swinner Gill where a nice wooden bridge has appeared. The path is very undulating until you get to the beautiful waterfall where we stopped for a break. Lots of water, so, so attractive, especially for the folk of Keld who have it on their doorstep.

This perhaps quirky little village has a B&B with displaying Kinky Boots and even a working red phone box (K6) that Pete had to check out! Then the big climb of the day that I am famous for, over Kisdon Hill at about 500m towards Muker. A sheltered spot was found for lunch out of the wind where Barry, Chris and co. made a makeshift picnic spot of wood, wire etc most impressive. After lunch it was very steep down into Muker but with amazing views of Swaledale. Just under 8 miles so we deserved a cake and hot drink in the ice cream shop in Reeth. Maybe it wasn't as cold as I suggested as one of the group had a double scoop ice cream.

Many thanks to Phil for leading the walk.

Our June walk will be led by Peter on June 19th starting from near the CB Inn in Arkengarthdale the walk will be a 7-mile exploration of the upper dale including Whaw and High Fagnergill.

Please contact nickygrace729@gmail.com if you would like to join this walk.



The group in Upper Swaledale - photo James Dykes

FELL WALKING GROUP – Report by Annie Clouston

On a deceptively mild day, with clouds that didn't threaten imminent rain, nine of us set off from Muker just after 10am. We walked along the Pennine Way up out of the village then leaving it to track North to Keld where we descended the steep stone path down into the valley, crossing the river by footbridge to follow a course downstream to Kisdon Force. Sadly, I wimped out of what last summer had been irresistible and did not take a leap on the wild side into the fabulous plunge pool below one of a series of beautiful waterfalls. Why? At a conservative estimate the water was 8°C and the air temperature about the same, so I may have my eccentricities but there is a kernel of self-preservation somewhere within. Besides I hadn't incorporated impromptu baptism in the risk assessment. Here we stopped for a snack in glorious surroundings, and some of my fellow walkers arranged themselves like Magistrates at the Bench – the boss and the bookends!



From Kisdon the path alongside the Swale affords a steady undulating walk across Swinner Gill towards Muker. However, deferring the crossing of Ramps Holme Bridge, and the stone pathway across fields back to Muker we continued along the valley side eventually climbing to walk along the edge of an escarpment to reach Shore Gill and descend to Ivet Bridge – an absolute treasure with seemingly disproportionately high arches built to withstand being swept away by floodwaters - and from there follow the valley bottom back to Ramps Holme Bridge and thence to Muker. All in all, a walk of 11 miles during which, for the most part, the weather was kind.

Refreshment was taken at the fortuitously open Farmers Arms. This pub has been on the market for two years, so the potential for community ownership is now being investigated. This could secure its future and ensure it is run for the benefit of the Upper Swaledale community.

Thank you to Phil who led the walk and my companions for an excellent day's exercise and companionship.



Swinner Gill – Photo Annie Clouston



Las Meninas by **Diego Velázquez** is a 1656 painting in the Museo del Prado in Madrid and is one of the 15 items to be presented by Morlin Ellis, Curator of the Spanish Gallery of the Auckland Project in her talk: “The History of Spanish Art in 15 Objects” at our u3a Witham meeting on 27th June 2024.

GEOGRAPHY QUIZ - by Phil Clarke

Places in the British Isles

1. Knitted buttoned jacket (8)
2. A bomber in the Battle of Britain (9)
3. Famous place for lace (7)
4. Mum is feeling fine (10)
5. A rebuild for Noah? (6)
6. Gorgeous variety of cheese (7)
7. Depression in the land surface (6)
8. Equine pace to final resting place (10)
9. A heavy rubbish container (7)
10. Current of air on the lake (10)
11. Small currant pastry (6)
12. William's battle of 1066 (8)
13. The national emblem of a Celtic nation (4)
- 14.
15. Almost a craving to drink (6)
16. Blenheim was home to this Duke (11)
17. Royal pottery here (9)
18. Where pork pies are a speciality (6, 7)
19. A form of comic verse (8)
20. Completely dark water (9)
21. Energy, food good for our u3a walkers (6)

COFFEE AND CHAT PICNIC

Our usual Coffee and Chat session in June is to be bigger and better and in the form of a Bring-Your-Own Picnic that you can enjoy with friends and family at the Cricket Club, Vere Road, Barnard Castle, from 1.00pm to 4.00pm on Thursday 13th June. Indoors if wet but otherwise an al fresco opportunity to eat, drink and be merry.

Please note that alcohol consumed on the premises must be purchased from the Cricket Club bar which will be open for our use.

Coffee and Chat - Coming up:

11th July – Scarth Hall, Staindrop 2.30 – 3.30 pm

8th August – Andalucia's, Galgate, Barnard Castle 2.30 – 3.30pm

Yet another incomparably tedious month in Ambridge

It's as if the scriptwriters have bored themselves into a stupor from which a mosquito bite has roused them momentarily to scratch themselves and, in that moment, had a thought. We need to revive an ISSUE! (subtext: we cannot think of anything new).

