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FORUM

MARCH 2025

No. 25/03



u3a

CHAIR'S LETTER

Dear Friends

"May you live in interesting times", a phrase misquoted by Joseph Chamberlain from an ancient Chinese proverb seems particularly pertinent at this time given the seemingly endless turmoil in word affairs. Yet, as I journeyed into Barney at the weekend, I saw new lambs in the fields, could detect the slightest hint of green in the hedgerows, the birds are busy, the nights are definitely 'putting out' now and our dogs have noticed that walkies should be earlier, reminding us that whatever misfortunates disturb our everyday life the world keeps turning, seasons arrive and nature pursues her relentless course unaffected by tariffs, ceasefires and annexations.

Of course, the passing of the meteorological year also prompts us to remember in the u3a year, the subs are now overdue and the AGM will soon be with us and with it my very brief tenure as chair.

We now appear to have some basis for optimism for a committee to see us through to 2026, thank you to all who stepped forward.

Once again, we have had no difficulty in having enough material to create a Forum. It is gratifying to see reports appear every month but may I make an appeal to those groups who do not regularly report in the Forum to write a report now and again to let us know how and what you are doing. I know some groups already struggle to cope with the sheer weight of numbers in some venues yet others could do with more people. Perhaps you like it small but the interest groups are what attract most people to join and remain with Teesdale u3a so it would be good to hear from more of you.

The social in February seemed to go down very well and we look to repeat the Picnic at the Cricket Ground in June. In the meantime, as well as the monthly meeting and interest groups we continue to attract modest numbers to 'Coffee and Chat'. These are held at venues around the dale but provide an opportunity away from the turmoil of the Witham, giving the option to meet amongst friends, find new friends, or if you wish let us know what you want to see from Teesdale u3a.

Best wishes,

Ian

Cover: New-born lambs crossing Langley Beck. Photo: Ian Royston

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 urge you to be succinct. The more succinct you are the more photos, illustrations and interesting articles and silliness we can include! Photos should be credited, of high resolution in jpg format and sent separately. 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: 14 April at 18:00 and next month's editor is Kate. Handwritten/typed contributions can be left in the u3a file in the library. Please 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.

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ADVANCE NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Thursday 24 April 2025

The 17th Annual General Meeting of Teesdale u3a will be held on Thursday 24 April 2025 in The Witham Hall, Barnard Castle commencing at 10.30am. Doors open 10.00am.

All AGM documents will be sent out by email.

Nominations for Committee and Motions for debate must be received by the Business secretary on or before Thursday 27 March 2025.

MONTHLY MEETING – Report by Ian Reid

There have been five mass extinctions in Earth's history. Martyn Radcliffe, one of our own members, explained what this meant at the February monthly meeting.

Extinctions are a normal part of evolution and they occur naturally and periodically over time. Research e.g. from fossils, examination of rocks etc., has shown that 10% of species are lost every million years, 30% every 10 million years, and 65% every 100 million years. Evolution occurs through the balance of extinction, the end of species, and speciation, the creation of new ones.

However, mass extinctions are periods with much higher extinction rates than normal. In a mass extinction, at least 75% of species go extinct within a relatively short time, by geological standards, typically less than two million years. There have been five mass extinction events in Earth's history, at least since 500 million years ago. We know very little about extinction events prior to this time.

Martyn displayed a chart which showed the changing extinction rates, measured as the number of species that became extinct per million years. This number was never zero. Background extinction rates are low, typically less than 5 'families' per million years, but ever-present. The spikes in the chart indicate that there were 5 major events when rates were much higher i.e. the end of the Ordovician (444 million years ago), Late Devonian (360 mya), Permian (250 mya), Triassic (200 mya), Cretaceous (65 mya when the dinosaurs became extinct).

The causes of mass extinctions include: glacial periods, sea level changes, tectonic uplifts of the earth's surface, changes in climate and ocean

chemistry, intense volcanic activity, and asteroid impact. These causes are interlinked.

The question is, 'are we heading for a sixth'? Human intervention has brought about much more rapid changes in the earth's environment. Recent evidence suggests that the burning of fossil fuels, changes in land usage, population increase, pollution etc. are causing a very rapid increase in carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere, both greenhouse gases which blanket the earth and trap the sun's heat. Some suggest that the situation is already irreversible, although others believe that technology can provide us with alternative means of producing energy without the emission of greenhouse gases. The solution lies in our hands.

This was an excellent, thought-provoking talk, reminding us of the seriousness of the current position and of the urgent need for everyone, particularly governments, to recognize this and to develop policies and practices to reverse the situation.

NEXT MEETINGS AT THE WITHAM

24 April 2025: Prof. Alec Ryrie - Protestants: A History in Seven Characters

Protestant Christianity emerged from Martin Luther's Reformation in the early 1500s. It spread across Europe, to Britain and eventually around the world. In this lecture, church historian Professor Alec Ryrie will tell the story of how Protestantism got from there to here by introducing seven remarkable men and women who exemplify different parts of that story: some heroes, some villains and some who, like most of us, are caught uneasily somewhere in the middle.

22 May 2025: Dr Patrick Eyres - Turner in The Pennines.

The Pennine journeys of the landscape artist, J.M.W. Turner, were to sketch material for artworks later painted in his London studio. The Victorian art critic, John Ruskin, considered that the watercolours created for Dr. Thomas Whitaker's 'History of Richmondshire', which included views in Upper Teesdale and along the river Greta, were among the finest of Turner's landscapes. These will be discussed alongside his explorations of other picturesque and sublime terrain within the Pennines.

FEBRUARY SOCIAL – Report by Annie Clouston

The Allsimons take Barnard Castle by storm

We had a great night on Saturday 1st February at St Mary's Church Hall when members of our u3a gathered for a rejection of the Wintertime Blues. The band, featuring our very own Bob Tuddenham and his two music collaborators, Simon and Simon, plus their sound man Steve wowed us all with their versatility and musicality, playing accordion, guitars, piano and with strong vocals with harmonies. Their songs and instrumentals covered a wide range of genres, from Celtic folk to some rock classics with a bit of Appalachian in the mix. One of the Simons was a particularly articulate raconteur and gave the walkers among us a cautionary tale in classic Stanley Holloway style.

So, we had an evening of great entertainment and the comment going around was, "who knew?" about our Bob. The raffle with its mystery prize proved an attention grabber, and the feasts brought by the members on a BYO basis were a wonder to behold. Hazel and David's enviable picnic basket was remarkable and probably one of the more sober spreads of the night.

Massive thanks and appreciation go to the Allsimons who were incredibly generous with their time, energy and conviviality.

The socials group have lots more planned for the year, including the picnic in June - so watch this space.

