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FORUM

September 2025

No. 25/09

u3a

CHAIR'S LETTER

Dear Friends

Here we are in September with the summer behind us, where did it go? It has been a funny mix of heatwaves and storms. On the plus side it seems to have given us bumper crops of apples and plums according to my vegetable and fruit growing friends. From now on it is dropping temperatures and earlier and earlier dark evenings. Thank goodness for an interesting calendar of events still on the U3A agenda.

The August monthly talk, given by Jane Harrison, was on her recent trip to Peru and its history through archaeological records. I was pleased to pick up the tip on how to identify llamas from alpacas, pointy stand ears for llamas and floppy ears for alpacas. As a person interested in textiles, I was amazed by the quality of textiles, colours, designs and fine textures found dating back 1,000 years and the use of alpaca wool in weaving fine cloths, initiated in England by Sir Titus Salt in his textile mills at Saltaire.

I took the opportunity to go as a guest to the Science and Technology's September meeting on the perks and perils of AI trying to stay on top of this growing phenomenon. It made me think that I cannot be an ostrich regarding these developments and so I have signed up for the January workshop.

Last week I went to Tennant's of Leyburn for one of their talks linked to an auction event. This time it was Art Deco jewellery, which has remained popular since the 1930s right through to today. I am lucky enough to have some modern reproduction Art Deco costume jewellery brooches which I enjoy wearing. The real thing is way out of my league with the use of diamonds in platinum settings. They go for thousands of pounds and dollars.

I hope you 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. As I said last month, 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 September meeting as I am a crime fiction fan. Hence Susan Parry's talk on her Yorkshire Dales Mystery Series really appeals to me.

Bye for now

Julie

Photo overleaf: Dusk by VV Kuby

It's Your Forum

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All editors receive all contributions and share the email account.

NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

We are very grateful for all your contributions. Wherever possible, we will try as editors to include your work, and also urge you to be succinct. The more succinct you are the more photos, illustrations and interesting articles and silliness we can include! 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: October 13th and next month's editor is Tony. 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
- Back copies are in the u3a file in the Library or in The Witham Shop.

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MONTHLY MEETING

Jane Harrison, one of our own members, was the speaker at the August meeting. Her topic was 'Inca and Pre-Hispanic Cultures in Peru'.

Early archaeological records indicate that people had settled in Peru by 15,000 years ago. Humans had travelled from the Siberia area to North America when sea levels were lower and spread south. Settlements were beginning to be established from about 7,000 to 6,000 BCE. From about 3,500 BCE, animals such as llamas, alpacas and guinea pigs were being domesticated. Maize was cultivated from about 3,000 BCE, indicating that people were becoming settled. With the growth of settlements, society became more hierarchical and ceremonial activities increased. Advanced engineering was used, particularly for terraced landscaping and for irrigation. Incas were amazing road and bridge builders and it is estimated that they built 40,000 km of roads. Agricultural produce was very varied including a huge variety of potatoes. The study of astronomy provided a very precise agricultural calendar.

There were many deities, particularly the sun god, considered the father of the Sapa Inca, the divinely appointed ruler with absolute power. Royal rulers were mummified after death. Very fine textiles were produced with intricate designs and rich colours made from natural dyes. Music was important and Pan's pipes were a feature. Pottery was handmade as the potter's wheel had not been invented. Much of it was decorated, e.g. with fish, animals, reedboats, and abstract work. Metalwork included the skilled use of gold and silver. Copper and bronze were available but not iron. Some earrings were very large and the Spanish called the Incas 'Big Ears'. Fine metalwork was also used for funereal purposes.

The Inca Empire grew to include what are now parts of Ecuador, Chile, Bolivia and Argentina. There was no written language but extensive use of quipus which was a sophisticated recording system made from fibre cord and knots and used for many purposes, including accounting. The primary language was Quechua which spread throughout the empire and is still spoken. Inca architecture could be on a grand scale, e.g. Machu Picchu, using enormous stone blocks which fitted perfectly together and made without the use of iron tools.

The conquest by the Spanish in 1532/1533 brought an end to the Inca Empire although there is evidence that it was already in decline.

Jane gave an excellent presentation, full of fascinating details and we are all now booking our holidays to Peru.

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.

2026 calendars will be on sale at September monthly meeting until Christmas, cost £7.50. Theme 'Reflections and Shadows.'

23-10-2025 Richard Annis. Crowtrees, Bowburn

Lost Industry- Excavation beside the A1 Richard Annis is a retired Senior Archaeologist with Archaeological Services Durham University.

The excavation beside the A1 for Amazon revealed remains of a thriving industry.

27-11-25 Roger Browne (Pianist) The Golden Age of Radio

Roger has entertained us before with musicality and wit.

Please note, there is no monthly meeting in December, as our Members' Christmas Lunch is to be held at The Spotted Dog, High Conniscliffe, on Friday 5th December. Book early to avoid disappointment! For a seat at the table ring Sue Overton 07512 368884.

A PLEA FOR HELP

Charles Dickens Lodge, Barnard Castle

Several members from U3A are volunteers to help run the shop at Charles Dickens Lodge. This involves a minimum of one hour a month, from 11.0 am till 12 noon, weekdays only, excluding Thursday.

Anyone interested in volunteering would have at least two training sessions and must be able to understand the workings of a till!

For more information contact Dorothy Jameson on 01833 637957.

FUTURE WORKSHOPS

Saturday 27th 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 1st November 1- 3pm **Stained glass work: create your own tea light holder.** The workshop is full but if you are interested we will put you on the waiting list.

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

Saturday 13th December 4-6pm, Thorngate, Barnard Castle **Cocktails for Christmas.** Led by the workshop committee.

Saturday 17th January 10-12, Witham Room, The Witham Peter Redgrave will be following up his talk to the Science and Technology Group on *Perks and Perils of AI* with ***A Users Guide to AI.***

Book your place by contacting Sue Overton at the monthly meeting, or by email [sueoverton@ hotmail.com](mailto:sueoverton@hotmail.com) or 07512 368884

DAY TRIPS

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)

FUTURE DAY AND LONGER TRIPS a note from Dorothy Jameson

Cairngorm Travel have now announced the full itinerary for our trip starting on 16th April, 2026. There will be a trip to Ballindalloch Castle and grounds, a cruise on Loch Linnhe, and a day in Nairn. All these are included in the price of the holiday. I know some of the party are keen to visit the House of Bruar, and asked if the bus could drop them off.

Unfortunately, all these trips are going in the opposite direction. It was suggested organising a taxi but it would mean missing one of the lovely included day trips.

There are 31 of us going on the holiday and there are only twin and double rooms now available. Anyone wishing to book has to contact Cairngorm Travel direct on 01405 761 334. Dorothy Jameson

YAHR U3A SUMMER SCHOOL 2025

Report by Jill Darrington and Gavin Roberts

This Summer School has gone from strength to strength since it was started up by the U3A groups in South Yorkshire at a location near Barnsley. They now hold the school at larger premises, the 'UK Home Office Resilience Academy' at Hawkhill, near Easingwold which, being just to the north of York on the A19, is quite accessible from other parts of Yorks and Humber and the North-East. The accommodation is also suitable for participants with mobility issues, although the short distance from the town of Easingwold itself, and the length of the entrance drive, does mean that those without their own transport need to arrive by taxi. There were 120 people in attendance at the 2025 School.

