

FORUM

August 2025

No. 25/08



u3a

CHAIR'S LETTER

Dear Friends

Well, here we are again, and according to the BBC in our 4th heatwave of the summer, well really this only counts for the East Midlands and the Eastern areas further south. We are luckily enjoying pleasant temperatures in the low 20s with a slight breeze. Then this morning on the radio they announced that autumn is coming earlier due the dry hot weather, with leaves turning and berries appearing. Well, you just cannot win!

Looking back over the month, it has a been a slow, pleasurable month meeting friends for coffee or lunch or days out to local favourite places. I must mention the very interesting talk from Ruth Lapworth at the monthly meeting on the obesity crisis and the new wonder drugs. Really thought provoking and it certainly generated lots of questions from the audience.

I have a friend staying at present and it has become a joke about how many people I know to say hello to. Of course, they tend to be members of our friendly U3A group and that is another part of the joke, "A U3A member?". It is such a nice feeling knowing you will bump into people you know as you pop around the town.

As a member of the workshop and social events committee we are busy planning new things to tempt you with. Do not forget to check out the workshop offers at the Monthly Meeting with Sue Overton. Plus, we are getting ready for the October social event, An evening of music and food from the 60s and 70s, at Glaxo's social club. Dress for the decade with a chance to win a prize for the best outfit. Looking forward to seeing many of you there for an evening of youthful memories, testing our limbs as we try to dance as we once did.

Looking forward to the August meeting and catching up with friends and members. I will try and get the order correct this time, greetings, housekeeping and then the introduction to the speaker, still learning, not too sure if I will ever be perfect, 😊

Bye for now

Julie

Photo overleaf: Curlew by Pete Redgrave

It's Your Forum

Editors: Kate Bailey, Annie Clouston, Jane Kenwright, Alyson Kuby and Tony Seward

This month's editor is Annie: Edition No: 25/08

e-mail: forumeditor@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

Phone: Annie: 07988 625738

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 writing but 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 400 words, and 1 photo, and send them preferably by email attachment to the Forum Editor at:

forumeditor@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

DEADLINE for the next edition: Monday 15 September and next month's editor is Alyson. 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: Julie Archer chair@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

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

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

Treasurer: Jane Mathieson treasurer@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

MONTHLY MEETING

July 2025

The obesity crisis - are weight loss drugs the answer?

This was the title of Ruth Lapworth's very topical talk to the July u3a meeting. Adults are generally considered obese if they have a body mass of 30 or more, the body mass index (BMI) being weight in kilograms divided by height in metres squared. Recently, waist measurement has been added to reflect the growth in type 2 diabetes and other health problems. A large-scale international survey from 1990 to 2022 shows that there has been a significant shift towards increased obesity and that people are becoming obese at a younger age. The United States has the highest obesity rate at 43%, with the UK at 28%, the highest in Europe. Countries in SE Asia have the lowest rates, particularly Japan. It is estimated that by 2050, 50% of adults world-wide will be either overweight or obese. In the UK 2/3rds of over 35s are currently either overweight or obese with the highest rate in County Durham.

Environmental causes of obesity are a complex mix of inactivity, appetite regulation, eating too much processed food and poor-quality sleep. The costs to individuals and to society are enormous eg, £6.5 billion to the NHS in 2024. Other costs include loss of productivity due to poor health, investment in hospital equipment such as beds and wheelchairs and larger seats in aircraft and sports stadia.

Many cases of obesity are associated with an increase in type 2 diabetes (a disorder of glucose regulation). The discovery of gut hormones such as GLP-1 and GIP which provoke insulin release led to the development of the drug semaglutide (Ozempic) to treat type 2 diabetes. The significant weight loss seen in patients treated with Ozempic led to its reformulation as Wegovy to manage weight loss. Another drug, Mounjaro, mimics the actions of both GLP-1 and GIP is now available. Both Wegovy and Monjaro suppress appetite and promote feelings of fullness leading to lower food intake and weight loss. As with most drugs, there can be side effects including nausea, diarrhoea and pancreatitis. The global supply of these drugs and their cost is an issue. There are also concerns around eligibility, their availability on-line and their long-term use. It is likely that further research will lead to new versions and will lead to the treat a variety of other medical conditions.

In an excellent presentation, Ruth was able to make a complicated subject accessible to an appreciative audience

NEXT MEETINGS AT THE WITHAM

25-9-2025 **Susan Parry.** Forensics to Crime Fiction. Swaledale crime writer, Susan Parry, is the author of the Yorkshire Dales Mystery series.

Susan is an analytical chemist and her research career at Imperial College involved forensic investigations, including some high profile murder cases. Her books, set in the Dales, feature forensic archaeologist Dr Mills Sanderson who uses her expertise to assist the police in their homicide investigations.

23-10-2025 **Richard Annis.** Crowtrees, Bowburn – Lost Industry-Excavation beside the A1. The excavation for Amazon revealed remains of a thriving industry.

Richard Annis is a retired Senior Archaeologist with Archaeological Services Durham University.

BIG SOCIAL EVENT COMING UP!

Saturday 18 October 7-11pm

Glaxo Sports and Social Club

A night to remember with your favourite 60s and 70s hits, have fun, strut your stuff, dress to kill, or people-watch!

Music by Making New Plans and Two Local Blokes

Decade appropriate buffet

Tickets available from Sue at monthly meetings and on request 07512368884

FUTURE WORKSHOPS

Saturday 27 September 10-12am **Workshop Showcase** at the Guide HQ Birch Road. Come along to chat with members of our varied interest groups to see what you're missing and choose your new u3a activity.

Saturday 1 November 1-3pm **Stained glass work: create your own tea light holder.** This workshop is full but if you are interested we'll put you on the waiting list.

Saturday 29 November 2-4pm at Guide HQ **Medieval Winter – a historical and social exploration.** Led by local historian Kim Harding.

Saturday 13 December 4-6 pm, Thorngate, Barnard Castle **Cocktails for Christmas.** Led by the Workshop Committee.

NORTHERN DALES RICHARD III GROUP

Monday 15 September 7pm

At St Mary's Parish Hall Newgate Barnard Castle

An evening with best-selling author Annie Garthwaite

Annie's best-selling novel *The King's Mother* reveals the Wars of the Roses through the eyes of the women who shaped them: Cecily Neville, the King's mother; Marguerite of Anjou, deposed Queen; Elizabeth Woodville, betrayed wife; and Margaret Beaufort, mother to an exiled son

TICKETS: £2 MEMBERS £3 NON-MEMBERS pay on the door

Contact Kim Harding 01833 637018

FUTURE DAY AND LONGER TRIPS

I have organised the following trip for September. If you want to put your name down for it please email janem1947@hotmail.com, or phone 07591095765, or sign up at monthly meetings. Payments can be made by be made by Cash, or Cheque made out to 'Teesdale U3A' or BACS, 'The Teesdale U3A' 20-83-73, 03778576'. Please identify which trip the money is for. Coach costs are non-refundable.

Friday September 19th, A DAY in SKIPTON. Free to look round this lovely market town with lots 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 & known shops & cafes. Walks along the Leeds Liverpool Canal. Leaving at 9am outside Addisons, return before 6pm. Coach price £18.00. Payment as above.