WORKSHOP REPORT

Pakistani Vegetarian Cookery - Report by Ruth Lapworth

A group of 10 enthusiastic cooks met on an exceptionally cold and frosty morning hoping to learn about Pakistani vegetarian cooking and also sample some of the dishes prepared during the session. They were not disappointed. The workshop was expertly led by Naila Laundry. Her love of cooking combined with a wide knowledge of food which she was happy to impart to the group led to a very informative and enjoyable session.

Naila had done a lot of food preparation before we met so after introducing herself she started straightaway by making 2 curries (one wet and one dry). This was followed by showing us how to prepare parathas and vegetable samosas so we could have a try!

She started her first curry called “Curry in a hurry” by frying chopped onions in vegetable oil and then adding garlic and ginger pastes, tomato purée, various spices, tinned tomatoes, chickpeas and fresh, chopped coriander. While this was simmering on the stove, she moved on to prepare the dry curry called “5 spice potato”. This used baby potatoes which she had previously par-boiled and fried in butter with parsley and thyme. These were added to a mix of 5 spices (black mustard seed, coriander, cumin, nigella and fenugreek seeds) which she fried in a very small amount of vegetable oil. To this mixture she then added some hot madras curry powder, garlic paste, fresh coriander and enough water to steam the potatoes. At this stage the delicious smells were making most of us feel decidedly hungry!

In the next part of the workshop Naila showed us how to roll out flat bread dough to make parathas. These were cooked in a hot frying pan until nicely coloured on both sides. She demonstrated an easy way to fold narrow sheets of filo pastry around a tasty mix of vegetables. The vegetable mix had been stir-fried but Naila added garlic, mint sauce, chat masala, garam masala and chilli flakes before adding spoonful of the mix to a corner of the pastry which she folded and sealed with a flour and water paste.

Most of us then had a go at making some parathas and samosas without getting ourselves covered in too much flour! All the samosas (some looking a little rustic) were oven-cooked until crispy. A few volunteers (under instruction) prepared an onion pickle, a beetroot raita and a cucumber and tomato raita.

We then sat down to enjoy our feast. A splendid way to finish a great and warming morning thanks to our workshop lead, Naila.

FUTURE WORKSHOPS – Sue Overton

For reservations and more details on all Workshops please contact Sue Overton **07512 368884** or email sueoverton@hotmail.com

Saturday 12 April 10am -12 noon – Poetry Writing Workshop led by Ray Lee at Guide HQ Birch Road. Cost £3.

Saturday 10 May 2pm – 4pm Richard III - Walk and Talk led by Kim Harding with finish for refreshments in St Mary’s Parish Hall. Cost £3. Maximum of 10 people. This workshop is now FULL but there is a reserve list.

Saturday 31 May 10am – 12 noon – Classics in a Nutshell led by Tim Meacham. “A selection of practical experiences offering insights into how Greece and Rome continue to be relevant to us today. Art, Drama and History will feature in fun and thought-provoking ways” at Guide HQ Birch Road. Cost £2.

Saturday 5th July 9am - Exploring Tynemouth Workshop. The coach is now full but contact Sue if you wish to be placed on the Reserve List.

FUTURE DAY AND LONGER TRIPS – Jane Mathieson

I have organised the following trips for this year. If you want to put your name down for any of them, please email janem1947@hotmail.com, phone **07591095765**, or sign up at monthly meetings. Payments can be made by Cash, Cheque made out to ‘Teesdale U3A’, or BACS, ‘**The Teesdale U3A, 20-83-73, 03778576**’, please identify which trip the money is for. Coach & Cattle tour costs are non-refundable.

Friday 16 May Chillingham Castle & Cattle visit. Extensive grounds including gardens, lakes & woodlands. The castle includes an Armoury, Torture chamber, Museum and Dungeons. Chillingham Castle boasts some of the highest levels of paranormal activity in the country, with a large collection of spectres and apparitions spotted by visitors over the years. The Cattle tour starts at 1.45 pm from the Visitor Pavillion & lasts about an hour, please be there a few minutes early, it can be a bumpy drive so please wear suitable footwear as the fields are uneven and hilly and you have to go through a disinfectant foot bath. Coach leaves from outside Addisons at 9am, return before 6pm. Entry to Castle & Gardens £11.00, which is payable on the day at entry, Historic House members free, please remember your card. Coach price £20.00, Cattle tour £7.50, payable as soon as possible please.

Friday 20 June Ushaw Chapel, House & Gardens. 9.30 leave outside Addisons, return before 6pm. Entry to Chapel, House and Gardens £9.00, Historic Houses members free please remember your card. Coach price £12.00. There are permanent exhibitions about Pugin and Life at Ushaw, and a Display of books showing Bird art through the centuries. Most of the areas are accessible, with ramps where there are a few steps, some of the outside areas can be uneven. Payment can be taken at monthly meetings or as above.

Friday 18 July Helmsley Walled Gardens. The gardens are a few minutes' walk from the carpark, they are flat with seating and a cafe, Afternoon in the town. Helmsley has many shops, cafes, galleries and Friday is market day, the Castle is English Heritage if you want to visit, costing £8.10 if not a member, there is a small Brewery with shop or there are tours around it. Leaving at 9am outside Addisons, return before 6pm. Cost £25.50 includes Gardens and coach. Payments as above

Friday 19 September a day in Skipton. Free to look round this lovely market town with many of shops, galleries, eateries and walks. Impressive Castle, £11.40, Hour-long boat trip from £9.50. Friday is market day. Craven Court off the main street has many independent shops and cafés. Walks along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Leaving at 9am outside Addisons return before 6pm. Coach price £18.00. Payment as above.

SUMMER PICNIC AT THE CRICKET CLUB

Thursday 12 June at 12 noon – 3 pm – Bring your own Picnic
at Barnard Castle Cricket Club

Bar available. Raffle included in ticket price of £2

This social event is also open to non -members.

Contact Sue Overton **07512 368884** or email sueoverton@hotmail.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions to Teesdale u3a became due on 1 March 2025 and though the vast majority have now paid their very reasonable £18, a few seem to have forgotten. Please check to make sure you have paid, if you're not sure or need to speak to someone please contact the Membership Secretary as detailed on page 3 or any committee member.

GROUP REPORTS

ANDROID PHONE GROUP - Report by Martyn Radcliffe

The group met as usual at the Guide HQ. There was discussion once again regarding passwords. Specifically, how to keep up to date and create them using such apps as random word generators to get three words to create a password.

In 2024 the top three worldwide passwords were:

At number 3 –12345, at number 2 - password and for the third year running at the top number one spot -123456.

We looked at current online scams like phishing, spear phishing etc. as well as increasing security by using virtual private network apps.

ART APPRECIATION GROUP – Report by Tony Seward

The final lecture in Professor Malcolm Andrews' series on the evolution of landscape painting introduced us to Samuel Palmer (1805-1881) and English pastoral.