The Summer School is an excellent occasion to socialise with people from other U3A groups – there was a large established contingent from South Yorkshire (Sheffield/Barnsley) and from York City itself, but also members came from other parts of the country such as the South-West and Kent. Many of the participants are regular attendees, year on year. The school offers two full days of tuition with ten different subjects on offer, ranging from cosmology (which was very popular) to Japanese and Spanish studies through to ancient history and the story of democracy/authoritarianism and even improvised drama. For those with the energy there are also optional evening events to attend – a folkdance, a quiz and a lecture. On the final morning there is a ‘show and tell’ when the individual groups share their learning experience in a plenary session – so a little like being back at work (getting to grips with Powerpoint), but in fact most of the participants make light of the occasion and offer a fun filled ‘skit’ to illustrate their experiences of their chosen subject.

The teaching itself takes place in the annexe of a large Queen Anne period house at Hawkhill, and there is a comfortable and modern accommodation block with en-suite rooms and even a games room.

There are some grounds immediately outside the coffee lounge with attractive flower-beds, and over lunch or in the evening one can stroll further afield in the quite extensive woodland plantations on the estate. The Georgian town of Easingwold itself however would be about a mile away across field-side paths, but there is also a welcoming bar area in Hawkhill House which is open for socialising at the end of the day.

One can attend the school as a day delegate but most people stay over, so they can be part of the social atmosphere, and the food is second to none (Yorkshire portions) with a range of meat, fish and veggie options.

Jill decided to study the 60’s – see below

The course was called My Generation – study of Art, Culture and Literature in the 1960s. We were looking at a time of change from the beginning to the end of the decade. There were a lot more opportunities for people as the decade went on and people had more freedom to do as they pleased. More opportunities were given to women, for example, when the contraceptive pill was introduced initially to married women only, and the Abortion Act which followed. The women at Dagenham Ford went on

strike for equal pay in 1968 and in 1970 the Equal Pay Act was introduced.

We were looking forward to the 70s rather than back to the years just after the war. We looked at Labour and the scientific revolution which is referenced as the “white heat of technology” speech by Harold Wilson. He seems to be referring to another world when he says :

“For the commanding heights of British industry to be controlled today by men whose only claim is their aristocratic connections or the power of inherited wealth or speculative finance is as irrelevant to the 20th century as would be the continued purchase of Commissions in the armed forces by lordly amateurs”. I love this quote – it really paints a picture! He stresses the need to move forward. It was an exciting time to live through as anything seemed possible.

There were great changes in music during the decade from Chubby Checker doing the Twist - which would have been amazing at the time - to the Beatles and Bob Dylan going electric.

Fashion was important at this time. Audrey Hepburn sported the little black dress in *Breakfast at Tiffanys*, Diana Rigg wore a leather cat suit in *The Avengers*, Mary Quant designed Hotpants. At the other end of the scale, tie-dye and the hippy look came in culminating in Glam Rock arriving in 1970. BIBA opened and I remember a school trip from Sheffield supposedly to the Natural History Museum, when we spent all our time in BIBA! I don't know how we got away with it! I remember it being very dark, and therefore very exciting!

We studied *Billy Liar* by Keith Waterhouse (not my cup of tea) then went on to *The L Shaped Room* by Lynn Reid Banks which was much more interesting. The poets we studied were Philip Larkin and Seamus Heaney, both active in the 60s, and the artists studied were Graham Sutherland and David Hockney. The tutor we had made it fun and we all contributed to the sessions.

At the end of our show and tell we prepared a list of all legislation passed during this time and a very funny skit on *The L Shaped Room*. It was an excellent course and the only advice I would give would be to take a cushion as there is a lot of sitting down – and try not to eat too much - the food was excellent.

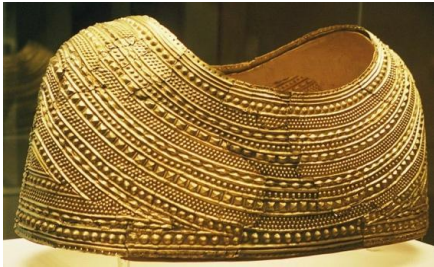
GROUP REPORTS

ART APPRECIATION GROUP – Report by Tony Seward

Continuing our tour of the so-called 'Celtic fringe' (how Anglo-centric can you get!), we turned our attention to the history of Welsh art. This has been well served by a comprehensive and engaging BBC series, fronted by Huw Stephens. For convenience, 'Welsh' art is defined very broadly as: art located in Wales; art commissioned by Welsh patrons, produced by non-Welsh artists living in Wales or depicting Welsh subjects; and, post-1700, art by native Welsh artists.

The series is in three hour-long episodes. The first begins with an impressive passage burial chamber on Anglesey, dating from around 3000 BC. It features mysterious zigzag and circle patterns carved into the rock, possibly expressing belief in an eternal cycle of birth, death and rebirth. We then move on to the Bronze Age, and the stunning 3000-year-old Mold Cape, finely wrought in pure gold.

The Mold Gold Cape, c.1900-1600 BC (British Museum)



Found near Wrexham, it is now in The British Museum and was one of Neil MacGregor's choices for his ground-breaking History of the World in 100 Objects. It is powerful evidence of the sophistication of the society which produced it. After some discussion of the mysterious Celtic 'triskele', still widely used as a symbol of Welsh identity, we entered more familiar territory with the dawn of Christianity and all that followed from its beginnings in Wales.

Triskele: Iron Age bronze plaque, c.200 BC-50 CE, (Amgueddfa Cymru/Museum Wales)



By its very nature, the new religion was a unifying force, so it is difficult to

identify much that was unique to Wales in its artistic expression. We were however treated to the splendid illuminated manuscript known as the St Chad's Gospel, now in Lichfield Cathedral, an array of Celtic crosses, and a majestic carving, made from a single oak trunk, of the patriarch Jesse with the tree of his descendants sprouting from his side.

The later medieval period was marked by the emergence of wealthy patrons with the means to commission work from the leading masters of the time.

One of these was Sir John Donne (not to be confused with the later poet) whose lovely triptych by Hans Memling features a striking portrait of himself as donor.

The Donne Triptych, (detail), c.1478, (National Gallery, London)



After him came the powerful Herbert family, Dukes of Pembroke based at Powys Castle, who were courtiers, poets and major patrons of the arts.

The programme ended with a brief taster for Episode Two, whose starting point will be the emergence of a distinctive Welsh school of art after 1700.

AUTOMOTIVE GROUP – Report by Peter Colley

The group has enjoyed a variety of activities over the summer.



We enjoyed being hosted by the Teesdale Motor Club at the Dalemmain Classic Car Show near Ullswater where a wonderful cross section of vintage and late 20th century vehicles were on display in glorious surroundings and sunshine.

Several members attended the British Touring Car Championship at Croft that showcased wheel to wheel racing at its finest. Later in the month we attended the Battle of Britain day

at Croft. This was a family friendly outing where we were amazed at the sidecar racing. Crazy doesn't do it justice!

Many thanks to colleagues from the Photography group for their excellent pictures. This is one of the sidecars in action. Members may or may not be interested in the vacancies available in the race teams for 'passengers!'

Credit for the Automotive news in August's Forum goes to David Yeadon who celebrated his 81st birthday on our July trip. We are often mistaken for one another!

BIRDWATCHING – Report by Andrew Lapworth

We didn't have a field meeting in August, which is usually one of the quietest months in the birdwatching calendar.