Historic Houses Association

I have recently taken out membership of the Historic Houses Association (HHA). Although it costs £68.00 a year, I have already got my money back by visiting Chillingham Castle, Ushaw, Kiplin Hall, Auckland Palace and Newby Hall, with Alnwick, Bamburgh and Raby Castles and Rokeby still to visit. There are over 300 houses to visit throughout the UK, at some of which you can stay overnight. In their quarterly magazine there are also guided holidays viewing Historic Houses in the area. I shall be adding two more houses to visit next year. Contact Jane Mathieson **07951 095765**

COTSWOLD TRIP – a note from Dorothy Jameson

The tickets for this trip will arrive at Kyle Travel a few weeks before we are due to leave on the 22nd September, and Kyle Travel will contact everyone who has booked. I have arranged that Maudes Coaches will pick us up at Addisons at the beginning of the holiday and take us to Darlington to pick up the main coach, and bring us back to Barney at the end of the holiday on 26th September. The return cost of this is £10 per person and please pay this to Kyle Travel by 15th September if not before.

THEATRE TRIP

THEATRE BY THE LAKE, 6th December, The Wizard of Oz.

Bookings being taken for our annual trip. Please let Diana know if you are interested. Email - dianamarks813@gmail.com

Telephone - 077 6262 6912 or 01833 630469 (leave a message)

Norman Cornish: Miner Painter or Minor Master

On Tuesday 21 October at Scarth Hall Staindrop, Mike Thornton will be presenting his illustrated talk “Norman Cornish: Miner Painter or Minor Master” that examines his influences, artistic process, choice of materials and some key examples of Cornish’s work from the recently acquired long-term loans planned for display in the new ground floor gallery at Bowes Museum opening on 15 November 2025.

All proceeds from the £5 entrance fee go to Doug Scott’s charity COMMUNITY ACTION NEPAL. Further details from Ian Royston, website <https://scarthhall.co.uk/> , scarthhall@gmail.com or 07 881 248478

Job Vacancy

Business Secretary for Teesdale u3a

Teesdale u3a is recruiting a replacement business secretary for April 2026, when our current secretary, Liz Colley will have completed her three years in office. Applying now would allow you to follow the work of the business secretary for this year.

It would suit someone who likes to be organised and is comfortable with using emails, word documents and managing online communications.

The remuneration is the undying gratitude of the rest of the membership who don’t have to do the work. If you fit the bill please get in touch with me by email:

bissec@teesdaleu3a.org.uk

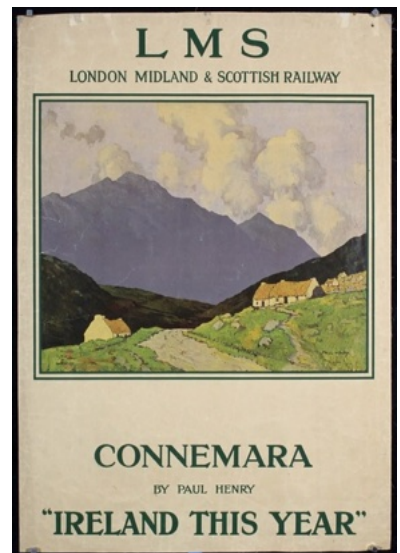
GROUP REPORTS

ART APPRECIATION GROUP – Report by Tony Seward

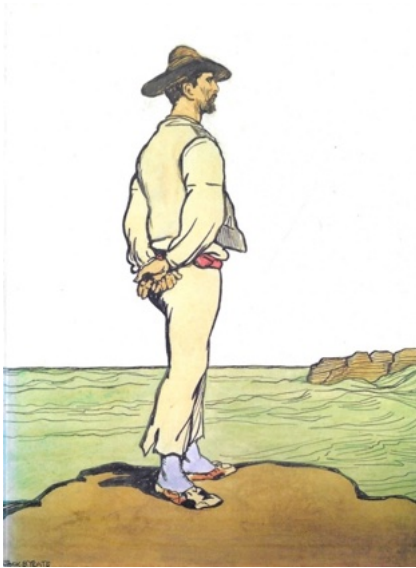
In August we moved on from Scottish artists to attempt an overview of their near neighbours across the Irish Sea. We found they had much in common, so much so that in one case, that of Sir John Lavery, he could easily be classified as both Scottish and Irish: he was a 'Glasgow Boy' but also identified with the struggle for Irish independence, a portrait of his wife Hazel personifying Ireland on the new state's banknotes.

Like the Scots, many Irish painters spent time in Paris absorbing the latest developments in French art, and in the artists' colonies that flourished at Grez-sur-Loing near Paris and Pont Aven in Brittany. Some, like Lavery and William Orpen, became internationally successful society portrait painters. It is noticeable that a disproportionate number of them came from the North of Ireland, the wealthiest part of the island, with its thriving shipbuilding and textile industries, or from prosperous Anglo-Irish families in the rural South and West. With limited access to travel and training, it was rare for budding artists to emerge from the Irish Catholic community...

These and other factors make for a rather fragmented overall picture of 'Irish' art. There were no identifiable groups like the Glasgow Boys or Scottish Colourists, so as a way in we focused on two leading artists, Paul Henry and Jack B. Yeats. Henry was from Belfast, studied in Paris and fell in love with Achill Island in Co. Mayo. Most of his work thereafter centred on the far West of Ireland, which became for writers and artists seeking to establish a national identity the quintessence of Irishness, Gaelic-speaking, relatively untouched by English influence, its stoical people struggling to survive in a harsh though beautiful landscape. Henry embodied all this in his classic images of rural Ireland.



Paul Henry Connemara c1925



Jack Yeats, the brother of the poet WB, was from Sligo where his mother's family were prosperous merchants. Like so many Anglo-Irish artists and writers, he identified strongly with Irish nationalism. He never went to France and ploughed his own furrow, largely uninfluenced by international trends. His style constantly developed and changed, and it is this originality and variety which earned him the primacy he enjoys as the leading Irish artist of the 20th century.

Picture: Jack B Yeats, *An Island Man*, 1906 (frontispiece to *The Aran Islands* by JM Synge)

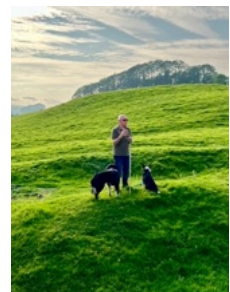
Lastly, we had a quick look at the life of Hugh Lane, another scion of an Anglo-Irish family (nephew of Lady Gregory), who settled in London and prospered as an art dealer. He did more than anyone to foster public interest in the latest trends, by founding the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art in Dublin, and donating his fabulous collection of Impressionist paintings to it.

The topic for September's meeting will be Welsh Art.

AUTOMOTIVE GROUP – Report by Peter Colley

The Automotive petrol-heads had a run out in the lovely Yorkshire Dales, taking some very narrow and little used roads, ending up in The Green Dragon Inn by Hardraw Scar waterfall for lunch. The writer informed the assembled that it was his 81st birthday! What a nice way to celebrate!

Whilst there, Peter Colley noticed that sheepdog demonstrations were to be held nearby a few days later, so he and Liz returned to see 'one man and his dog(s)' do their stuff.





From there to Farfield Mill close by Sedburgh. An excellent place to visit with its crafts and countryside exhibition - but not on a Tuesday, because it's shut that day! Try another time!

So, off to Sedburgh for a cup of tea in the Black Bull Inn. The sound of Happy Birthday being

sung...will a candlelit cake appear around the corner? No, but in another room a lady is found, sharing the same birthdate as me - July 22nd. This is my new friend - Barbara from Didsbury!