Classical poets invented the pastoral tradition, which has retained its hold on the European imagination ever since. Typically, it involves an escape from the hurry and stress of urban life to an ideal countryside where nymphs and shepherds sing and dance and tend their flocks - most influentially evoked by Claude Lorrain in his calm, twilight scenes set against the backdrop of the Roman Campagna. As we saw earlier, English painters by 1800 had begun to move away from this towards a new focus on English landscape.

Palmer was a quiet rebel who took the process a stage further, creating his own very personal 'valley of vision', inspired by his master William Blake and several years spent in the woods and fields of Shoreham in Kent.

Like Blake, he strove to 'make the ideal probable' and to draw the viewer into his own world of 'little dells, and nooks, and corners of Paradise'. His paintings of moonlit harvesters, shepherds folding their sheep, woods and cornfields have an other-worldly quality, 'a mystic and dreamy glimmer' which has captivated artists and public ever since.

The portrait of himself aged around 19 is startling in its directness. There is no attempt to strike a pose, merely total honesty in examining the self he sees before him. It speaks directly to us as if it were painted yesterday.

We concluded with a close examination of one of the famous 'sepias', a set of six drawings in the Ashmolean Museum and a must-see for all Palmer fans. 'The Valley Thick with Corn' responds to the words of Psalm 25, celebrating the munificence of God's bounty, with the reclining figure possibly representing Christian in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Taking a 'mindful' approach to the work, the lecturer gently guides the viewer through its complex detail, bringing out much that might escape a less attentive look.



***Self-Portrait by Samuel Palmer
c.1824 (Ashmolean Museum)***



The Valley Thick with Corn, 1825 (Ashmolean Museum)

Next meeting Wednesday 2 April: Nordic Vision – Scandinavian Painting c. 1880-1914.

BIRDWATCHING – Report by Andrew Lapworth RSPB SALTHOLME

An intrepid group of 17 of us met just after 10.00 am at the RSPB's nature reserve in the Tees Valley, surrounded by the industrial landscape of Teesside and the iconic landmarks on the horizon: the Tees Transporter Bridge, the clock-tower of Middlesbrough town hall and Tenemos, the sculpture by Anish Kapoor; and in the further distance Roseberry Topping. There had been a few snow flurries when we met outside the Bowes Museum earlier, but we had a dry day, albeit with a biting cold wind.



Intrepid cold birdwatchers at RSPB Saltholme.

Photo: Judith Coleman

Fuelled by coffees we checked the main lake for ducks and waders: mainly Lapwing and a few Redshanks; a Barn Owl made a brief and distant appearance hunting over the rough grasslands, and an obliging hovering Kestrel close to the Centre gave us great views. As always, the

feeding station provided close views of various finches and the local flock of Stock Doves. En route to Saltholme Pools main hide we saw several pairs of Stonechats, and we were then treated to some fabulous murmurations of flocks of Lapwings which we suspected had been spooked by one of the local Peregrines. Sure enough, eagle-eyed Charlotte found what telescopes soon revealed to be a fine Peregrine perched on the ground a field away. From one of the screens Roger found some Shovelers filter feeding, a drake Goldeneye, and then more distant Pintails, upending in the choppy water.

In the hide and out of the cold wind we soon found the solitary Avocet that had only just returned to the reserve, and along the causeway numerous perched Lapwings and Golden Plover; in the corner of the pool a group of

Black-tailed Godwits were feeding in the shallows. Once again, we watched the wader flocks making ever shifting shapes in the sky.

After lunch back in the centre we drove along to the watchpoint over Greatham Creek. The tide was out so we enjoyed some close views of Teal, Wigeon, Curlews and Redshanks, and a solitary Golden Plover in fine plumage and good light. This is a draughty spot at the best of times, so needing to warm-up again, we drove towards Seaton Carew, using the cars to watch from, by driving slowly along the access road to Teesmouth National Nature Reserve, hoping (without success) for one of the Short-eared Owls which frequent this area. A short walk out through the dunes towards North Gare didn't reveal any new birds for the day and the icy wind made our eyes water! Another slow drive along the Zinc Works Road was made but no owls were seen. Now it was time to drive home in the warmth of the cars. Over 40 species of birds were seen on our trip, not bad for such an unpromising cold and windy February day.

BOARD GAMES – Report by Hazel McCallum

This month, a select band of four of us met to play some board games. First, we played a tile-based game Azul, which was a new game for some of the



group. The aim of the game is to construct a pattern of tiles on the right-hand side of the board, by gathering groups of the same kind of tile on the left-hand side of the board. You get extra points for completing a line and getting all the tiles of one sort placed. Sue won this

game, her Scrabble skills coming to the fore as she interlinked her tiles with aplomb!!

Our second game was a return to Quirkle as we felt we needed a game which required slightly less brainpower. Clare won this game with many shouts of Quirkle and another purple Quirkle, but no doubles this time.

ROOM TO READ BOOK GROUP- Review by Ann Whitfield

Favourite books from childhood

Our meeting in February was a little different from usual, as we each talked about our favourite books from childhood, why we loved them and the memories we attach to them. We had an entertaining discussion in which the recurring theme was surprise and embarrassment on rediscovering some of those books which enchanted us as uncritical youngsters!

As a group of women who began reading in the 1950s and early 60s, we were struck by how didactic and lacking in humour many of our choices were. The Wind in the Willows was a notable exception which was also important in sparking and nurturing an interest in nature and a love of animals. Another gem was the Snow Goose by Paul Gallico, which should surely have been on every child's bookshelf. Celia still had her original copy with illustrations by Sir Peter Scott and it sparked for her a lifelong care for wild creatures.

Most of us read and enjoyed Enid Blyton's adventure stories, including the Secret Seven and Famous Five books, and also her school stories such as the Mallory Towers series. Although these, and other school stories, reflected lives in boarding school which were far from our own experience, they were essentially about relationships between girls which accounts for their popularity.

Most of our choices were very gendered, and there were several classics aimed primarily at girls, such as Heidi, Black Beauty and Little Women. One exciting exception was Emil and the Detectives by Erich Kastner, written and set in pre-war Berlin and remarkable for its realistic setting and exciting storyline.

After a lifetime of reading, we would almost certainly choose different books now for our younger selves. We would be much more alert to stereotypes and moralising! The humour, beautiful illustrations and wide-ranging content of modern children's books make for delightful choices for children nowadays, but perhaps we shouldn't despair too much if the beginning readers in our lives only seem to favour Harry Potter and Walt Disney!

CHESS GROUP – Report by Diana Marks

We were a merry band of four at the March gathering, welcoming a new member. Several games were enjoyed with triumph and disaster experienced in equal measure!!

We are hoping to increase our numbers next month and already have another two people joining us. The Chess programme on BBC2 on Monday evenings may spark a bit more interest. Let's hope so.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD GROUP - Report by Sue Overton

We tackled two crosswords this month working in two small groups of four and five. The first crossword was from The Times and the second from the Guardian. The group of five – unsurprisingly with the extra brain – completed their crosswords first. But of course, it's not a competition!