Looking ahead to autumn and winter months many of us will get great pleasure from feeding and watching birds in our own gardens and yards. Blackbirds and Robins will become more noticeable after their July and August weeks spent moulting new feathers preparing them for the colder months. Baby Great and Blue Tits are now at their peak and beginning to explore our gardens once again, as will Sparrowhawks that get to know where they might find a meal. If we're lucky we may get Chaffinches, Greenfinches and Goldfinches coming to our feeding stations.



However, we need to be vigilant. According to the British Trust for Ornithology, Greenfinch numbers declined by 57% between 2012 and 2022; the once very common Chaffinch declined in numbers by 39% between 2012 and 2022. What caused the decline? A disease called **Trichomonosis**, that affects the upper digestive tract of birds (it also affects pigeons and doves and birds of prey). The disease interferes with a bird's ability to swallow, causing them to regurgitate food and water; the parasite is then easily spread to other birds when and where we put out

food in our gardens, especially on flat surfaces such as bird tables and on the ground below feeders.

The RSPB advises we regularly (weekly) clean our feeders, as the parasite can live outside a bird for a few days in regurgitated food or faeces. If we see sick birds (lethargic birds with fluffed-up feathers), the advice is to clean our feeders and stop putting out food for 2-4 weeks. This can prevent or slow the spread of diseases. Further research is being done, including on which feeder designs reduce the risk of spreading the disease.

If you do see signs of sick birds in your garden we can help by reporting our observations to **gardenwildlifehealth.org**

As we move into Autumn, as u3a birdwatchers we now look forward further afield to seeing our first winter visitors such as Redwings and Fieldfares from Scandinavia, Blackbirds from Northern Europe, and wild geese and swans around our wetlands and coasts. Maybe even White-tailed and Golden Eagles from the various reintroduction projects; exciting prospects!

ROOM TO READ BOOK GROUP- Review by Ruth Lapworth

***The Offing* by Benjamin Myers**

This book divided our opinion. It was published in 2020 and is the second novel written by Benjamin Myers. *The Offing* is set in the North East just after the Second World War and evokes a sense of place in a very different era. The story revolves around a boy, Robert Appleyard, who leaves his pit village in Co. Durham one summer and walks south towards the sea. He comes across an elderly lady, Dulcie, living with her dog in an isolated ramshackle cottage. They strike up an unusual friendship, with Dulcie providing exotic foods and drink in exchange for the odd jobs Robert undertakes around the property.

While renovating an old studio Robert unearths a collection of poetry by Romy Landau, that provides a window into Dulcie's past. He discovers that the two women had been lovers and Romy had hidden the poems from Dulcie before she committed suicide by drowning in the sea. Eventually Dulcie faces up to the past and decides that the manuscript should be published. It is a commercial success and Robert, finding that

he cannot return to life in his mining village, eventually goes to University and becomes a writer himself.

The Offing in the context of this story is the furthest reach where the sky and sea meet but is also a metaphor for Robert's transition from adolescence to adulthood.

The book split us equally into those who hated it, finding the style of writing profoundly irritating; and those who liked it after an unpromising start. The problem for half of us was the sentimentality and the unlikely nature of the story combined with overblown language and an excessive use of adjectives. The rest of us liked the local setting and the fact that an elderly female mentor was responsible for Robert finding his vocation. We all liked the poems (presumably written by the author) but were often perplexed or annoyed by some of the detail and inaccuracies in Benjamin's long descriptions of the natural world. Due to the book's divisive nature, we had a fairly robust discussion awarding it a score of 3 for book group but only 2 for recommendation to a friend.

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS GROUP – Report by Susan Overton

Good News!!!

The Climate Solutions Group can now offer you a recycling option for disposal of your empty medicine blister packs. As you are probably aware, currently, these cannot be put in your blue recycling bin and must be put in your household waste bin. Landfill is often their final destination!

Recycling blister packs is difficult and costly and we continue to seek financial support for our project but we have now purchased, with the help Teesdale & District Eco Rotary, a Terracycle (www.terracycle.com) waste box specifically for the packs.

Please save your empty blister packs and hand them in to me at a monthly meeting and/or

5 Cecil Road, Barnard Castle DL12 8AL

And if you would like to show your appreciation by giving a small donation towards the purchase of our next waste box, that would be greatly appreciated.

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS FORUM – Report by Kate Bailey

This month we spent time preparing for the forthcoming workshop at Guide HQ on Saturday 27th. We hope you will find time to attend so you can find out more about the many Interest Groups offered by Teesdale u3a (or if you missed it, the final pages of Forum provide all the Convenors contact details for your enquiries).

Members of the Climate Solutions Discussion Group will be in attendance to chat and provide information and raise awareness of our activities. Over the last couple of years we have been working to find practical solutions to local environmental issues, for example by finding alternatives to domestic cleaning products that pollute our rivers and to the plastic packaging of absolutely everything, by discussing practical ways of diverting clothing and blister packs for pills from landfill, and exploring the idea of creating pollinator parks around Barnard Castle. We have all learned from each other's experiences and always focused on the positive things we can all do, individually and collectively, to help nature recover and to reduce our own impacts on the planet.

We also bring our own "Good News" items to each meeting. This month we talked about the company making wine and spirits bottles from recycled paper (stocked in major supermarkets) now plotting to replace plastic and metal paint cans with paperboard pots. In Sussex, Lewes District Council has agreed to recognise the Rights of the River Ouse, paving the way for the Ouse to become the first in England to have its legal rights recognised. In attempts to eradicate bark beetle infestations in commercial forests, both drones and sniffer dogs are being used to identify areas of damage to growing trees.

We learned that 50,000 Wimbledon tennis balls, donated to the Wildlife Trusts, are used to provide safe homes for harvest mice. Species recovery programmes supported by Natural England have led to the Hawksbeard mining bee being seen in East Sussex for the first time in a century, and to a Chough chick fledging and flying in Kent for the first time in 200 years. And in Antarctica, researchers have found that ammonia wafting off the



droppings of 60,000 penguins contributes to the formation of clouds that help to cool down an otherwise rapidly warming continent.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD GROUP - Report by Sue Overton

Phew! That was a REALLY difficult one.....thanks for bringing it Kate! We usually zip through the Times Quick Cryptic as a warm up but no, not with this one! After nearly an hour neither of the two groups of four had completed it and so we resorted to consulting our friend Google and found the answers on 'Danword'. We rallied after a break for much needed caffeine and biscuits and finished the afternoon with a comparatively easy Everyman crossword.

How did you get on with last month's clues? Here are the solutions:-

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

This is an anagram of the first three words indicated by 'mess up'.

Answer: RAGS TO RICHES

Documentation reportedly in small bottles! (6)

This is a homophone clue indicated by the word 'reportedly' Answer: PHIALS

Now try this one:-

Centre of club, I'm bonny airhead (5)

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

DISCUSSION GROUP – Report by Glen Howard

We had some very interesting discussions this month including: information available on You Tube; working into your 80's if you want a long life; suicides on railway lines; ID cards; defending yourself; over half of children not helping at home; gentle parenting; the illegal importation of meat.

New members are always welcome so do give me a ring or text if you are interested in joining us. We meet on the second Friday of each month.