BIRDWATCHING – Report by Andrew Lapworth

FIELD MEETINGS IN JUNE & JULY & MURDER ON THE BEACH

Twelve of us met for our meeting on 16th June at the RSPB's reserve in Teesside. From the Saltholme cafe with its panoramic views we were pleased to see the large number of **Sand Martins** breeding in the artificial sand bank nearby. On the islands in the main water were noisy **Black-Headed Gulls** (with many chicks) and **Common Terns**. En route to the large hide overlooking West Saltholme Pool we spotted **Reed Buntings**, **Linnets** and **Great White Egret**. From the hide we had close views of **Avocets** including some of this year's youngsters, **Little Ringed Plovers**, **Black-tailed Godwits** (many in their cinnamon red breeding plumages) and **Spoonbills**.



At Seaton Carew we met the volunteer wardens who were providing 24 hour vigilance of the breeding **Little Terns** in their fenced off area on the beach. Little Terns, one of our rarest and most vulnerable seabirds, lay their 2-3 eggs in a shallow scrape in the pebbly sand and rely on their camouflage.

During the day the volunteers ensure no people or dogs stray into this area; during the night they do their best to deter the local foxes. Around 80 pairs were there when we visited, and some already had chicks; we watched the parents bringing in sandeels to feed them. During the hour or so we were there we were saddened to witness a **Kestrel** take 3 chicks (no doubt for its young).



The Kestrel predating Little Terns at Seaton Carew; the bird entered the protective covers to get the sheltering chicks.

Photos by Derek Wood

The wardens can do nothing to deter the Kestrel which is also protected by law. Derek Wood, Senior Warden there, has now told me: “...*the birds abandoned and the site closed on 6th July - about 6 weeks early.* **Little Terns:** 83 nesting pairs produced 211 chicks, of which 67 fledged but 144 were predated. **Ringed Plover:** 13 nesting pairs had 39 chicks of which 19 fledged. The concern now is that the Little Tern colony may decide not to attempt to nest there next year.

In July, 13 of us met at **Scorton Lakes**, a delightful complex of former gravel quarries that have now been restored for nature with a network of paths and a mosaic of habitats; the site is near Catterick just off the A1. July is always a quiet month in the birdwatching calendar; most singing has stopped and breeding is mainly over, with young birds fledged. Ducks are in their dull brown “eclipse” plumages and are tricky to identify. We saw quite a few species and I misidentified **Gadwalls** for **Pintails** (ducks that are very different and easy to identify in their winter colourful plumages). Much easier to identify were a family of **Great-crested Grebes** with their 3 juveniles; the latter were in their distinct “humbug” stripes. On the second lake we went to we were treated to a vista of large flocks of geese: the usual **Greylags** and **Canada** but also the smaller **Barnacles** that breed at Scorton (we sometimes see them to a Salholme in the winter). Two large flocks of **Lapwings** were a delight to see and also a smaller flock of **Curlews**; all of these will have been breeding on the uplands and were now regrouping in flocks.

The muddy margins of the lakes, and the islands, offer safety and safe feeding. Dotted along the shorelines were some more unusual waders: a dark **Spotted Redshank** was a notable find and with the **Common Sandpipers** there was a more distinctly marked **Green Sandpiper**.

After lunch at the cafe at nearby Ellerton Lakes we went to YWT's Bolton-on-Swale lake which has two hides one of which has close bird feeders. As we arrived we saw and heard all the Geese leave the reserve: the cause was a paddle-boarder (YWT subsequently confirmed paddleboarding or other water sports are not allowed on their lake there which is an SSSI). We added a closeview of a Reed Warbler to conclude our day's birdwatching.

BOARD GAMES – Report by Hilary Clarkson



In July we once again enjoyed the hospitality of the Old Well Inn's breakfast room for a fun afternoon of friendly rivalry and laughter.

Nine of us in two teams played a couple of games each of Carcassonne, a game inspired by the French town of the same name. Carcassonne is a strategy game in which the landscape is developed one tile at a time. Tiles represent roads, cities, monasteries and fields. Little wooden people called 'meeples' are placed on tiles to claim roads or territories.

Careful planning is required to strategically improve one's score. Final scores are added up at the end, and sometimes those who had loudly complained that they weren't scoring well during the game got a pleasant surprise when totting up was complete. Annie, Jane, Sue and Hilary each won one game.

August report by Celia Chapple

Six Board Game enthusiasts warmed up this month with two rounds of *Skyjo*. It's largely a game of luck with a spoonful of 'strategy' thrown in, and depends on which cards you have and pick up from the pile - it's a bit like BBC's *Pointless*, the player with the lowest value cards wins. Celia won overall (her first win since joining the group a year ago, so it was about time!) but hot on her heels was Kate. We had a raucous time playing it.

Doing a hundred-and-eighty-degree turn, the winner of *Ticket to Ride* (Europe version) is whoever scores the most points by placing your train cars on the board to build routes that score! It requires patience, strategy and boldness with a teensy-weensy pinch of luck. Most winners have played boldly, especially in picking the longer routes to populate with their trains. The winner of one group was Jane with 118 score, and group 2 was won by Kate with 93.



If you are curious about the games we play, come and see us on Saturday 27 September at Guide HQ in Barney. Teesdale u3a is having an Open Day from 10am until 12 noon, and you can get a hands-on view of some of the games.

Our next group meeting is Monday 8 September, 2 pm at the Old Well Inn.

ROOM TO READ BOOK GROUP- Review by Celia Chapple

***The Other Side of the Bridge* by Mary Lawson**

I must not give too much away in this review. The book is a complex story of family life in a close community, loving and not loving, fidelity, guilt and revenge, all interwoven in Lawson's flowing narrative. The setting is the remote Canadian outback and in two timespans, 1930s and 1950s. There are teenage brothers: Arthur, quiet, unambitious, a hardworking farmer; in contrast, his brother, Jake, academic, lazy, spiteful, unreliable and spoilt. His capricious mother loves Jake whilst she depends on Arthur to look after Jake in addition to providing their livelihood. Jake torments Arthur for his own enjoyment by putting Arthur in socially embarrassing and audacious situations.

The prominent 1950s adolescent character is Ian, who feels the community's pressure to follow his father as the local doctor. Ian is attracted to Laura, Arthur's wife, and takes a summer job on the farm to be near her. Ian's deeper feelings and desires are displayed to us as though we are in his shoes.

Guilt and revenge are carried throughout the story after Jake creates another reckless, dangerous act. It is one too many crises for Arthur to bear - a lifetime of anger and frustration boil up and he doesn't attempt to save him. Guilt dominates the rest of Arthur's life and is carried along in the story until the tragic end.

This story charmed us all with its depth of characters, storyline and moral issues. Lawson vividly describes the Canadian landscape. It raised discussion on whether it is possible to have such contrasting children in one family; why Jake behaved as he did; Jake's likely paternity; adoption and its effects on children. The group voted 4.9/5 on 'recommendation to a friend' and 'a good reading group book'. This novel, published in 2006, was long-listed for the Booker prize.

CHESS GROUP – Report by Diana Marks

We were eight again this time, all rearing to go and get the grey matter working. One experienced player give valuable lessons to one of our group who said they had learned a lot, even being given homework! Perhaps this would be a good strategy for another session when players are unevenly matched.

Two of us stayed behind and enjoyed a well deserved cocktail (or two!).

We meet again on Thursday 4th September.

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS GROUP – Report by Kate Bailey

A smaller group this month because of holidays, but momentous news to consider. The highest court in the world, the UN International Court of Justice (ICJ), has delivered a landmark legal opinion that "*all states have legal obligations to protect the climate and prevent significant harm from climate change*". Legal duties of countries include regulating greenhouse gas emissions and high-emitting businesses, and phasing out fossil fuels, so that granting oil and gas extraction licences and subsidies for production "*may constitute wrongful acts under international law*".