The mid-session break for coffee and chocolate biscuits restored some of the depleted energy but fatigue soon returned with lots of mutterings for the need to have a lie down! Did you know that a person who constructs or solves crosswords is often called a cruciverbalist. Now that would look impressive on any CV!

Did you find the solution to last month's hidden clue? Perfect extract from guide altered (5) Answer: IDEAL

Now try this trickier one from the Guardian: Flexible sort of ice-covered shoe form (7)

Our next meeting at 2pm in the Guide HQ, Birch Road will be on Wednesday 9th April – contact **Sue Overton** on **07512 368884** or email sueoverton@hotmail.com if you would like to join us.

DISCUSSION GROUP – Report by Glen Howard

Another good meeting. Topics discussed:

The Technology race between the Chinese and the Americans with China being able to produce things much cheaper (Deep Seek).

The drop in the numbers visiting The Bowes Museum and the reduction of volunteers reflecting this downward trend.

The COP 30 meeting in Brazil

The pluses and minuses of an electric car and a hybrid car.

The impact of homelessness in Finland as it diverts its investment into defence.

The pros and cons of avocados

Prisons and the unfair treatment of pregnant women

NHS reforms and the dismantling of NHS England.

Our **next meetings** will be **on Fridays 11 April and 9 May**. If you would like to join us, please give Glen Howard a ring on **01833 631639**

FAMILY HISTORY INTEREST GROUP – Report by Alan Swindale

Pam Taylor gave “An Introduction to DNA and Family History Research”.

I find the subject mind-bending but a greatly simplified summary follows:-

Every cell in our body contains a copy of the 23 pairs of chromosomes which are made up of Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). The original pair are formed at conception, half from the father and half from the mother. The other half of the father's DNA and the mother's DNA is not passed on. This has happened at every past generation so I have inherited 1/32nd of my DNA from each great great-great grandparent – who would have been born around 1800. Any other descendant of that GGG grandparent will also have inherited DNA in the same manner so I and my fourth cousin on that family line may have matching DNA of around 1/32nd of our total DNA. Conversely if I and some other DNA tester have matching DNA (albeit a partial match) we MUST have a common ancestor. How large that match is indicates how close is our common ancestor. We can then start using conventional genealogy to find out how we are related; clues such as surnames and locations provide short cuts. If both testers have good and large family trees the search can be quite brief so if you do have a DNA test, PLEASE connect it to as good a family tree as you can provide.

The **next meeting will be on Thursday 10th of April at 13:30 in the Dales Room at Enterprise House**. It will start with a 1 hour talk from RootsTech2025 “Learn Genealogy Faster and Easier with Artificial Intelligence” followed by coffee/tea and a one-hour discussion. May's subject will be on using FreeReg to find records in Church Registers.

GARDENING GROUP – Report by Kate Keen

In March our guest speaker was Eddie Harland who came along to tell us about the development of the garden at Littlethorpe Manor Gardens near Ripon. Eddie has been Head Gardener at Littlethorpe since 1998 so has an extensive knowledge of the garden.



Littlethorpe Manor Gardens

Photo: Eddie Harland

The owners the Thackwray family purchased the house and gardens in 1985 and have overseen the development. The gardens consist of 11 acres, 4 acres of formal gardens and lawns around the house and 7 acres of parkland.

Back in 1998 the walled garden was empty except for weeds. Eddie drew up a plan for the walled garden and laid out a mock-up so that the owners could envisage how the gardens would look. Local contractors were used and a bespoke arbour and screen partitions were commissioned. The four corners are planted to represent the four seasons and each has a bespoke statue.

In 2000 the sunken garden was created with a large pool and a White Rose of York Parterre. Sadly in 2013 the low box hedges were affected by blight and were all removed and destroyed.

In 2001 the pergola was installed and has a fine display of wisteria and clematis. In 2002 the largest project was started - the Fountain Pool and Terrace. A Georgian balustrade was created and steps down to the new levels. In subsequent years developments included the Holly Walk, Chimney Pot Garden and Cut Flower Garden. After this the parkland with a lime tree avenue, followed by the Winter Garden.

The Physic Garden was developed during the covid lockdown and laid out in what had been the tennis court with herb beds cut into the tarmac. The Thackwray family money had been made through the design and manufacture of specialist surgical instruments for a global market. The focal point of the physic garden is a statue of a hip joint designed by a member of the family.

This was a fascinating talk which was well received by our group. Littlethorpe Manor is a private garden open by invitation only. We may arrange a future coach trip in 2026 to see the garden.

On **Friday 4 April** we will have a talk from Sarah Hopps - "The All-Seasons Garden". Sarah Hopps is a regular speaker at the Harrogate Flower Show

We will continue to take bookings for the talks to ensure that we do not exceed the capacity of the hall. We will send out an email the week before the meeting and people can reply to this to book their place. For those not on email a text or phone call to **Kate Keen** on **07880 741151** will suffice.

On **Friday 2 May** we will have a coach trip to Burnby Hall Gardens, Pocklington for the tulip festival.

GEOGRAPHY GROUP - Report by Jane Harrison

In February we welcomed our youngest speaker to date. Jonah Blake is a third-year geography undergraduate at Durham University. Jonah's contentious title was "What is the point of a modern geography degree?" To answer this, Jonah outlined his course and explained how the knowledge and skills acquired would prepare him and other students for the future.

Geography has certainly changed in recent decades. Cultural and political identity, climate and sustainability, digitisation, and decoloniality now appear on university level courses. Michel Foucault, David Harvey, Edward Said and Doreen Massey are some of the key thinkers.

At Durham the BA and BSc geography undergraduates follow a common foundation course in the first year. Most modules are compulsory. In the second and third year the number of optional modules increases. Jonah has specialised in social-economic geography and has chosen courses with titles such as "Geographies of Crisis" and "Geographies of Money and Finance". There has been an emphasis on theory and philosophical concepts. An approach that looks at people and the world through different "lenses" has been adopted. It is intellectually demanding but Jonah is clearly thriving on it!

Fieldwork still plays an important role in research. In years one and two there are visits to Newcastle and Bristol. Jonah had the opportunity to go to Norway, in his third year, where he worked on combined projects with BSc students. This was a memorable experience even if they all got very wet on a glacier!

In the third-year students also undertake a dissertation. Jonah is researching venture philanthropy and the Wall Street development paradigm. (I'll make no attempt to explain that!)

Jonah has 10 hours contact time each week. He values the expertise of the academic staff who are at the forefront of geographical research. It's not all work however: like most students Jonah enjoys the social side of collegiate life and extra-curricular activities. He is a talented footballer.

When they finish their degrees, geographers are well-rounded, critical thinkers whose skills transfer across disciplines. They are very employable and go on to a wide range of careers. In 2021-2022 73% of BA geography graduates were in full-time employment or study. After graduating Jonah will be working as a sustainability consultant.