Contact Glen Howard 07975 705816 if you would like to join us

FAMILY HISTORY INTEREST GROUP – Report by Alan Swindale

The September meeting was based on a presentation from Ancestry: [How to get started using ancestry for genealogy research.](#)

Possibly the most prominent Family History website, Ancestry is not cheap at £70 for 6 months for UK records or £100 for 6 months for worldwide coverage. Add £10/month for optional 'Pro' membership which nearly doubles the cost for UK membership for little gain other than ease of use. To gain significantly from membership it is essential to start building a family tree. Ancestry will then provide 'hints' which are records or individuals which may match your family tree. Often these are derived from other members' family trees which match your tree. The payoff is that the hints you accept as relevant automatically attach the details of the records to your family tree. Thus you end up with a fully sourced family tree and other researchers (or yourself in the future) can judge whether your deduced connections are justified.

However, the other members of the group would have seen Pam and Alan frowning at the rather casual attitude in that talk to importing other family trees into your own tree with just a click of a button. A more conservative approach to research is to thoroughly research one possible addition to your tree, form and justify the connection, then add the new individual before moving on to the next hint.

In the next meeting Pam Taylor will give a presentation entitled 'Family History: Tools in Concert'. This will cover the most common research tools and why they are useful and will mention a few others that are geography-specific. There will be a series of questions to answer so that members can use the tools and see how they work in practice so please all bring laptops or their usual devices for the practical element although they can share and work in teams if necessary. It will be held on the second Thursday of October 9th, at 13:30 in Enterprise House.

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

GEOGRAPHY GROUP - Report by Jane Harrison

Our first talk, by Gerald Blake, was about maps of Teesdale. Thousands have been produced over the centuries, whether paper or digital, flat or folded, small scale or large. Many will have been lost.

Early maps are often found in atlases, for example, that published by Christopher Saxton, in 1579. Later, individual “county maps” were printed. Mapping stopped abruptly at the boundary so parts of Teesdale often appeared on maps of North Yorkshire. The idea of a “road map” was first popularised by John Ogilby and widely copied. His atlas, “Britannia”, published in 1675, showed the route from Ferrybridge to Barnard Castle. Many early maps often highlighted influential landowners and their estates. Richard Blome’s map from the 1670s (see photograph) shows the Bishopric of Durham.

Over the centuries surveying and cartographic techniques improved. The creation of the Ordnance Survey in the late 18th century saw an explosion in map making. The earliest ones of Teesdale were large-scale maps of Barnard Castle, at a scale of 120 inches to the mile. By the 1860s maps of Teesdale, at more manageable scales, were available to buy. The 20th century saw the mass production of leisure maps for the area.

As well as topographic maps, there are many thematic maps of Teesdale. These show subjects ranging from geology to turnpike roads and air crash sites. There are also research or working maps, such as those produced by Dr Margaret Bradshaw to show endangered flora and those by Professor David Evans showing glacial geomorphology.

Tim Meacham continued the Teesdale theme, talking about the railway line from Barnard Castle to Middleton-in-Teesdale. This eight mile line opened in 1868 and finally closed to freight in 1966, two years after it closed to passengers.

The line had three intermediate stations at Cotherstone, Romalldkirk and Mickleton and ran across spectacular viaducts at Baldersdale and Lunedale. It had seven branch lines which Tim had researched, explored and photographed. These included Scott’s siding, near Cotherstone, approved in 1884 to serve the construction sites at Hury and Blackton reservoirs. The engine was gradually moved forward on four pieces of track by transferring one section from the back to the front of the train!

Several branch lines served stone quarries, such as those at Middleton, Park End, and Crossthwaite. Two narrow gauge tramways ran to the Lunedale and Greengates quarries from an exchange siding near Lonton.

It was originally proposed to extend the line to Alston, with a station at High Force, but in 1872 the bill was (thankfully) withdrawn by the promoter.

Next meeting: Thursday 16th October. The Witham, at 2pm. Professor Sarah Woodroffe. Sea level change.



HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT – Report by Tim Meacham

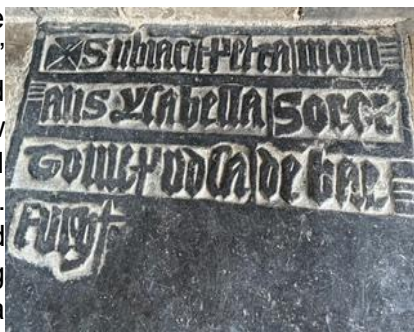
For our third Summer outing we chose Marrick Priory, near Reeth. Currently serving as an outdoor centre established in 1970, the Priory retains enough original features to justify a visit; it has also gained a good reputation for supplying afternoon tea of which our group took full advantage.

The Benedictine nunnery here was established in about 1140 by Roger De Aske, early in the reign of Henry II. For 400 years or so the nuns lived in peace and tranquillity well off the beaten track but supported by an associated lead mining industry until Henry VIII had them evicted as part of his dissolution of the monasteries.

The Prioress, Christabel Cowper, and her 16 nuns mostly returned to their families while Sir John Woodall, once secretary to Anne Boleyn,

purchased the building (for £364 and sixpence) before passing it on to Sir Timothy Hutton of Marske in 1592. The artist Turner visited the area in 1816, producing a well-known watercolour of the Priory. From 1592 until the 19th century the building changed hands many times, depending on the state of the local lead mining industry, until the final decline of mining locally saw the 'priory' (latterly a parish church) abandoned at about the end of WW2. After sympathetic restoration it reopened 20 or so years later as a residential centre for outdoor pursuits, with its brewery and other associated outbuildings becoming a separate farm.

We started our tour outside in the ruined remains of the early Priory (probably 13th century) which adjoined a later building famed as 'The Coffin House'; this was found to contain a hearse dating from 1828 which is now restored and on display at Beamish. The historical highlight of the visit however was the restored (in about 1811) priory church, dedicated to St Andrew and filled with intriguing inscriptions which give rise to more questions than answers. In the nave, near the modern entrance, is a black marble gravestone with a Latin inscription reading 'Here lies Isabella de Sorez, Countess of Richmond, who has departed' (thanks to Ian Reid for locating this translation). The only other information I could find was that Isabella was one of the nuns of the priory, and sister of Thomas de Pudsay, of Barforth; elsewhere I have found recorded one 'Thomas of Pudsay' who was apparently alive in the mid 1300s. Equally intriguing is a carving, now on the floor by the altar, of the arms and sword of the founder, Sir Roger de Aske. It is believed that this carving once stood upright elsewhere in the building. Moving to more recent times, high on the wall is a



tablet to the memory of "Mr. Thomas Fawcett, of Oxque, in this parish, who died in 1783, a celebrated cultivator of bees, for which he received many testimonies from the Society in London for the encouragement of Arts and Sciences."

We dined where the nuns dined, next door to the Prioress's house. The 1970 restoration here has retained some important features of the early buildings and as a bonus the afternoon tea was absolutely delicious – and there was lots of it! We finished our visit by climbing the first section of the

'Nuns' Steps', a paved way by which the sisters reached the village of Marrick on the hill above the Priory. This was a very different visit to any we have done before, but a most memorable one thanks mainly to the current staff who went out of their way to make us welcome.



iPAD and iPHONE GROUP – Report by Mike Sweeting

After 4 years of sessions of gradually increasing complexity, we have decided to go back to basics. We reviewed the gestures used to move around the screen and to access the Control Centre, Notifications and Search screens.