The ICJ emphasised that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right for both present and future generations. This opinion comes after 5 years of international collaboration on questions of state responsibility, initiated by 27 law students in the University of the South

Pacific and taken to the UN General Assembly by the Government of Vanuatu. Climate-vulnerable countries *"now have a legal basis to demand accountability, support and concrete action from high-emitting countries."* (extracts from Chatham House briefing 1 Aug 2025).

Lots of 'Good News' to report this month:

- The world's clean energy supply reached 40% in 2024, led by China's rapid transition away from fossil fuels. The Sunday Times reports that 8 countries generate 100% of their electricity from renewable sources. Vatican City runs primarily on energy from a solar hub it built on land near Rome, the result of an initiative promoted by the late Pope Francis.

- A colony of beavers has built a dam in the Czech Republic exactly where a long-planned infrastructure project (with a budget of over \$1m) had been delayed by bureaucracy. Costing nothing, the beaver 'engineers' have created a natural wetland that is revitalising local ecosystems.

- Studies of translocated pine martens, reintroduced into Wales, Devon and the Forest of Dean from Scotland, have shown that when pine martens move into an area, grey squirrels move out, allowing once-abundant red squirrels to retake old territories.



Photo:

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk / Anne Marie Kalus

- Researchers at Chester Zoo and Oxford University are exploring how to harvest and store living cells from animals in a non-invasive, cost-effective, and efficient way, by gathering their dung. The hope is that genetic samples can be cultured for conservation breeding programmes.

- Medicine containing scales and body parts taken from the critically endangered Asian pangolin species has been removed from China's official drugs compendium. Whilst not an outright ban, this will make it harder to prescribe, which is a positive step towards the promotion of ethical and sustainable medicines as well as efforts to save the pangolin from extinction in Asia.

Growing my Eco-Friendly Garden

Jane Mardon

I joined the Climate Solutions Discussion Group when it started, keen to gain knowledge and put into practice things that would make a difference in some way. The group has come up with plenty of ideas and actions over the years. I have learnt a lot too.



After having had a garden for many years, I moved to a 'no garden' home so I could just shut my door and travel the world for work and for adventures after retirement. Now 24 years later I have a house with a garden again. The front is fully established with flowering shrubs and the back was just grass and a tree. So I decided to create a small eco friendly garden. Trying my best to minimise harm to the environment.

After help and plant donations and advice from U3A members, family, friends and neighbours it is underway. Only shrubs, perennials and bee friendly ones at that. I have no idea what many are so am downloading an app on my iPhone to educate myself. I even have a wildflower patch. It's fun and the birds and bees love it. It's a small step. For me it's been worth the time and effort.



Then I was given a garden shed for a small donation so of course I had a shed opening/ribbon cutting party to celebrate its installation. Thanks U3A members - Peter for the shed and Martyn for all the work he did getting it upright again. Love my shed!

Two photos accompany my short garden story. Next year I'll do a follow up and see how things have progressed.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD GROUP - Report by Sue Overton

More than half of the group were AWOL ...cruising, travelling, childminding – who knew retirement could be so hectic! Nevertheless, a fabulous five met to combine their skills and managed to solve three crosswords of varying degrees of difficulty – a Cryptic from the Independent, a Cryptic and a Quiptic from the Guardian. Here are a couple for you to try:-

Rig the Oscars to mess up the Cinderella theme (4,2,6)

Documentation reportedly in small bottles! (6)

Last month's clue was:- Tool for bridge? (7)

Answer: SPANNER

You are welcome to join us at our next session in The Guide HQ 2pm -4pm on Weds 10th September – Contact Sue Overton 07512 368884

DISCUSSION GROUP – Report by Glen Howard

As ever our discussions were wide-ranging and very interesting and enjoyable. Topics included: council tax; one in one out; direct cremations; crypto currency fraud; walking the Great Glen Way; and the electricity supply

Our next meetings will be on Fridays 12th September and 10th October. If you would like to join us please give me a ring on 07975 705816.

FAMILY HISTORY INTEREST GROUP – Report by Alan Swindale

The August meeting followed up the July meeting 'Why researching Irish Family History can be so difficult' with a discussion of the sources that remain available, even if not complete. Using these sources is rather like doing a jigsaw puzzle where half the pieces have been lost.

Census Record survive – but only for 1901 and 1911; earlier census records were destroyed though some early 19th century census records survive in the form of census search forms where census information had been

abstracted and used as proof of age in the absence of both civil birth certificate and baptismal registers.

The majority of the population were Roman Catholic (78% in 1861). Parish registers exist for Roman Catholic parishes from the early/middle part of the 19th century, i.e. once the Penal Laws allowed Roman Catholic priests to keep such records. They often have to be sought in each individual parish.

In respect of the members of the Church of Ireland (12% in 1861) many of the registers had been deposited in the Public Record Office for safekeeping only to be destroyed along with the rest of the contents of the Public Record office in Dublin during the conflict between the Free State forces and the IRA at the end of June 1922.

All births, deaths and marriages have been registered since 1864 and can be searched on various websites. A reviewer (Irish Genealogy Toolkit) comments

“ It remains the case that Ireland's family history records are as scattered in cyberspace as they are on the ground.

I think it's fair to say that while the majority of church records remain the preserve of just one commercial database provider (RootsIreland) there will remain no single 'monster' site for Irish records”

One useful source that has survived intact is ‘Griffith’s Valuation’, a list of landlords and tenants (effectively the head of each household) in each ‘townland’ in Ireland. The survey was published progressively between 1847 and 1864. It was supported by a detailed map at 6” to the mile showing the boundaries of each townland. This allows genealogists to identify the exact piece of land on which their ancestors lived.

The next meeting will discuss how to use Ancestry, using a DNA match as an example. It will be held on the second Thursday of September, September 11th, at 13:30 in Enterprise House.

An index to other past talks at [Teesdale U3A Genealogy Tutorials](#).

GARDENING GROUP – Report by Kate, Julie and Fran

In August the gardening group travelled to Breezy Knees Gardens near York.



The gardens cover an area of over 20 acres and were featured recently on Gardeners World. Monty Don described Breezy Knees as “a beautiful modern garden created on the grandest possible scale”. The gardens are one of the largest in Northern England and have over 10,000 varieties of trees, shrubs and flowers. The gardens are divided into separate named areas, each with its own name and theme. The main entrance is a bespoke Breezy Knees metal gate.

From May until September the herbaceous borders have a succession of flowers in bloom. The garden has seasonal highlights starting in May and June with the collections of irises and peonies. The specially designed White Rose fountain was entertaining with its 2 minute display every 6 minutes, with well located benches to enjoy the view. The Raised Bed Garden was in full bloom with lots of herbs intermingling with the flowers. Late summer flowers including crocosmia, rudbeckia and Japanese anemones were in bloom. There were also lots of scents around the garden. The meadow was still full of flowers on our visit, some years ago the group had visited in September at which time the meadow had been cut back. The garden has lots of sculptures and fun structures with a giant pair of wellington boots, giant plant pot, large trowel sculpture and a dog made out of wellies.



The café was very popular with a good selection of scones, cakes, pastries, drinks and sandwiches. Breezy Knees has an excellent well stocked plant nursery and many of the Members indulged in purchasing some delightful plants, fortunately the coach had plenty of space in the luggage compartment and some spare seats to accommodate our purchases. This was another lovely day out with the weather holding and lots of garden borders to enjoy.

On Friday 5th September we will be travelling to Sizergh Castle in the Lake District.