Jonah certainly conveyed that he thought geography was still relevant in the 21st century and his love and enthusiasm for the subject shone through.

Afterwards Gerald organised a fiendishly difficult geography quiz. Deciding which were Britain's deepest lakes and identifying countries from their outlines proved particularly tricky!

Next meeting: Thursday 17 April. 2pm in The Witham. Tim Meacham: "The railways of Teesdale".

GEOLOGY GROUP – Report by Bob Tuddenham

We had two very interesting meetings on Zoom in February with talks by Trevor Morse and Les Knight.

In the first, Trevor took us through a series of quite old but very useful Open University videos that covered some of the basic principles of geology. The first on 'Textures' had a Teesdale connection looking at the Whin Sill in the field and the related metamorphic rocks from this intrusion. The subsequent videos explored ways of measuring geological time such as the use of zone fossils as first applied by William Smith the early 19th Century. The final video explained the use of radiometric dating.

Les Knight gave us a fascinating talk entitled '**Victorian citizen science: the eruption of Krakatoa 1883**'. Krakatoa is an island in Indonesia and was the location of a devastating volcano which had a worldwide impact with the pressure wave travelling three times around the world. While it was not the most powerful eruption in human history on Earth, (that was probably Tambora in 1815), it was one of the best reported because of the existence of a world-wide network of telegraph stations. The Royal Society sought evidence from around the world in what we would now know as 'citizen science'. We think the Krakatoa explosion was the loudest sound in recorded history and was heard in Perth over 3000 km away! The explosions, pyroclastic flows and devastating tsunamis resulted in over 36,000 deaths which is probably an underestimate. The ash was thrown some 80 km into the upper atmosphere and circulated the planet resulting in a temperature drop and poor harvests for several years. It also changed the appearance of sunsets around the world, as seen in many famous paintings like Edvard Munch's 'The Scream'.

Our next meeting will be at the Witham on Monday morning 28 April at 10.00 am. All are welcome. Please contact the convenor for the programme and details.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT – Report by Tim Meacham

Thirty keen members attended the March meeting at Enterprise House to hear Geoff Lowson's talk "From Spennymoor to Cape Town" which took us through the lives and works of Robert and Sophy Gray. There is a local link to this story: a plaque in Whorlton Church commemorates the church's consecration by this very Robert Gray in May 1853. Born into a wealthy family, the son of another Robert Gray who was Bishop of Wells, our Robert perhaps predictably entered the Church, serving at Whitworth, County Durham, before becoming vicar of Stockton in 1845. By this time, he had married Sophy, daughter of another local well-to-do family, the Myddletons, and they could have settled into a comfortable if predictable life of ease.

However, both were made of sterner stuff and in 1847 Robert accepted the position of Bishop of Cape Town. Geoff took us through the challenges faced by the couple. Initially it was necessary to fund their mission and the couple raised an enormous sum which allowed them to travel to South Africa in 1848 and set themselves up in their huge but undefined diocese. Trips followed through little-explored territory to meet the tribal chiefs and make plans to develop the diocese. Sophy was fully involved and even designed and project-managed a number of churches (some 40 or so).

Following a visit home in 1853 (hence presumably the Whorlton visit above), the pair returned to continue the good work in South Africa. They set up a school, St George's, in Cape Town aimed primarily at the education of the sons of the local chiefs.

Geoff had put considerable research into the dramatic effect this school had on the future development of South African life and politics right through to the present time. It was not all plain sailing (The Xhosa Cattle-Killing Massacre caused mass starvation in 1856 and 1857 for example) but thanks to the unstinting efforts of Robert and Sophy the diocese prospered and the seeds were planted for the South Africa of the late 19th and 20th century. Robert died in 1870, followed by Sophy less than a year later at the early age of 57, but together they had influenced history more than they perhaps realised. This was a splendid talk in every way, full of detail and nuanced understanding of the pros and cons of the English church's aims in trying to bring 'civilisation' to this far-away part of Africa. Whatever one's views on these aims, Geoff's description ensured that the diligence and commitment of this extraordinary couple shone through.

In April Ian Royston will talk about a very different but equally fascinating subject, '**Reservoir Mania**'. This meeting, on **Thursday 10 April** at **Enterprise House**, is now fully booked.

iPAD and iPHONE GROUP – Report by Mike Sweeting

The main topic for this month was about saving information about websites using the Apple default browser, Safari. This is done either using Bookmarks or Tabs. The first is useful as a permanent record of the links to sites (banking, retail, etc) that are accessed regularly. The second, Tabs, is used to keep a group of sites (research into car insurance cover and costs, for instance) easily accessible until that project is completed when they can be discarded. A bigger subject than it looks!

LUNCH CLUB – Report by Kate Keen



Seafood Chowder

In February the lunch group met at the Bowes Museum café in Barnard Castle. We had pre-selected our main courses and these arrived promptly and were beautifully presented. The most popular choice was the Hog Roast Sausage and Mash, with others choosing the Seafood Chowder and Miso Glazed Celeriac “Steak”. We were able to choose from a delightful range of cakes and the dessert options with coffee and teas. Service was really good especially considering that the café was full to bursting.

Our lunch venues will be a selection of old favourites and some that we have not tried before.

If anyone is interested in joining our friendly group then please contact me.
Kate Keen on **07880 741151**

MEN’S BOOK GROUP – Report by David Pennington

The first thing to note about the 'Men's Book Group' is that women are very much invited. Our interests lie in the Classics, Science Fiction, History, Military History etc.

Four members were able to attend in a private room at the Andalucia Café in Barnard Castle at our very first meeting on 20 February 2025.

Coffee and cake were consumed while discussing books that we have enjoyed and recommend to the group.

We discussed a range of books from historical adventure to science fiction to classical literature.

The group is small but hopes to encourage new members.

NEEDLECRAFT – Report by Glen Howard

Knitting and crocheting were the order of the day whilst chats covered the President Trump and Zelensky situation, how we have all lost height as we have aged and some have noticed that their feet have got bigger whilst one of our members has had to buy smaller shoes, the high costs of care homes and our woke society. There were also a lot of individual chats among members.

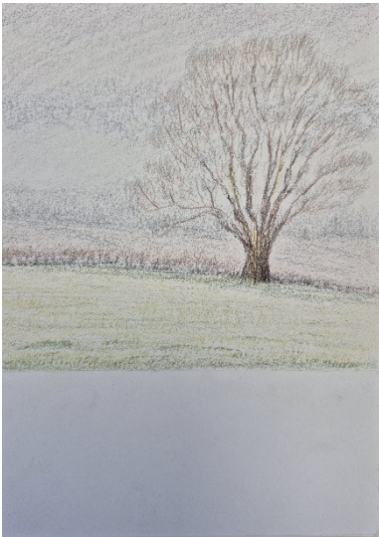
Our next meeting will be on Monday 7 April 2025. New members are always welcome and you certainly don't need to be an expert to join us, just enjoy stitching with like-minded folk. If you are interested please phone me, **Glen Howard, on 01833 631639**

PAINTING GROUP – Report by Val Hobbs

This month, six of us turned up, and we welcomed our new member, Beverley.