Silencing the phone, Aircraft mode options and the useful torch were reviewed. We also went through the various settings and functions within the mobile phone service settings, including keeping control of data usage and using WiFi calling.

For the future we will continue to spend time on the basics as well as covering more advanced topics. Please note that there will be no further meetings until 27 January 2026.

LUNCH CLUB – Report by Jane Mathieson

In August the lunch group tried out a new venue, The Crosskeys Inn at Eppleby. We were a group of 15 and had pre-ordered our starters and mains. The most popular starter was the twice baked cheddar cheese and spinach souffle followed by the home-made focaccia with hummus and olives, all were delicious and well presented. The most popular main course was the chargrilled lemon chicken with Greek salad and fries, followed by the sea bass with new potatoes, tenderstem broccoli and shrimps, again the main courses were enjoyed by all.

Most of the group managed a desert and we could choose from the main menu and the specials on the blackboard. The specials were the most popular with the Basque cheesecake with poached raspberries and raspberry sorbet (shown right) and the lemon curd crème brulee being well presented and delicious. The new venue went down well with Members so will be on our list for future visits. In September we are having an early evening meal at the Black Horse in Ingleton. If anyone is interested in joining our friendly group then please contact Kate Keen.



PAINTING GROUP – Report by Martin Paige

A rather poor turn out for this meeting with just the 3 of us. Perhaps the others didn't do their homework or were away on holiday.

Windows in art takes on a different perspective, It's not an operating system for computers but the use of transparency and shading. Following on from the last meeting with painting limes, this time it was apples. Initially there was an exercise in different effects laying one colour over another as opposed to mixing the colours and using the transparency to create a different effect . It is crucial that the first coat base colour is fully dry before laying, not painting the over colour, without re-diluting the base colour. The shading examples use different blends of colours to create a suitable shadow that subtly picks up the tone of the subject linking the shadow to the object rather than an after-thought.



PHILOSOPHY GROUP – Report by Pete Redgrave

Consciousness is hard

In 1994 David Chambers coined the term ‘hard problem of consciousness’ – why activity in the brain can give rise to 1st person subjective experiences. In the August meeting we reviewed some of the suggestions advanced to address this conundrum. The key debate is between Physicalists and the Anti-Physicalists. An anti-physicalist would be Rene Descartes (the guy who *was* because he *thought*) who argued consciousness is an immaterial mental substance (soul) that somehow interacts with the brain. Sadly, there was no suggestion of how it might, even in principle.

More recently, Chambers proposed consciousness is an emergent non-physical property of certain physical systems, e.g. the brain. Again, there is no suggestion of how the immaterial might interact with the material.

On the other hand, Physicalists think since the universe is made of physical stuff consciousness must emerge from specific arrangements of it, e.g. the brain. Computational functionalism holds that consciousness depends more on what the physical stuff does – computational algorithms – independent of implementing hardware, or wetware (e.g. the brain). That consciousness might be a software issue suggests one day machine intelligence could have some form of consciousness.

Despite these suggestions, Chambers' hard problem remains unresolved. No current ideas can explain *how* 1st person subjective experience arises from workings of the brain. Daunted by this, Colin McGinn (1989) thought the hard problem of consciousness may be unsolvable by human minds, in the same way a dog is unable to grasp the finer points of quantum physics – in that I'm with the dog!

However, undeterred by McGinn's pessimistic view, consciousness is being actively investigated both by neuroscientists and the artificial intelligence community. For example, quantitative measures of how neural activity propagates in the brain correlate well with levels of consciousness (coma, anaesthesia, vegetative state, slow wave sleep, dreaming sleep, conscious wakefulness).

Finally, we discussed signs of neural activity being both sufficient and necessary for subjective experience to 'emerge'. For example, ambiguous figures can provide insights into how the brain models the external world. Here the brain constructs two subjectively plausible models from the sensory input – two black faces or a white vase in the illustration. As the neural processing of one model fatigues, our subjective perception of the sensory input switches automatically to the other model – an oscillation that cannot be prevented volitionally.

In September's meeting Pete Redgrave will continue the theme of Consciousness with reference to AI.

On Tuesday October 28th Ray Lee will lead us in Natural Philosophy. All welcome.

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP – Report by Pete Redgrave

U3A Photography Group meeting September 2025 – Report by Alan Kenwright; Photographs by Anne Newton, Pete Redgrave, and Alan Kenwright.

In September the photography group visited the Low Barns nature reserve, just outside Witton-le-Wear. It turned out that the chosen date was not convenient for a number of our members, but a dedicated core of 4 photographers made the trip and were rewarded with pleasant sunshine and early autumn colours. (Is it just me, or does autumn seem to have

come early this year?) We were hoping for flocks of flamingos and a white-tailed eagle or two, but it seemed as though many of the birds had other things to do that day too. We did see some ducks and swans, as well as a couple of egrets. But no matter. There were plenty of other interesting subjects to photograph in the dappled light as we enjoyed a gentle stroll and an interesting discussion on “spot metering”. So, a good time was had by all concerned.



POETRY GROUP – Report by Robert Alabaster

WAR!

Q. What is it good for?

A. Absolutely Nothing!

This month the poetry group considered the theme of ‘Protest’. Protest rages against many targets...especially against the insanity and destruction of people, land and human values arising from armed conflict...

So it was perhaps not surprising that several poems focused on the subject of war.

Other themes:

Maya Angelou wrote on behalf of the enslaved and downtrodden everywhere: the caged bird sings not through joy but in spite of its harsh captivity:

“the caged bird sings of freedom”.

Denise Levertov writes of the struggle to champion the human spirit against Tyranny and Oppression.

“I have no vocation to join the nameless great,
only to say to others, Watch! Hear them!
Through them alone
We keep our title, *human*”

William Blake rages against the destruction of nature and the enslavement of man in the modern industrial world. He focuses on the squalid back streets of Georgian London where poverty, vice and squalor seem doomed to persist forever.

Dylan Thomas rages on a more personal level...

at the prospect of a father's death:

“do not go gentle into that good night
old age should burn and rave at close of day
rage, rage against the dying of the light”

And so to war...in song and in poem:

Bob Dylan shows contempt for The Masters of War:

“You that never done nothin’
But build to destroy
you play with my world
like it's your little toy”

Billy Joel describes the pointless brutality of war:

“remember Charlie
remember Baker
they left their childhood
on every acre
and who was wrong
and who was right
it didn't matter

in the thick of the fight”

Siegfried Sassoon mourns the theft of youth and laughter

“you smug-faced crowds with kindling eye

who cheer when soldier lads march by

sneak home and pray you’ll never know

the hell where youth and laughter go”

Ray Lee describes the surreal, grotesque choreography of the configuration of seating plans in the comfortable surroundings of peace talks far removed from the death and destruction of battle and Graham Nash pleads for change

“we can change the world

rearrange the world

it’s dying

to get better”

(Editor’s note: another poem by Ray can be found on page 41.)

SCRABBLE GROUP – Report by Ray Thompson

11th August 2025

There were 5 of us this month who met at Jeanette’s house, so we decided to stay in one group to play. Jeanette, Lillian, Monica, Paula and Ray made up the group. The games were shorter but entertaining. Jeanette won this first game with a score of 156, including a turn when she made 5 words in one turn, which scored 33 points. Lillian won the second game with a score of 123. We then stopped for refreshments of tea, coffee, a homemade Guinness cake and biscuits. Our last game was won by Paula with a score of 124.