On Friday 3rd October the garden group will be holding afternoon meetings at Stainton Village Hall with doors open at 1.45pm for a 2pm start. The first speaker of the season is Laura Ince-Henry who will be talking about Vegetable growing in the home garden.

GEOGRAPHY GROUP - Report by Jane Harrison



In July, sixteen of the group joined Jane Harrison for a walk around Richmond to look at the town's historical geography. She focussed on how the town's site and situation had influenced its development.

We began by comparing the modern layout, shown on the display board next to Trinity Church, to John Speed's map of 1610. It was surprising how

little the shape of the market place and network of surrounding roads had changed in 400 years.

The origins of Richmond go back to at least the 11th century, when Alan Rufus, a Breton nobleman, built his castle at “Riche Monte”. It was an excellent defensive site, on a steep-sided promontory overlooking the river Swale. Richmond became the administrative centre for the “Honour of Richmond” and soon developed as a market town, receiving its first royal charter in 1155.

We headed along Castle Walk and saw the remains of the defensive wall built to resist Scots raids in the 14th century. Below was The Green, where once there were tanneries, corn and fulling mills and a brewery, using the river as a source of power and water. Richmond specialised in knitted woollen stockings and sailors’ caps until woollen production moved to the West Riding. The fulling mills, which cleansed the wool, were gradually replaced by paper mills.

Mining and processing of minerals such as lead and copper also contributed to the town’s wealth. The movement of goods and people was assisted by the network of post roads and later turnpike roads which converged on Richmond.

At the market place, we considered the role of tourism in the town’s development. During the Georgian period, the racecourse, the theatre, the assembly rooms (now the Town Hall) and military musters, encouraged visitors. Hotels, such as the King’s Head, opened to cater for them. Better and wider roads were constructed to cope with carriages and sedan chairs, and the water supply was improved. New houses were built along Newbiggin and Frenchgate.

The Victorian period was one of more limited growth. The geography continued to hinder expansion to the south of the river. A second bridge across the Swale was only constructed when the railway came to Richmond in 1846 and the modern road to Catterick Garrison was only constructed in 1916.

Next meeting: Thursday 18th September. 2pm. The Witham. Professor Martin Pratt (of Bordermap Canada) will speak on “The next Cold War? Boundaries and geopolitics in the Arctic.”

GEOLOGY GROUP – Report by Bob Tuddenham

In July, we had a most interesting talk and practical session given by Les Knight entitled the 'Properties of Minerals'.

In the first half Les gave an introductory talk about this vast subject, firstly mentioning about the history of mineralogy. The mineral ores of the vital metals lead, tin and copper were known long before the scientific study of the subject. The first serious book on minerals was written by James Sowerby between 1802 – 17 in seven volumes with 550 coloured plates. There are apparently more than 6000 different minerals!

Les then described the key properties of minerals with some excellent explanations and superb slides. We looked at simple methods of identification such as Moh's hardness scale and the streak test before moving on to the quite complex categories of crystal systems with their different shapes and symmetry. We could see the crystal form of some of the important local minerals in Teesdale such as galena and fluorite which are cubic and barytes which is platy orthorhombic. We then viewed a video showing some very old techniques used to identify minerals - the flame test, the borax bead test and the use of a blowpipe on a charcoal block.

The second half practical gave us an opportunity to look at a whole range of different mineral samples and understand some of these mineral properties. We left the meeting with a much better understanding of this amazing subject.

The next meeting will be at The Witham on Monday morning September 22nd at 10 am. All are welcome to join us. Please contact the convenor for details.

iPAD and iPHONE GROUP – Report by Mike Sweeting

A select group this month with several apologies. The first topic of the day was the changes to the Photos app that have occurred over the last year. An outline with examples of the changes revealed that we perhaps needed a more in-depth review of the app. This will come probably later this year.

Notes is another app that has been significantly improved with several new and useful features. The camera icon in the toolbar has been replaced with a paperclip for archiving files, the ability to sort notes by date, title, etc. and to create folders.

A recent broader issue has been the way in which Apple Mail retains a list of recipients and offers them, along with possibilities from Contacts, as suggestions for the recipient of a new email. This can result in several listings for an individual. We went through how to tidy the list and reduce the confusion this can cause.

LUNCH CLUB – Report by Kate Keen

In July the lunch group returned to an old favourite Coghlan's at Barningham. It was a lovely day for a short drive into the countryside, the restaurant is set in an old coach house in pleasant grounds. The rooms are set up as an old fashioned tea room with flowery teapots, cups, saucers and plate sets. There are hats available for anyone who fancies dressing up for the occasion. As well as lunches they offer afternoon tea and do lots of outside catering.



We were a group of 14 and had pre ordered our starters, mains and deserts from a tempting selection. All the food was cooked to perfection and some Members thought that this was the best meal they had had all year. The most popular main course was the salmon and spinach Wellington served with a lemon beurre sauce. Those of us who had the strawberry and cream tartlet served with berry sorbet thought they were the tastiest strawberries ever and we were thrilled to be able to

purchase a punnet each from the shop.

In August we are having an early evening meal at the Crosskeys Inn at Eppleby. If anyone is interested in joining our friendly group then please contact me.



NEEDLECRAFT – Report by Glen Howard

This month's meeting was like no other – and some hope that it will never be repeated! Soon after everyone had arrived at our venue for this month, the common room at Grove Park, the fire alarm went off. So everyone



trooped outside, fortunately although it was windy it was sunny. The fire brigade arrived quite promptly but although there was no fire, the wind having set the alarm off, the fire officers couldn't switch the alarm off and the warden was off site. It was much too windy to do any stitching outdoors so a member very kindly invited everyone back to her house. As you can imagine after all the disruption not a lot of work got done but crocheting, knitting and miniature rug making were attempted. The main topic of conversation unsurprisingly was smoke alarms.

Our next meeting will be on Monday 1 September 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. Please give me a ring if you are interested.

PAINTING GROUP – Report by Martin Page

For something that is as simple as a green sphere it certainly was a challenge to not to paint it as a green sphere but to obtain the tonal range and texture resembling the surface of the lime. Similar to the onion challenge we first produced a pencil sketch to separate the tonal range allowing us to overdo the shadows and being able to rub them out of too dark or in the wrong place (something you can't do. with watercolour). Once



this exercise was satisfactorily obtained it was recreated with paint. This time though using an under tint of yellow under the green to create a tonal spread of the overall colour. This was done wet on dry so the two colours didn't mix. Then the mid and dark range greens were stippled to create the texture of

the lime skin Before adding the shadows to create the placement on the paper. It was a challenge that not everybody quite got right, but with Anne's deft involvement produced acceptable pictures.

That point notwithstanding, for the first time in ages ... Homework was set . We are to cut the lime in half and create an image for the next meeting - YES Maam !



PHILOSOPHY GROUP – Report by Christine Price

The topic was Plato's Theory of Forms.

Plato described the world as consisting of two realms: firstly the material world, a world of appearances which is changeable and therefore unreliable, and secondly, a realm of permanence and reliability which he called the world of Forms (or Ideas).

Using 'chair' and 'beauty' as examples, there are multiple examples of chairs that exist in our material world and in our imaginations. These chairs all share the characteristics of 'chairness' and are said to *participate* in the Form or Idea of 'chair' but none are able to fully replicate the perfect, unchanging Form which exists as an abstract concept that most people are unable to perceive.

We can perceive beautiful things such as flowers, paintings etc. which are said to participate in the Forms of flowers and paintings respectively, but also both participate in the Form of Beauty which is a concept that cannot be perceived by the senses.