Due to Anne still not able to attend we each brought something we'd like to work on. Most of us chose to use watercolours, whilst others chose acrylics.

The subject matters though, were very diverse, ranging through landscapes, townscapes, flowers, trees, birds and houses. We all worked in our own individual styles, producing colourful and detailed pieces of work.





Although the kitchen was not available to us, it was a very enjoyable and productive session.

For further details please contact **Val Hobbs** on valblackhobbs@gmail.com

PHILOSOPHY GROUP – Report by Ray and Jenny Lee **Philosophy and Education**

- Socrates: I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think.
- Aristotle: It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.

This month our intrepid philosophers got together to find out more about what philosophers over the centuries believed made a good education and how far their ideas were realised in the real world. Like all good philosophers, we first defined our terms, exploring the differences between education, training and indoctrination.

We then went on to explore how philosophical thinking had developed over time and soon discovered that politics, religion and the state very often got in the way of the high ideals the philosophers proposed. For instance, we found out that one of the few societies that tried to enact their philosophers' ideals was the ancient Greek society; the only minor problem being that the

education policies espoused by such philosophers as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, splendid though they appeared to be, were not available to girls, women or slaves.

This trend of excluding girls, women and, if not slaves, at least the poor, continued for centuries. It could be argued that it wasn't until the development of comprehensives that true equality occurred, because even when grammar schools were free, many poor parents could not afford the extra books, uniform and possibly travelling expense that were needed.

We also found that many of the great philosophers' ideas about what was involved in good education were sometimes muddled by indoctrination from the church. It is hard for a child to know the difference between education and indoctrination when the same teacher is often teaching both.

The progress of philosophical thinking made with primary and comprehensive education, was marred, this time by the state, with the imposition of an inflexible curriculum and a plethora of exams between the ages of 7 and 15.

We closed the session with a spirited debate on the pros and cons of computer learning and concluded that there were indeed both pros *and* cons!

Our **next philosophy meeting** will be held on **Tuesday 28 April at 10 am at Enterprise House**. Do come and join us for a session!

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP – Report by Alan Kenwright

In March the photography group visited Kiplin Hall, a Grade I listed building near Scorton in North Yorkshire. The building itself dates from the 17th century, though the grounds it sits in are an estate that predates the house, originally being part of the land belonging to Easby Abbey. Both the house and grounds provided excellent subjects for photography, not least the magnificent walled garden which must be spectacular later in the year.

Our **next outing** is to **Fairfield Mill in Sedbergh, on Wednesday 2 April** (note the change of day – not Tuesday!).



Corridor at Kiplin Hall
Photo: Robin Taylor



Swan Sculpture at Kiplin Hall
Photo: Anne Newton



Kiplin Hall
Photo: Val Reynolds

SCRABBLE GROUP – Report by Ray Thompson

Notes from the Scrabble Group Meeting held on Monday 10 March

We met at Judith's house, there were just 5 of us this month, so we split into two teams of two and three players. Phil and Ray played the first game and Judith, Regina and Paula made up the second.

Ray won his game with a score of 324, and Judith won the second game with 234.

We then stopped for refreshments, thank you to Judith who had made some delicious shortbread and provided chocolate biscuits.

In the second round the two winners played each other, and Regina, Phil and Paula played each other.

Judith won her game with a score of 337, Ray had the only 7-letter of the day with BOWLINE for 80 points. Paula won her game with a score of 218.

Our next meeting is on 14 April, venue to be decided, please call **Judith** on **01833 650150**.

COFFEE AND CHAT

Coffee and Chat - Coming up – Thursdays 2.30 – 3.30pm:

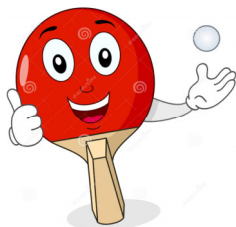
10th April – Cotherstone Community Café

ANY PIANISTS PLEASE?

Abbeyfield on Galgate is charitable supported living accommodation for 8 or 9 elderly people. They have a piano and would love someone to play this for them occasionally (for a small fee if required).

If interested please contact Louise at Abbeyfield, Tel. **01833 638474**.

TABLE TENNIS GROUP – Report by Peter Singer



There is much debate in the media at the moment about the “international rules-based system” or “rule of law” and specifically its current state of health and the existential risks threatening it from both sides of the Atlantic. On a more mundane level, table tennis, like every sport, has its international rules, without which the game would rapidly disintegrate into chaos and the law of the jungle (as the world order is presently appearing likely to do). In our table tennis group, therefore, we respect the rules and try, so far as we can, to observe them, although we do allow a certain amount of leeway, particularly in recognition of the limitations that inevitably come with our advancing years. We trust, however, that the national and international game will survive these minor liberties being taken weekly in Teesdale.

For example, para 2.10.1.11 of Table Tennis England’s Laws & By-Laws 2021 states that if an opponent’s free hand (*i.e. the one not holding the bat*) touches the playing surface (*or table*) during play, they lose the point. In our case, players’ reduced mobility and flexibility may make this a difficult hurdle to clear (and who can hurdle these days anyway?), so we tend to overlook such an infringement, if it is necessary to prevent loss of balance or even a fall. Leaning persistently on the table with both elbows throughout the game, however, is not tolerated. Similarly, the rules governing the service, in paras 2.6.1 and 2.6.2, require that the ball is held in the open palm of the server’s free hand and is projected near vertically upwards, without imparting spin, so that it rises at least 16cm (just over 6 inches for those of us still struggling with metrication) before being struck. This is actually more difficult than it sounds and, to be fair, not many of us have truly mastered it (or even attempted to) and, so long as the ball is not totally hidden from view or served from under the table, we are reasonably relaxed about this rule. So, we believe the game is safe in our hands, despite these divergences – and also we hope from anything Trump or Putin might be contemplating!

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.

UNDERSTANDING CLASSICAL MUSIC – Report by Ian Royston

After the postponement of January's meeting due to a storm of now indeterminate name (there seem so many these days) 2025 sessions recommenced by revisiting Howard Goodall's excellent BBC Series on The History of Music. It is some years since the group watched these so they were a very useful introduction to many as much as they were a welcome refresher for others. Episode 1 (of 6) covered the period from ancient times to Monteverdi's Venice in the first half of the 17th Century. On the way we learnt of many old instruments, including the Danish Lur, inspiration for the logotype of a well-known brand of butter from that country.

In the second part of the morning, we took in Simon Callow's video of Venice as a musical destination.

You do not need to be an expert on classical music to enjoy our sessions, even less so have any proficiency of any instrument. Just an ability to listen, enjoy and learn about classical music of all flavours.