Thank you to Jeanette for hosting us, and for the delicious cake. Our next meeting is at Judith’s on 8th September, if you would like to join us please call Judith on 01833 650150.

SPANISH CONVERSATION – Report by Michael Harris

We are back and we have grown!

If you would like to stutter your way through rusty Spanish for an hour or indeed practice your fluency to help the rest of us along the way. Then please join us at the Bowes Cafe at 10am on Wednesday October 1st.

Or, ring/text Michael Harris 07799051389
email:harris.potter10@gmail.com

Muchas Gracias

Nos vemos pronto!

TABLE TENNIS GROUP – Report by Peter Singer



A recent city break to “wonderful, wonderful Copenhagen” proved an extremely enjoyable, if far from cheap experience. Perhaps “salty old queen of the sea” (pace Danny Kaye) doesn’t quite capture the contemporary buzz of colourful canal-side buildings, excellent restaurants, art galleries and museums and a wide selection of tasty craft beers (marginally less pricey than wine), but maybe “a welcome so warm and gay” is nearer the mark. Highly recommended.

Anyway, we came away with a definite feeling of “hygge” (pronounced something like hoo-ger), defined as “a quality of cosiness and comfortable conviviality that engenders a feeling of contentment or well-being”. The term would apply equally, of course, to our table tennis group. The main hall of the leisure centre on a Friday afternoon positively vibrates with hygge, as our very sociable and friendly members exchange pleasantries, health reports, reading choices and holiday plans etc. as well as playing a few games. At the tables, the hygge is perhaps a little more elusive, when a more competitive streak creeps in, winning shots are celebrated and mis-hits bemoaned loudly. Nevertheless, we all get on well and generally enjoy the sessions, however well or badly we may have played.

With regard to improving our play, table tennis guru Ben Larcombe offers some advice on how to play aggressively at 50+ (obviously advanced years in table tennis terms, although many of us can barely remember such halcyon youth!). The key points are: stay very close to the table (phew, that’s an easy one); have a strong serve (mmm! Maybe try harder

on this); attack early in the point (well, we rarely manage long rallies anyway) and be aggressive in defence (although he uses the dreaded American spelling of “defense” and perhaps easier said than done). So, that’s wrapped up how to improve our play and over to all our members to start implementing this simple formula next Friday – watch out for fireworks!

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 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

This month we started on a new series “The History of the Symphony”, another BBC production but this time with Simon Russell Beale.

The series presents a radical reappraisal of the place of the symphony in the modern world and explores the surprising way in which it has shaped our history and identity.

Episode One titled “Genesis and Genius” began amidst the turmoil of the French Revolution with the arrival in England of Joseph Haydn, dubbed the ‘Father of the Symphony’.

Haydn was well-known before he arrived in London but it was there that he was at his most productive and some would say, happiest as he was lauded by many strata of society who simply could not get enough of his works. The episode continued with Mozart, the genius who wrote his first symphony at the age of eight but though well regarded never quite achieved the acclaim he deserved in his lifetime and though he has at least 41 symphonies to his name, few of them, if any, are as well known or as often played as those of Beethoven, the revolutionary who created the idea of the artist as hero and whose Eroica Symphony changed music for ever.

The next episode “Beethoven and Beyond” looks at the later works of Beethoven before looking at Schubert, Berlioz and Liszt.

In the second part of the meeting Simon Callow was in Norway when he looked at the work and life of Norway's best-known composer, Edvard Grieg. Grieg earned his living as a renowned concert pianist of his own and others' works but always returned to Bergen where he felt most at home and at peace with the world. He was fully absorbed with all aspects of Norwegian culture and wrote his famous Peer Gynt suite to accompany the play of Henrik Ibsen.



Grieg was one of the first composers to have his own performance of his own work recorded on 78rpm records.

Grieg's House, now the Grieg Museum in Troldhaugen, Bergen. [Wikipedia]

We plan to continue with the History of the Symphony and explore other musical cities next month at 10:00 on Friday 26 September at Startforth Community Centre.

WILDFLOWER GROUP - Report by Anne Thomson

Due to the intense heat on Wednesday, 11th August our wildflower walk along Ramshaw Railway was postponed to the following Wednesday, 20th August when 6 of us identified 40 flowers on a considerably cooler day.

We identified some that were unusual or new to us - Sticky Groundsel, Common Hemp-nettle, Black Nightshade, Bird's Eye Speedwell, Common Toadflax and Common lambsquarters.

We also came across Sweet Alyssum which is a wild flower but is more commonly cultivated as a garden plant. A complete list of the flowers identified has been sent to the Group members.

Our September walk is, again, a railway meeting at Mickleton railway station car park. Please contact the Convenor for more details of future walks or the Group in general.



WINE GROUP – Report by Tim Meacham



For the third year running, the Wine Group visited a local North-Eastern Wine Estate. This year it was the turn of the Robin Hood's Bay Vineyard, a relative newcomer to the area but owned by the longer-established Holmfirth Vineyard. Set up in 2017 the Robin Hood's Bay offshoot produced its first set of wines as recently as 2022. The owners are Ian and Rebecca Sheveling, both of whom greeted us cheerfully (a contrast from last year's vineyard visit elsewhere in Yorkshire!), with Ian leading us on a fascinating tour of the vineyard.

Happily, the promised rain failed to materialise as Ian took us through the short history of the site. The couple were looking to expand their Holmfirth base but decided instead to bid for a big farm situated on the hillside on the edge of Robin Hood's Bay village. On the higher area of the site they have planted their Solaris (white wine) grapes with the Rondo (rose and red wine) grapes on the lower levels, as these require warmer and less windy conditions. Drawing on their Holmfirth experiences, they have restricted their plantings to these two grapes. Ian told many humorous stories about the vicissitudes of setting up UK vineyards but mixed these up





with a wealth of interesting detail. We all survived the long and steep climb back to the tasting area where we sampled four wines including their very first batch of sparkling rose. My favourite was the medium/dry Rondo rose which seemed more complex than its dry counterpart. We left happy and aware for the first time that the Rondo grape is one of the few that naturally produces red juice (rather than needing red skins to provide the colouring).

Throw in a very tasty lunch at the beautifully-situated Victoria Hotel, and the excellent driving and company of Alan, our favourite UTASS volunteer driver, and we had, in my opinion at least, the best of our three visits so far to North-Eastern vineyards. Highly recommended for a visit.

WIMMIN SWIMMIN' GROUP - Report by Annie Clouston

Wimmin Swimmin has certainly become a thing! Look at the merch...a recent birthday has brought a crop of cards and these stunner-socks – unimaginable a few years ago. It's a bit like wimmin cyclin' – three years ago it was hardly possible to find a picture on a birthday card of a lass on a



serious bike with a ferociously competitive glint in her eye. Now they're almost as available as those of lads in lycra.

Our wimmin swimmers are enjoying their peaceful pooltime, some even finding their zen. But I'd like to give a shout-out to our Shirley, star of the TM and the telly in her role as volunteer driver.

However, in our context she is indispensable, a one-time swim coach, she gives very helpful support and advice to everyone on the continuum of timid to confident swimmers, before launching herself up the

pool resplendent in snorkel and flippers. Our grateful thanks Shirley, it wouldn't be the same without you.

Swimming is very beneficial as all round non-load bearing exercise and our sessions aim to make everyone feel safe and relaxed. We would welcome any woman who wants to give it a go.