Plato argues that only those trained to reach to highest abilities of thought and reason, and recall innate knowledge (Philosophers) could perceive the Forms and be fit to be rulers.

Although Aristotle (and indeed Plato himself) found weaknesses in the Theory of Forms, aspects of it are found in the work of later philosophers such as Descartes and Kant who argued that certain knowledge was present at birth (innate), rather than learnt from experience.

Empiricist philosophers such as Locke and Hume, however, found that all knowledge was gained from the evidence of the senses and experience - the basis for scientific enquiry.

After some interesting discussion, we ended by considering whether Plato's theory had any relevance for today, for example in how we relate to what we think is the 'reality' of things such as news reports.

The next philosophy group meeting will be on Tuesday 26th August at 10am at Enterprise House, during which Pete Redgrave will conclude our discussion on Consciousness, including How would we know how to exclude AI?

The following month we will meet on Tuesday 23rd September at which Clare Tuddenham will lead a discussion on Wisdom.

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP – Report by Alan Kenwright

Photographs by Charlotte Washbourne, Anne Newton, Andrew Lapworth, and Peter Redgrave.



In August the photography group visited the Ryhope Engines Museum.



This magnificent example of Victorian engineering was built in the 1870's and pumped water up from the underlying magnesian limestone aquifer to a reservoir which provided drinking water to the city of Sunderland. It was in continuous use for over 100 years before the steam powered pumps were replaced by electric versions. For roughly the last 50 years it has been maintained as a museum by a dedicated group of volunteers.

After a fascinating and informative tour, we had the opportunity to photograph many beautifully crafted details of the massive engines and pumps.

We then moved on to Seaham where we enjoyed both a good lunch and the opportunity to take more photos of the town and, in particular, the iconic statue of "Tommy". A very inspiring and enjoyable outing.



PICKLEBALL – Report by Ruth Lapworth

Our pickleball group is thriving with 24 members plus another two who join us outside the tennis season. The standard of play is now much improved and most of us are now fairly familiar with the bizarre scoring system. However we thought it a good idea to have some coaching and a member suggested we approach Julie Vickerman who had set up the Richmond and Wellfield Pickleball Group. Julie and her head coach, Kieron Pearce, kindly agreed to come to our Monday session on 28 July to go through the basics and ensure we were playing and scoring using Pickleball England Rules.



We started with making sure we had the correct grip on the paddle and then practised “dinking”. It appears we have been spending too much time trying to hit the ball hard from the baseline when we should have been dinking from just outside the kitchen! This skill means that winning is based more on strategy rather than speed or strength; the aim is to

keep the ball low over the net to land at your opponent’s feet. We then focused on court placement with serve and return. It was interesting to learn that there is also a drop serve which some of us might find easier than the volley serve.



Thankfully, Julie and Kieron confirmed that our interpretation of the rules was correct. They also introduced us to the concept of rally scoring which is completely different but is being increasingly used; so we may need to exercise our brains to get to grips with this

in the future!

We all agreed it had been a very worthwhile session enabling us to develop our skills and increase our knowledge of scoring methods and rules. We expressed our thanks to Julie and Kieron and hope they can return for

another session later in the year. In the meantime we need to keep on dinking and practise some of the drills to improve further.

There is now a waiting list for members to join the group but if you are interested in having a free trial session please contact me through the u3a Teesdale website.

POETRY GROUP – Report by Terry Whitfield

Journeys

The poems ranged from Victorian 'nonsense' to profound twentieth century spiritual explorations. There was very little description of physical journeys. The poets we looked at were much more concerned with exploring emotional terrain.

We started with C P Cavafy who got us off to a classical start with *Ithaca* in which, based on Odysseus' return from Troy, he explores what makes a fulfilling journey. Next was *Roads Go Ever On* by JRR Tolkien. Bilbo sings of his homecoming:

'Eyes that fire and sword have seen,
And horror in the halls of stone
Look at last on meadows green,
And trees and hills they long have known'.

Edward Lear's whimsical *The Owl and the Pussy-Cat* entertained us before we got down to serious stuff with *Pilgrimages* by R S Thomas.

Thomas searches for God in the footsteps of previous pilgrims on a visit to an island off the coast of Wales:

'Were they too late also, those
First pilgrims? He is such a fast
God, always before us and
leaving as we arrive'.

Then to Wilhelm Muller's bleak words set to music by Schubert in *Winterreise* (Winter Journey): 'Now the world is wretched, the path veiled in snow'. In *For the Traveller* John O'Donohue is much more encouraging:

'Every time you leave home,

Another road takes you

Into a world you were never in'.

Finally, we went on an intellectual and aesthetic journey of discovery with John Keats *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* where Keats is able to read the Greek poet in English for the first time:

'Oft of one wide expanse had I been told

That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;

Yet did I never breathe its pure serene

Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold'.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GROUP

Monday 8th September 2025 at the Witham, 10am. All welcome.

Talk and discussion led by Pete Redgrave: AI – should we embrace it?

Topics to be considered will include: How intelligent is AI? AI work mates; artificial authors; AI's great brain robbery; does AI make us cognitively lazy?; AI counsellors and therapists; AI art and music; AI hallucinations; is your job safe? AI creates jobs; Artificial General Intelligence; will AI become conscious?

SCRABBLE GROUP – Report by Ray Thompson

This month's meeting was at Lillian's on 14th July. There were 8 of us this month, so we split into 2 teams of 4. Team 1 was made up of Jeanette, Paula, Judith and Regina, Judith won this game with a score of 228, including a 7 letter word of RINGERS. Team 2 was made up with Phil, Ray,

Monica and Lillian. Ray won this game with a score of 213.

We stopped for refreshments of tea, coffee, biscuits and a homemade Victoria Sponge, delicious. In the 2nd rounds the two winners and runners up made the first team, so Ray, Phil, Judith and Regina played together, Judith won this game with a score of 168.

The second game was played with Jeanette, Paula, Lillian and Monica, and Lillian and Jeanette tied for first place with a score of 156. Well done to Judith for winning her two games, and thank you to Lillian for hosting this month and for the refreshments. Next month's meeting will be held at Jeanette's.

UNDERSTANDING CLASSICAL MUSIC – Report by Ian Royston

July marked the final episode of Howard Goodall's Story of Music, "The Popular Age" where he looked at music in the 20th century and up to the present day.

The early 20th century saw two massive innovations in music: the gramophone, which, though limited to about two minutes for a wax cylinder and 10 minutes for a 12" 78rpm record, allowed music lovers to at last hear their favourite music as often as they wished without recourse to the concert hall. And, by the end of the first quarter of that century concerts from all over the country and indeed from other countries could be heard over the wireless, directly into one's own parlour. The demand for orchestras had never been greater.

Ironically, though classical music was now more available to more than ever before these same two media also allowed for a greater explosion in popular music and by the 1930's music quickly found a new outlet in the guise of the 'talkies' a motion picture with voice and music.

During these times more classical music was being heard and played more than at any time in history though we imagine there being a decline in classical works as the proportion being recorded and broadcast was undoubtedly in the minority.

However, it was not dead, indeed far from it as composers such as Gershwin, de Falla, Saint-Seans and Copland gained worldwide popularity

and though some 'experimental' music may be difficult for those attuned to conventional themes, composers such as Philip Glass appear to have bridged the divide.

Many composers have found rewarding outlets in film scores and it is in these that some major modern works have emerged, many as complex and layered as the symphonies of past times.