The meetings are held on the fourth Friday of the month at Startforth Morritt Memorial Community Centre starting at 10:00 am.

WILDFLOWER GROUP - Report by Anne Thomson

It was a well-attended Spring get-together on Monday 17 February when seventeen of us met and chatted amongst ourselves at Andalucia Deli and Coffee Shop followed by a general discussion. We shall continue this again in the autumn and winter.

Unfortunately, our first wildflower identification amble of 2025 was cancelled due to a lack of flowers plus the weather turned cold and wet.

We shall re-commence on **Wednesday, 9 April** when we shall meet in the car park of **Egglestone Abbey at 2 pm**. We would welcome prospective new members to join us for a taster.

WINE GROUP – Report by Tim Meacham



In recent months Majestic Wine have been offering some interesting ‘Bin End Sales’ and their February venture allowed the group to sample some rather nice bottles at knock-down prices at the March meeting (although with one interloper as will be apparent below). Thanks to Judith and Phil for stepping in to host at the last minute.

We started with something quite unusual for us, a genuinely sweet white wine! This was a **Huella De Chile Moscato 2022** (12.5% and £6.99, down from £11.99). The Wikipedia account of Chilean wines only mentions the Muscat grape once at the end of its final paragraph. Actually this was rather a nice drinkable sweet wine with its self-proclaimed ‘fresh palate leading to a lush finish of honey and candied fruit.’ Most members preferred our second drier bottle, a **Skouras Mantinea 2024** from Greece (12% and 9 Euros 99 cents from the vineyard). This had a real fizz to it provided by the little-known Moschofilero grape and confirmed what we already knew that recent Greek wines are a true revelation. By a sheer coincidence, having purchased a bottle of Skouras wine from Majestic for this session I then found myself a week before the meeting actually visiting the Skouras vineyard in the Peloponnese where I purchased a second bottle, the one we actually sampled! Back to Majestic we then tried an Italian white, a **Coste Domini Veneti Soave 2021** (13% and £10.00, down from £14.99). This was based on another unusual grape, the Gargegna, and was possibly the highlight of the day: very easy drinking, this one. That contrasted with the powerhouse final white, the **Clos de la Casse Anjou Blanc 2022** (14.5% and £9.99, from £14.99). ‘Wow, that packs a punch!’ one member cried. Easy drinking this was not. ‘It’s quite hard work’, another member opined, and, while admiring the clear depth and complexity of the Chenin Blanc wine, we found this our least favourite of the day.

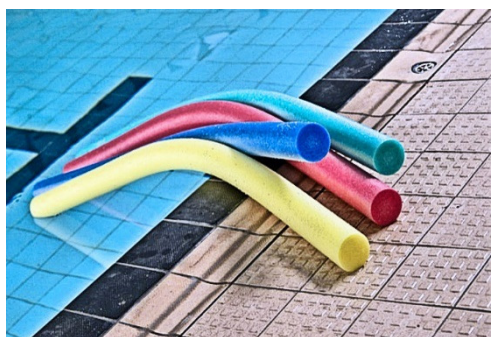
As always, we finished with a couple of reds. Both found favour, even with the anti-red brigade. Firstly, the Argentinian **MV Mendoza Malbec 2022** (13.5% and £6.99, from £12.99) was nicely balanced, not over heavy and good value especially at the bin end rate. Even smoother however was the **Colinas del Itata Cinsault 2022** (13% and £12.99, down from £18.99). This second Chilean wine of the day featuring our third lesser-known grape, (the Cinsault) was from a very high-altitude vineyard in the Rolling Hills of Itata, 450 km south of Santiago, first planted in 1551. A little pricy maybe, but this went down very well with our red wine enthusiasts.

All in all we agreed that Majestic had produced a fine variety of very different wines at a very affordable price.

WIMMIN' SWIMMIN' GROUP - Report by Ruth Lapworth

After a successful first session most of the group returned for more immersion in the pool at Teesdale Leisure Centre. The lure of the water is just too much, even when heavily chlorinated and not as warm as most of us would like. After the last session, some of the group had decided to invest in brand new swimming costumes and even a pair of new goggles was on show.

There was no delay in everyone getting into the pool and setting off either for the deep end or the opposite side of the pool at their own pace and in



Noodles

their own style. For those who are finding things a bit hard we have been encouraging the use of 'noodles'. For readers unfamiliar with noodles of the non-culinary variety they are cylinders of foam which provide under-arm support and thereby enable the individual to float around very happily either on their front or back. This then allows the would-be swimmer to concentrate on trying out arm and leg strokes without sinking!

A few in the group had enjoyed the first session so much they had decided to visit the pool on their own just for a swim or to practice their strokes.

It appears that one of the aims of the group (to reintroduce women to the benefits of swimming by increasing their confidence in the water) has already been achieved.

We look forward to more relaxing swimming sessions throughout the year.

For information on future sessions, please contact **Sue Overton** on **07512 368884** or email sueoverton@hotmail.com



Sparrowhawk Photo: Andrew Lapworth

WALKING GROUPS



SHORTER WALKS - Report by Liz Colley

It was bus passes to the ready as fifteen of us caught the No. 70 bus to Whorlton Our route was to walk back along the Teesdale Way to Barnard Castle, a distance of 4 miles. The sun was shining and the snowdrops in flower, a lovely day to be out and about.

As we left Whorlton on the Teesdale way we caught a glimpse of the work in progress on Whorlton bridge. The Teesdale way is quite high above the river as you leave the village, tracking the edge of the fields. Here the surface was drier than expected after heavy rain the day before. But when the path dipped down to cross streams it became quite muddy and slippery, care was needed underfoot.

We followed the path across the sheep fields and reached the team-building wall stile. The people who built this wall must have had long legs! But with a team effort we all managed to get over it. The path then drops down into Whorlton Woods which were much muddier underfoot. This is where the use of sticks or poles makes walking safer.

Just before reaching Egglestone Abbey Bridge, we stopped to look at the Lime Kilns. As the woods were so muddy it was decided to take the high route back to Barnard Castle over the upper Demesnes.

Our next walk will be on **Monday 28 April**.



The group crossing the beck in Whorlton Woods. Photo: Ian Royston

4-6 MILE WALKING GROUP – Report by Alan Kenwright

On Tuesday 11th March, six intrepid members of the group met on the edge of the moors above Wolsingham in Weardale for a walk mainly on very quiet roads and shooting tracks. There was a biting cold northerly wind and the odd snowflake in the air as we set off, but once we were underway, we soon warmed up and the weather held off, with the sun even putting in an appearance towards the end of our walk. We paused for a break and some refreshment at Doctor's Gate, apparently so called because it is where the Doctor from Wolsingham would ride to on his horse and hold an impromptu surgery for the people from Bedburn and Hamsterley. (Though if you could walk the five miles from Hamsterley to get there, presumably there wasn't much wrong with you!) An enjoyable and invigorating walk with magnificent views over open moorland. Six miles with no stiles and no mud – we all got back with clean boots for a change!