Ruth and Sue will be there to greet you at our next session on Saturday 27 September from 3-4. Two further sessions have been booked for 25 October and 22 November. Meanwhile, I'm off to Turkey for a meet-up with other swimmin' wimmin, this time for a week-long festival of swims in the warm (25C), turquoise, and deliciously salty waters of the Med.

Carpe Diem!

WALKING GROUPS



SHORTER WALKS - Report by Liz Colley

Hutton Magna to Wycliffe

Starting on the village green in Hutton Magna we visited the first of three churches on this walk. You enter the churchyard of St Mary's Hutton Magna through a lychgate built by the famous 'Mouseman' Robert Thompson, whose work we also encounter further on in our walk.



There are beautiful views towards Stainmore and we were fortunate to have a good day for walking, not too hot, which it had been the previous week. Eleven members joined this walk as we left the church and walked down the village to pick up the footpath through Hutton Hall Farm. Taking the footpath which follows alongside Hutton Beck around the field margins of fields already harvested. Some fields had been harvested since I had done the recce the week before and I learnt from one of our walkers who had been a farmer that the crop I had thought to be rapeseed was a bean probably grown as animal feed.

On reaching the road that leads to Whorlton and Thorpe Farm we crossed over to take a footpath that leads down through the woods to our second church of St Mary's in Wycliffe. This is such an interesting church with Saxon origins. It is closely associated with John Wycliffe, the fourteenth century theologian who produced the first English translation of the bible and whose parents are buried here. This church is where we came across more of 'Mouseman' Robert Thompson's work as he produced all the wooden furniture in the church, there are several mice to be found. I can recommend a visit to this church as there is so much history to be explored here.



Our walk then headed up the very narrow lane out of Wycliffe, fortunately timing it so that we were away before three very large tractors with massive trailers came through. We returned to Hutton Magna along the very quiet Green Lane, observing the passing of the summer - blackberries already ripening and the leaves starting to turn. This lane takes you past the third St Mary's Catholic church between Wycliffe and Hutton Magna, built in 1849. Then it leads back into the village.

4-6 MILE WALKING GROUP – Report by Nicky Grace



We met on a warm day following rain so that in the morning there was a heavy mist and I could not see the end of the garden. Luckily by the time ten of us met up at Hanging Shaw the sun had come through, the mist had cleared but it was humid. We crossed from the car park in Forest in Teesdale to walk down to the Tees and picked up the Pennine Way beside the Tees.

The wild flowers including devil's bit scabious, meadowsweet, grass of parnassus, and knapweed made a colourful display which was enjoyed by many butterflies, mainly Peacock and Red Admiral. Having navigated several stone stiles, we reached Saur Bridge and crossing Harwood Beck we walked towards Widdybank Farm, admiring mountain pansies en route. We stopped for a welcome coffee break overlooking the Tees, just before the farm. To the call of curlew and lapwing we walked back along the track joining the road to Harwood briefly. Returning beside the beck we reached Saur Bridge again and returned to our cars on the same outbound path. It was a lovely amble of circa 5 miles in beautiful Upper Teesdale.

4-6 MILE WALKING GROUP – Report by Lynda Bares

Seven of us met up near the CB Inn for a 5.8 mile walk in Arkengarthdale in nearly perfect walking weather. Initially we dropped down to Arkle beck, then walked next to the beck through pastureland to Whaw Bridge, there we started to climb, firstly through a wooded area then fields, getting steeper as we climbed up onto Kitley Hill, where we met a track



that meandered along the fells to High Faggergill farm. Here we started our return, through fields and moorland, stopping on the way down for a drink and a quick bite to eat (many thanks to our new member who brought cake!). Then back to Whaw and backtracking a short while before crossing the beck on the new, improved, bridge, and following the beck down on the northern side and a brief road walk back to the cars.



Finishing off in the CB Inn for a friendly drink/chat.

A walk with very varied scenery but including 200m of ascent, which we took at a gentle pace. Various sightings of birds and good weather, a great day out.

7-9 MILE WALKING GROUP – Report by Chris Burton

20/8/2025- Lower Wensleydale

A group of twelve keen walkers met in Leyburn market place. Proceeding west out of the town, up onto ‘The Shawl’, a grassy promenade created by the Victorians, with super views of Wensleydale and Penn Hill.

Through ancient woodland, passing abandoned lead and iron ore works and on to Preston Under Scar. After walking the length of this pretty Dales village, we “diced with death”, crossing the Wensleydale Railway Line (perhaps not, with an average of about 3 trains a week!)

Redmire village was our lunchtime location. The return leg via country lanes, woodland and pasture, took us through “Bolton Hall Estate“. The seat of Baron Bolton, formerly the Dukedom of Bolton.

The original route from Wensley to Leyburn, was waived due to a large herd of cows with calves in a small field. The alternative along the low Middleham Rd /steep cart track, proved a longer, tiring but necessary alternative! All survived the walk of c 9 miles, rewarded with tea and cake in Leyburn.

Our September walk is a 9 mile walk, led by David, following the Wearhead to Westgate loop starting with a steep ascent but ending

alongside the River Wear. On October 15 Alan will be leading a walk starting between Stanhope and Blanchland.

Please let Nicky Grace know if you are interested in coming along on nickygrace729@gmail.com

FELL WALKING GROUP – July - Report by Phil Clarke

We met over in Wensleydale in the lovely village of Carperby. Fourteen of us met for this varied walk after completely taking over the village hall (honesty box) car park. The first 3 miles were up, up to the top of Carperby Moor where it topped off at just under 1650 ft. We were on shooters' stony tracks with the added knowledge that we were on the James Herriott 15km Trail Race that was being run on the next Sunday. Not surprisingly there were no takers to enter. It is a tough race!!!



The walk became much easier, undulating terrain to where we met a path that took steeply down to the village of Castle Bolton. In my head I had booked a couple of benches for lunch in the village but to no avail, there was a walk challenge on, and the benches were taken by groups 40 years our juniors. Oh well we are hardy souls in Teesdale U3A we had some banter with them, lost out, so just sat on the grass looking at the great views of the castle and further afield.

After lunch the walk took us down to the Ure river valley. After passing the almost finished new build of Hollins House - which was impressive - we arrived at the lower Aysgarth Falls which in my opinion are better than the main Falls. There we walked on limestone pavement almost in the river. A quick stop at the Middle Falls before walking a mile or so over fields back

to Carperby. A walk of real variety just under 11 that turned out to be 12.4 miles. Oops!! Then a great chat and refreshments in the local pub where James and Helen Herriott spent their honeymoon, The Wheatsheaf.

August report by Peter Harding



Ten hearty fell walkers set out on a 10.5 mile hike following in the miners' footsteps. We gathered in Rookhope and discovered that the village hall runs a small café which was open until 4pm. We were pleased to know that as true fell walkers we look forward to that well-earned cuppa at the end

of our walk. Especially as the walk had been described as an adventurous walk in Weardale. It lived up to its billing, but more on that later!