In the second part of the meeting Simon Callow continued the story of J S Bach when he arrived in Leipzig in 1723 as Thomaskantor (director of church music) at St. Thomas's Church School and became Kapellmeister at no fewer than four churches in the city. This was the happiest and most productive time of his life.

Before leaving Leipzig, Callow reminded us of another musical director of that city, Felix Mendelsohn-Bartholdy who lived there in his latter years when he spent his time between Germany and Britain, prior to his early, tragic death.

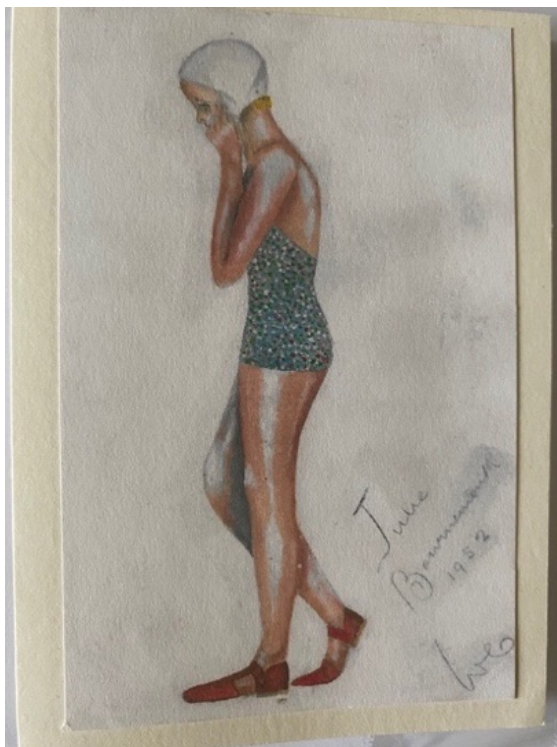
We plan to continue with the History of the Symphony and explore other musical cities next month at 10:00 on 22 August and 25 September at Startforth Community Centre.

WIMMIN' SWIMMIN' GROUP - Report by Annie Clouston

Wimmin are giving a good account of themselves in the pool where we have exclusive use for one hour, once a month. There is considerable variety in style, from very stylish to idiosyncratic, from dogged to languid, and from be-noodled to naturally buoyant. We are very impressed with Sandra, who has got the bit between her teeth and has joined the TLC aquarobics class which marks a huge leap in her confidence (although it would be fair to say she is well and truly couchbound for the rest of the afternoon). Maureen is also now noodling her way across the pool, big progress.

Hearing some of our timid swimmers' stories, a common denominator is their traumatising experience of school swimming lessons, where the harsh bark of impatience was often accompanied by a stick with a hoop wielded with gusto.

I am enchanted by this beautiful picture sent to me by Hazel Yeadon of Julie, her sister, painted by her father, Bill Cunliffe.



As an outdoor swimmer these last few weeks have been a gift. The Tees has offered some delightful swims and my most recent in the Greta at the Meeting of the Waters (right) was pure bliss. If anyone would like to join me for a dip please let me know. Our next session at Teesdale Leisure Centre is on Saturday, 30 August from 4-5pm. Please book with Sue Overton; sueoverton@hotmail.com



WINE GROUP – Report by Annie Clouston

In July we had a meeting of the lushes at Stella and John's for the traditional summer fizz-fest. We stuck our noses in, slooshed the stuff about a bit, swigged it, and tried to make some kind of guess about the grape variety, country of origin, strength and price. The more we swigged, the less we got right! Stand out of the day was a tremendously accessible Pinot Grigio Sparkling Rose Extra Dry from Lidl at less than £6. Needless to say, there was a run on it at the supermarket (who doesn't love a bargain?), so it proved not so accessible after all! However, it was back on the shelves last week.

In August we met at Jane's on a very steamy day that warranted thirst-quenching of a vigorous nature. As usual (and rather unfairly as far as this red-wine drinker is concerned) there were four whites and two reds on offer. All had been purchased at Bon Coeur Wine Merchants at Melsonby and were outside our usual abstemious price range, even at the knock down prices Tim bargained for. Two of the whites were from Sicily: a Fiano and Grillo Zabu, but our favourite was a Muscadet from the Loire, Melon de Bourgogne (£10.95). Best of all on the day, and not just because I am biased, was one of the reds, a Cotes de Rhone, Via Nostrom, Minervois from Languedoc, a hefty 14%, on offer at £10.50. Sumptuous.

Our September meeting is a trip to Robin Hood's Bay's Bay Vineyard, established in 2017, but boasting exceptional wines since 2022. We shall see...

WALKING GROUPS



SHORTER WALKS - Report by Liz Colley

Blackton Reservoir and Hannah's Meadow

The weather was set fine as sixteen of us made our way up to Balderhead Reservoir car park for our July walk. This was led by Barbara who is very familiar with this territory as she grew up on a farm just above Blackton

Reservoir. For those unfamiliar with the area Durham Wildlife Trust have positioned an information board by the car park describing a shorter circular route which takes you through the countryside associated with the celebrated Hannah Hauxwell.



However we were more adventurous and set off to walk around Blackton reservoir before heading up to Hannah's Meadow. Barbara led us down the track and picked up the path which runs along the south side of Blackton. This gave us good views of the property Hannah lived in at Low Birk Hatt and Barbara filled us in with stories about Hannah. It was an idyllic view with haymaking in progress in the fields across the dam. Barbara also gave us fascinating insights into growing up in Baldersdale. Journeying across the dam wall to reach her primary school on the other side. She told us the winters could be very harsh and one year probably 1963 she broke for the Christmas holidays and didn't return to school until March.

The walk around the reservoir is full of interest. There are great views up to Goldsborough and Shacklesborough. This is very much sheep country and at this time of year the lambs are looking as big as their mothers who have been shorn. We crossed over the dam wall and continued around the reservoir to Low Birk Hatt. Here we picked up the Pennine Way which was nostalgic for me as I walked the Pennine Way 50 years ago. My memories are of more rain and soggy moors and damp feet! From here the route climbs up past Hannah's Meadow which is managed by Durham Wildlife

Trust for the benefit of wildlife and for all to enjoy. The wildflower enthusiasts among us made the most of the opportunity, a few days later and the meadow would be cut. We left the Pennine Way once we reached the road and headed back to the car park.

7-9 MILE WALKING GROUP – Report by Peter Singer



Photos by Ian Royston

Part of the appeal of Upper Teesdale is its remote and dramatic landscape and the feeling of comparative wilderness that it invokes. It has a unique diversity of rare, upland habitats and their associated flora and fauna, to which we are fortunate to have such relatively easy access. Our circular walk around Herdship Fell took us through this landscape and gave us both exercise (at times perhaps more than some of us had expected) and wonderful views up and down the dale.

Fourteen of us assembled at Weelsike Car Park, overlooking Cow Green reservoir, as we had in April, when the walk had to be postponed, because of thick mist and pouring rain. This time the weather was much kinder,

cloudy with sunny spells, but no rain and a gentle breeze, ideal for walking. We set off back along the access road and headed north, uphill over rough moorland. There were no real paths, so we made as much use as we could of sheep trods and quad-bike tracks, skirting around a number of sinkholes, swatting the occasional deer fly and pausing to take in the views, here dominated by Mickie Fell (at 2,585 feet, originally the highest point in historic Yorkshire). We dropped down, crossing Marchesgill Sike and taking a break for coffee at High Stony Comb, before crossing a footbridge to reach the hamlet of Harwood, with its three or four farmhouses and ruins of a church and school beside the beck.