The group at Doctor's Gate. Photo: Ian Royston

7-9 MILE WALKING GROUP – Report by Phil Clarke

Fourteen members came over to Leyburn for a just-under 9-mile walk through three beautiful Wensleydale villages. We started the walk in the square in Leyburn on the last really cold day before the weather changed. We moved off downhill towards the first village, Wensley. Unfortunately, the imposing Penhill was not visible because of low cloud. Wensleydale is the only dale named after a settlement and not a river. The route followed the River Ure for a couple miles to Middleham Bridge. The bridge was built as a suspension bridge with castellated turrets in 1830, later converted into a wrought iron plate girder bridge. After carefully crossing the bridge, we walked along the muddy flood plain towards village number two, Spennithorne. A pretty village for a food stop and then on to nearby Harmby only half a mile away. Here was my star of the walk a waterfall in a village. Amazing!! Leyburn up in the distance so a gentle climb back to the square for warmth, cakes and hot drinks.



Crossing the bridge at Middleham. Photo: Judith Coleman

On **16 April** our walk is from Appleby to Rutter Force It's a lovely, low-level, 7.5 mile walk along the river Eden and back along Hoff Beck.

Please contact **Nicky Grace** nickygrace729@gmail.com if you are interested in coming along

A REPORT FROM EMBRIDGE – report by Annie Clouston

An everyday story of Kiwi Folk

“Kiwis suffer from vowel sluppage” (sic)

Ennie and Elison have been getting acquainted with the taxi drivers and vintners of Marlborough. The Grundys, Iddie, Idward and George (sadly currently whingeing copiously at a correctional institution on the Edwin Fox - the last ship to transport criminals from Britain to Australia and on to New Zealand) are the proprietors of the Embrudge Dothepoms Carting Agency. Iddie in particular loves to yarn on while driving Poms between the various vineyards that make up Marlborough County. His favourite subject - apart from himself - is how his Dad, old Joe, was the last Kiwi to ride bareback on a giant Moa while simultaneously knocking back a flagon of Speight's 11% brew. Ennie and Elison have smiled and nodded indulgently in what they suppose are all the right places, while hoping that they are giving insufficient encouragement to his verbosity. They just want to get to the wine tour...

The Lancers have been growing vines since those faithless Poms voted to join the Common Market in 1973 causing the local economy based on dairy and lamb to collapse. The Patriarch, Tony, aided by his good lady Pet, is now the baron of the vineyards, making Savvy (Sauvignon Blanc) a but of Chardonnay, a whusker of Pinot Gris and a smudgeon of Pinot Noir. Their daughter, Pup, is in charge of the wine tours for Poms and is on duty, in person, to give Ennie and Elison the 36x30ml samples of the vineyard's vuntages. The women begin with a few thirsty gulps. Pup remonstrates! “No! Swush it, snort it, swull it, tup it on yer tongue, roll it round, feel the acidity in yer cheeks, the tannin in the beck of yer mouth, put yer hid between yer legs to gather sput to assess the tannin contint, then SPUT in the bucket!” the more the sput, the more the tannin apparently. Ennie and Elison are too well brought up to sput, so surreptitiously they swallow. Sample follows sample. At sample twenty Ennie is rendered incoherent but still up for it, Elison is slightly more together but by sample 24 she too is showing signs of disobedient legs, though her hand to lip action is uncompromised. At sample 30, chucked out of the vineyard, Iddie refuses to have them in his cab. Aargh, the long crawl home.

Happy listening! Annie

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 am	Annie Clouston 01833 637091
Chess	1 st Thurs pm	Diana Marks 07762 6265912
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
Family History	2nd Thurs pm	Alan Swindale 01388 488348
Gardening	1 st Fri pm	Julie Archer 07774 903377
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	Kate Keen 07880 741151
Men's Book Group	3rd Thurs pm	David Pennington 07392 758444
Needlecraft	1 st Mon pm	Glen Howard 01833 631639
Painting	2 nd Fri 10am	Val Hobbs 07900 497503

Group	Meeting Time	Contact details
Philosophy	4 th Tues 10am	Ruth Sansom 01325 401850
Photography	1 st Tues am	Alan Kenwright 07731 122399
Pickleball	Every 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	Judith Fanner 01833 650150
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 07591 095765
Understanding Classical Music	4 th Fri 10am	Bill Heyes 01833 640885
Wildflower Group	2 nd Wed 2pm	Anne Thomson 07928 594404
Wimmin' Swimmin'	Saturdays	Sue Overton 07512 368884
Wine Group	3 rd Tues pm	Tim Meacham 07847 182554
Walking Groups		
Shorter walks 3-4 miles	4 th Mon pm	Liz Colley 01833 695197
Walking 4-6 miles	2 nd Tues 10am	Janet Bayles 07887 834346 Patrick Neill 07881 811518
Walking 7-9 miles	3 rd Wed 10am	Nicky Grace nickygrace729@gmail.com
Fell Walking	4 th Wed	Jane Johnstone 07771 657440

www.thewitham.org.uk

Box office: **01833 63110**

Community Arts Centre



Thurs 27 March 7.00pm	SCREENING – National Theatre Live: Dr. Strangelove (12A) Starring Steve Coogan
Sat 29 March 8.00pm	MUSIC – An Evening of Folk, Blues and Americana Phil Caffrey, George Lamb & Pat McMahon
Tues 1 April 7.15pm	LIVE SCREENING – Royal Ballet & Opera: Turandot (12)
Wed 2 April 7.00pm	SCREENING – Big Screen Musicals: Billy Elliot The Musical 20 th Anniversary (15)
Sat 5 April 8.00pm	COMEDY– Geoff Norcott: Work in Progress (16+)
Fri 11 April 7.30pm	FOLK MUSIC – The Lindisfarne Story: No Time to Lose Founder member Ray Laidlaw and former front man Billy Mitchell
Sat 12 April 2.00pm	FILM: Paddington in Peru (PG)
Sat 12 April 7.30pm	NIGHT OUT – Darragh Ennis: The Ultimate Pub Quiz (14+) Test your knowledge in a live quiz show hosted by star of <i>The Chase</i>
Sun 13 April 2.00pm	FUNDRAISER – Barnard Castle Band in Concert Come along for an afternoon of music to support The Witham and Band
Wed 16 March 7.30pm	SPOKEN WORD – In Conversation with Lord Ian Botham: Hosted by cricket legend Geoff Miller OBE
Fri 18 April 1.00pm & 4.00pm	FAMILY - Princess Live: The ultimate princess pop party, featuring your favourite fairy-tale royalty in this all singing, all dancing concert show
Thurs 24 April 2.00pm	FILM – Mufasa – The Lion King (PG)

www.thewitham.org.uk

Box office: **01833 631107**