The ISSUE that has been re-vivified in order to get Mrs Fenella Langridge (and Godfrey her husband, who doesn't like to admit it) back on board is Alice's relapse into the lying, subterfuge and irresponsibility of active alcoholism. All, apparently, because of desperate fumbblings in the dark – we knew it would happen, didn't we? – with Hooray Harry, until very recently a closet alcoholic himself. Drawing Jakob the Vet, the highly unlikely lover of Alice's mother, Kate, the ridiculously caricatured purveyor of snake oil at Spiritual Home (please avoid booking yourself in for a detox) into her web of secrecy by making him her new, and only, best friend. There is the dimmest chance that how she proceeds along her route to oblivion may provide a glimmer of interest in the slough of the abyss of the swamp in which the plot-lines have drowned.

Meanwhile, I have been asking around for listeners' – of which there are still a few - nominations for most unpleasant character. Some favour George Grundy, and that is gratifying, because he is undoubtedly a toad. Others Emma Grundy, his mother, clearly there are genetics here. She does bitter better than that stuff my mother used to put on my nails to stop me biting them. Her mother (genetics will out though I am reluctant to woman-blame here because the whining males of the Grundy line are highly obnoxious). Susan would win Olympic Gold in the Hideous Accent competition, but with a change of scriptwriter can sometimes appear almost kind. Recently though another working class dynasty has come centre-stage, oddly enough related by marriage to the Grundys, the Horrobins! Chelsea – or Chels as she is affectionately known – has been showing her true colours as a scheming multi-tasker and opportunist. Once upon a time she was written as full of teenage angst, though a surprisingly talented hairdresser, now she appears as a waitress in various Ambridge venues, buzzing around like a bluebottle on speed, giving customers a strong desire to swat her with a rolled up Daily Mail.

I promise that next month I will be featuring listeners' favourite characters. However, I fear that this will be an onerous exercise in prising out nominations where the pool of possibilities is so shallow.

Happy listening! Annie

Answers to Geography Quiz

1. Cardigan
2. Lancaster
3. Honiton
4. Motherwell
5. Newark
6. Cheddar
7. Valley (Anglesey)
8. Canterbury
9. Skipton
10. Windermere
11. Eccles
12. Hastings
13. Leek
14. Thirsk
15. Marlborough
16. Worcester
17. Melton Mowbray
18. Limerick
19. Blackpool
20. Kendal

NORTHUMBRIA REGION u3a PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Entries are invited for a photography competition. The purpose is to select pictures to illustrate an updated hard copy tri-fold leaflet about Northumbria Region u3a and supplementary information on its website so photographers must be willing for their entries to be published. The competition is for photographs that best display the ethos of the u3a of **learn, laugh and live**. They can be of any activity within the u3a.

Entries should be digital images in jpg format with a maximum size of 2,000 pixels on the longest side and emailed to seahamdistrictu3a@gmail.com by 31st May 2024, with judging completed by 30th June 2024.

Details of date and locality and preferred title of the picture should be included in the body of the submission email and more than one entry is acceptable. As your entry may be published, please have the courtesy to ask permission of any member who appears in your picture.

Please use the wording **Regional Photo Competition** in the email title. The winning entry will receive a £20 gift voucher.

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	3 rd Wed pm	Annie Clouston 01833 637091
Chess	2 nd Thurs pm	Diana Ma
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 and Technology	2 nd Mon am	Roy Tranter 01833 638288
Scrabble	2 nd Mon pm	Lilian Smith 01833 650628
Spanish	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	2 nd Wed 2pm	Anne Thomson 07928 594404
Wine Group	3 rd 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	Liz Colley 01833 695197
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

Fri 24 May 7.30pm	COMEDY– Carl Hutchinson: That’s The Show – Film & Q&A (12+) A journey into stand-up.
Tues 28 May 7.30pm	FAMILY – Megaslam Wrestling: 2024 Live Tour
Thurs 30 May 7.30pm	TRIBUTE – The History of Rock A must see for any fan of ROCK!
Fri 31 May 7.30pm	JAZZ – Borealis Jazz Musicians from across the North perform music that fuses elements of folk, rock and contemporary jazz.
Sat 1 June 8.30pm	NIGHT OUT – Bingo That’s Bonkers (18+)
Thurs 6 June 7.30pm	LIVE MUSIC – Strictly Tommy Blaize: The Voice of Strictly Come Dancing
Fri 7 June 7.00pm	SPOKEN WORD – The Battle of Britain in North-East England with Denis Fox
Fri 7 June 7.30pm	TRIBUTE – The Carpenters Experience
Sat 8 June 2.00pm	FILM – The Great Escaper (12A) Starring Michael Caine, Glenda Jackson, John Standing.
Sat 8 June 7.30pm	LIVE MUSIC – D-Day Anniversary Concert: 80 Years On St. Mary’s Community Orchestra & Singers
Tues 11 June 7.15pm	LIVE SCREENING – Royal Opera House: Andrea Chénier
Tues 18 June 7.30pm	MUSICAL THEATRE – Frogna! & Fox: A Life in Song (12+) Featuring favourite songs from stage and screen, this raucous, cabaret-style show is not to be missed.
Fri 21 June 7.30pm	TRIBUTE: The Elton John Show
Sat 22 June 7.30pm	COMEDY – Pete Firman: Trik Tok (11+) An evening of jaw-dropping magic and laugh-out-loud comedy.
Tues 25 June 7.00pm	LIVE MUSIC – Noaddedsugar! Midsummer Melodies