Leaving this last outpost of civilisation, we had to give way to a large flock of sheep being driven down the track by some farmers and their dogs – a great snapshot of life as a hillfarmer. We pressed on, having a quick lunch at an idyllic spot by Harwood Beck and climbed up to the Alston road, along



which we had to walk for half a mile, close to the summit of Herdship Fell and watching out for speeding motor bikes, before starting the return trek along a well-made, former mine road. We had wonderful views of Burnhope Seat (once the highest point in Durham, until they moved Mickie Fell), with its ski tows on Yad Moss and also Great Dun Fell, Little Dun Fell and Cross Fell, the largest block of high ground in England, forming a ridge over 7 miles long. The final stretch was easy walking and soon the reservoir and

car park re-appeared at the end of our 9-mile circuit and we repaired to Langdon Beck hotel for the essential tea and cakes.

The next 7 – 9 walk will be led by Chris from Leyburn. A 9 mile walk will take us along the Shawl, to Preston under scar and Redmire. We will return through the Bolton Hall estate to Leyburn.

In September our 9 mile walk led by David. Starting at Wearhead we will reach Westgate after a steep initial ascent and steady descent, via Slitt Wood. Our way back to Wearhead will be along riverside paths. Please let Nicky Grace nickygrace729@gmail.com if you are interested in coming along



COFFEE AND CHAT

**Thursday 11 September 2.30pm at
Andalucia, Galgate Barnard Castle**

**Come along to natter, suggest, give feedback,
find out...**

FRAUD PROTECTION

**No matter how savvy you think you are there's
someone out there desperate to relieve you of
your cash. For really good up to date information
on current scams go to
FraudProtection@durham.gov.uk**

QUIZ by Quizmaster Phil Clarke

Geography and Literature Quiz all answers beginning with letter A

1. Indian city, site of the Golden Temple
2. Largest US state by area
3. Region of Spain, capital Seville
4. Underground layer of water bearing permeable rock
5. Scottish city "Granite City"
6. Precipitation that has a high level of hydrogen ions due to pollution
7. Alphabetically the first city in the World
8. Largest island in Firth of Clyde
9. Previous name of Nur-Sultan, capital of Kazakhstan
10. A device for measuring wind speed.
11. The criminal mastermind in a series of books by Eoin Colfer
12. 1998 novel that won the Booker Prize for Ian McEwan
13. The headmaster of Hogwarts School in Harry Potter books
14. Surname of the main character in John Updike's "Rabbit" novels
15. Leo Tolstoy called this 1878 book his first true novel
16. French comic strip about Roman occupation of France
17. The World's best selling writer
18. A Ranger of the North in Lord of Rings who becomes King of Gondor and Arnor
19. The oldest of The Three Musketeers
20. Shakespeare comedy in which Rosalind and Orlando marry.

Answers on page 41

High Summer in Ambridge by Annie Clouston

The lethargy that comes with excessive heat has afflicted some of Ambridge's residents with morbid malaise, but energised others into ferocious fits of fury. The ongoing battle between that convert to eco-warriorhood, Justin (previously a money-grubbing capitalist and expert bombast) and Brian (previously a polluter and profiteer and now someone who may well be losing his marbles) reached a crescendo of volcanic vituperation. Stella, a pragmatist and peacemaker, has been unable to reconcile these two alpha males with locked antlers and so, meanwhile, the harvest perishes in the heat.

Elsewhere, the unmitigated soapiness of Brad pining for a truly sickly-sweet Mia is hard to bear without a bucket for an accessory. His appointment and delighted acceptance of Best Man at the Ambridge Wedding of the Year – Egregious George to Empty Amber – is par for the course. The unlikeliness of this “friendship” that has always been about the exploitation of an absolute nitwit (Brad) by an absolute heel (EG) is another one of those scriptwriter flights of fancy that is unfathomable.

All-About-Me-Alice is still obsessing about the number of isms that can be pinned on her daughter Martha as a result of her alcoholism in pregnancy. And so, it is Chris, Martha's father who gets my Only Sensible Person in Ambridge Award this month, for giving Alice a talking to, though I dare say with a change in scriptwriter next month he may decide to climb Kilimanjaro in a Yogi Bear outfit for the Foetal Alcohol Syndrome charity.

As a footnote, I want to thank one reader for his gift: ***For the Love of the Archers, an unofficial companion***. I have been particularly exercised by the ambition of the questions at Quiznight at the Bull. I leave you with one brainteaser from simpler times – *When Susan Horobin won a pig at the village fete in 1983, who offered to build a pen for it, and would later become her boyfriend and husband?* (I have a homeless guinea pig. Is there anyone out there...?) Answers to both questions on a postcard please.

Quiz Answers

Amritsar, Alaska, Andulusia, Aquifer, Aberdeen, Acid Rain,
Abu Dhabi, Arran, Astana, Anemometer, Artemis Fowl, Amsterdam,
Albus Dumbledore, Angstrom, Anna Karenina, Asterix the Gaul, Agatha
Christie, Aragorn, Athos, As you Like It

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	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
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	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

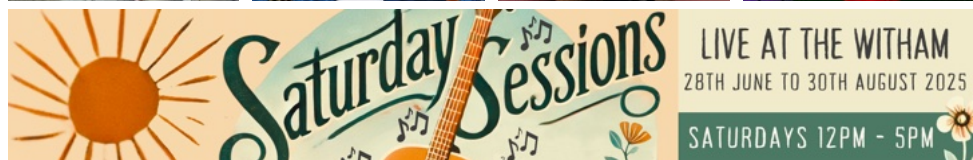
WHAT'S ON : 2025

23 AUG - 27 SEPT

the
witham
Culture • Community • Commerce

Barnard Castle's Community Arts Centre

www.thewitham.org.uk



Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy (15)

Sat 23 Aug | [Film](#) | 7pm | £5 Shown with subtitles

National Theatre Live: Inter Alia (15)

Thurs 4 Sept | [Live Screening](#) | 7pm | £12 - £14

Lauren Pattison: Big Girl Pants (14+)

Fri 5 Sept | [Comedy](#) | 7.30pm | £16



Smooove & Turrell (18+)

Sat 6 Sept | [Soul & Funk](#) | 8pm | £20

Made in Tennessee

Wed 10 Sept | [Tribute](#) | 7.30pm | £25

The UK Rock Show

Thurs 11 Sept | [Tribute](#) | 7.30pm | £28.50

Angela Barnes: ANGST (14+)

Fri 12 | [Comedy](#) | 7.30pm | £17



Josh Jones: I Haven't Won the Lottery so Here's Another Show (14+)

Sat 13 | [Comedy](#) | 8pm | £15



Connor Selby & Band

Wed 17 Sept | [Blues](#) | 7.30pm | £18

Celebrating George Michael

featuring Steve Mitchell & Band

Thurs 18 Sept | [Tribute](#) | 7.30pm | £26-£35

Voices of Hope: Northern Lights

Fri 19 Sept | [Choir](#) | 7.30pm | £15

The Ever Ready Band

Sat 20 Sept | [Brass Band](#) | 7.30pm | £13-£15

Stephen Fearing & The Sentimentals

Sat 20 Sept | [Music](#) | 8pm | £16 | [WITHAM ROOM](#)

Royal Northern Sinfonia

Sun 21 Sept | [Classical Music](#) | 2pm | £10-£22

Barbara Dickson SOLD OUT

Thurs 25 Sept | [Celebrity Music](#) | 7.30pm | £30

Edwina Hayes

Sat 27 Sept | [Folk](#) | 7.30pm | £16



Box Office: 01833 631107

THE WITHAM, 3 HORSE MARKET, BARNARD CASTLE, DL12 8LY