From the Rookhope Inn, we started a gentle ascent before reaching the disused railway track and climbed the Bolt's Law Incline to reach the ruins of the Bolt's Law Standing Engine. The incline has a gradient of 1 in 6, which was too steep for locomotives therefore a stationary steam engine was used to pull, or lower, loaded freight tubs. The Weardale Iron Co built the engine in 1846 and it remained in operation until 1923. From here the iron ore and minerals were transported by train to Tow Law, coal being the return freight. We spent a little time exploring the ruins of the engine house, trying to picture the operation and the working conditions of the miners. We then continued along the disused rail track which is also a part of the Coast to Coast Cycleway and the Pennine Journey. A good track and glorious views, what more could we ask for? On reaching the Parkhead Station to our joy the normally closed Tea/Coffee shop was open, therefore it was decided that this was an excellent stop for lunch.

Once refuelled we continued along the track crossing the B6278 and skirting alongside Heatherby Burn. We all were enjoying the dry weather and the wonderful Weardale scenery, but alas rain arrived, and our wets were put to good use. We were then put to the test as the public footpath had disappeared, or was moved, or no longer existed. Nothing a fell walker hasn't experienced before.

We therefore consulted our maps for an alternative route and after much discussion, and review of several possibilities, we headed for high ground

and a possible trig point. On reaching the trig point our final route was chosen, and we descended by farm track and minor road into Rookhope.

On our return, and consultation of personal trackers, we discovered that we had walked an extra 2 miles and much to our dismay we'd missed the village café. However, a good time was had by all.

The leader would like to thank his fellow walkers for their patience and understanding.

ANOTHER (literally incredible) MONTH IN AMBRIDGE

Before I start my usual irascible rant I thought readers might care to know when this time-wasting habit of radio banality started. It began in the Strand Palace Hotel – not really the hotel but its backside, the staff hostel. Behind us was Covent Garden market and in front the Lyceum ballroom. Me and my mate, innocents from Darlington, had got ourselves jobs chambermaiding in the fleshpots of London. We worked split shifts starting at an hour that I've shunned ever since, stopping for two hours at 1pm, replenishing energy at the canteen and then bolting for our beds for a nap. The soundtrack of our nodding off was The Archers plumbed-in to our noisy roadside billet via Rediffusion. Thus began a 55 year-old tradition of nodding off to the non-eventedness of Ambridge.

And now for catch-up. My two selected targets for derision this week (not counting the scriptwriters) – are Empty Amber, who you will remember is inextricably entwined with Egregious (once Hapless, now Besotted) George the Jailbird, and Utterly Appalling Lawrence, who has featured in a previous chronicle as getting a gold in the Pompous Ass Olympics.

Let's start with my problems with EA – obviously her emptiness is irritating, but not exceptional in the dramatis personae. However now she is off to Turkey to get her teeth veneered so that she can get all the benefits of her trade – influencing – to fund her forthcoming wedding to EG the J. Her teeth appear, to the unsophisticated of Ambridge, to be very good, but for EA's nuptial ambitions (or should that be Amberitions?) they have to be "pahfect". I did have a laugh when she projected her notion of pahfection on to her prospective mother-in-law, Emma, by giving her a voucher for veneers for her birthday. And how preposterous is this match anyway?

Who can imagine that someone who can say “Yoegah! I absolutely lav yoegah!” can possibly last with a Grundy?

Then there’s UAL whose absurd caricature is worthy of a sit-com – think the opposite of Alf Garnett in social class if not in prejudices. He has suddenly become centre stage in some kind of attempt to make the Archers wokewise. Both racist and sexist, he has become the latest Ambridge Sir Jasper.

The question I posed from The Bull’s Quiz Book must have been too hard, for no answers arrived. Here is an easier one: *In 1951 when Dan Archer bought his first tractor, which of his horses did he sell to Walter Gabriel?*

Answer to last month’s brainteaser: Neil Carter (of course).

Coffee and Chat

Coffee and Chat

Thursday 9 October 2.30-3.30 Winters Cafe, Middleton in Teesdale

Thursday 13 November 2.30-3.30 Cotherstone Community Cafe

NOT TO BE MISSED!

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Autumn Snapshot by Ray Lee

The September woodland
Is pine dense
But intruded by the occasional
Broadleaf tree.
Other pushy species
Are scarce.
Mainly shrivelled
And untroubled by light.
The soil is many shades of brown
But odd patches of sunlight
Flicker
A scant and random pattern
Dictated by the wind.
In the treetops
Sunlight
Strokes occasional leaves.
Brilliantly
Each favoured leaf
Glow transiently and shivers
As if stealthy autumn
Has made it insecure.

Ray's collection of 100 poems ***Just a Snowy Scene*** is published by Amazon. Ray is a Teesdale u3a member.

Group	Meeting Time	Contact details
Android Group	1 st Thurs pm	Martyn Radcliffe 07975 970088
Art Appreciation	1 st Wed pm	Tony Seward 01833 630050
Automotive	3 rd Tues am	Peter Colley 01833 695197
Birdwatching	3 rd Mon am	Andrew Lapworth 07962 038052
Board Games	2 nd Mon pm	Hazel McCallum 01833 316484
Book Group 2	2 nd Mon pm	Maggie Cleminson 01833 640801
Book Group 3 Room to Read	3 rd Wed am	Annie Clouston 01833 637091
Chess	1 st Thurs pm	Diana Marks 07762 626912
Climate Solutions	1 st Thurs am	Kate Bailey 07867 683195
Creative Writing	1 st Wed 7pm	Martyn Radcliffe 07975 970088
Crochet (2 groups)	3 rd Thursday pm 4 th Monday pm	Hazel McCallum
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
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 Conversation	3 rd Thurs 10am	Michael Harris 07799 051389
Table Tennis	Every Fri 3pm	Peter Singer 07508 663998
Theatre	Varies	Elizabeth Formstone 07979 204212
Travel & day trips	Varies	Jane Mathieson 07591 095765
Understanding Classical Music	4 th Fri 10am	Ian Royston 07818 046938

Wildflower Group	2 nd Wed 2pm	Anne Thomson 07928 594404
Wimmin' Swimmin'	Saturdays monthly	Sue Overton 07512 368884
Wine Group	3 rd Tues pm	Tim Meacham 07847 182554
Walking Groups		
Shorter walks 3-4ml	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

Highlights at your Community Arts Centre

Sat 27 Sept 7.30pm	FOLK MUSIC – Edwina Hayes
Wed 1 Oct 7.30pm	FOLK MUSIC – The Breath, supported by Basset Manchester-based guitarist Stuart McCallum and singer/flautist Rioghnach Connolly.
Thurs 2 Oct 7.30pm	THEATRE – The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde & The Body Snatcher (11+)
Tues 7 Oct 7.30pm	SOUL MUSIC – The Three Degrees
Wed 8 Oct 7.30pm	R & B MUSIC – Dr. Feelgood: Doctors Orders Anniversary Tour
Fri 10 Oct 7.30pm	COMEDY – Nick Helm: No One Gets Out Alive (16+)
Sat 11 Oct 7.30pm	TRIBUTE – Abba Sensation
Wed 15 Oct 7.30pm	FOLK MUSIC – Fairport Convention
Thurs 16 Oct 7.00pm	FILM: The Penguin Lessons Starring Oscar nominee Steve Coogan
Fri 17 Oct 7.30pm	CELEBRITY NIGHT OUT – Annabel Croft: From Tennis Balls to Glitter Balls
Sat 18 Oct 7.30pm	POP MUSIC – Bay City Rollers
Tues 21 Oct 6.45pm	LIVE SCREENING – Royal Ballet & Opera – The Metropolitan Opera: La Sonnambula
Tues 21 Oct 7.30pm	COMEDY – Connor Burns: Gallus (16+)