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FORUM

November 2025

No. 25/11

u3a

CHAIR'S LETTER

Dear Friends

Here we are in November with the days getting shorter, the clocks having gone back, and snow is in the forecast, following a fairly mild month so far. I have spent the afternoon cutting back madly in the garden and have filled all four of my garden waste sacks ready for a trip to the recycling centre.

It has been a busy U3A month. The 60s/70s social evening was enjoyed by all who attended. I was very impressed by the amazing outfits people had put together. The wigs, both hired, bought and made were a triumph and several had me fooled for a while, before I recognised their wearers. As for the dancing, the floor was mainly full for nearly every dance, and the bands were great at playing all the songs we knew.

In November I was one of the lucky members who attended the glass workshop where we spent a very creative afternoon on our glass projects.



As someone who struggles with drawing and painting this was straight up my street with glue, glass beads and pieces. Our creations have gone off to be fired in the kiln, and I cannot wait to see the finished result

Unfortunately, I will not be at the November meeting as I am off south to the Midlands to visit family and celebrate my birthday, another year, another ache and

another wrinkle 😊. I hope you will all enjoy Roger Browne (Pianist) talking about “The Golden Age of Radio”. I look forward to hearing all about it on my return.

Bye for now, Julie

Cover photo: Autumn Tints on the Tees, Elizabeth Hatchell

It's Your Forum

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

This month's editor is Kate : Edition No: 25/11

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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: 6pm Monday 12th January 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
- Asking a friend to collect one for you at the meeting - the cost is £2 on a 'first come first served' basis.
- Back copies are available online and also at Coffee and Chat events.

www.teesdaleu3a.org.uk

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MONTHLY MEETING – Report by Celia Chapple

A Lost Rural Industry: Excavation beside the A1

It was a full house for our October monthly meeting when Richard Annis FSA, retired Senior Archaeologist with Archaeological Services at Durham University, gave an illustrated and informative talk on the lost industrial brick sites in County Durham.

Richard began by showing some C19th and C20th century maps and more recent aerial photography indicating how widespread the brick sites were. Some of the villages, farm names and field titles have changed. For example, on an 1819 map, Bowburn (neighbouring Crowtrees Farm) didn't exist; an 1850 Ordnance Survey map clearly shows Crowtrees Farm with evidence of extensive buildings, and a 2008 aerial photograph shows formed brown grass patches indicating past activity. In 1839, evidence shows that the Burkett family owned the Crowtrees site.



The company, Amazon, applied to build a distribution warehouse on the Crowtrees site, and due to the existing archaeological evidence, Amazon was required to pay for a full survey.

Image supplied by ADS (Archaeological Data Services)

At first, shallow trenches uncovered 'wasters', useless broken bits of brick and tile. Deeper trenches discovered clay pipelines, a T-shaped building, moulding workshop and two driving sheds. Such clamp firings leave telltale black areas on the soil. Onsite clay was used and layers of green bricks

(unfired) and coke and whins were built as an oven, fuelled from below, and left for a month to 'cook'. An oven was dismantled after each firing. The Burketts found that it was cheaper to do local business, and pan tile roofs were in demand as the need for pit miners' houses increased. However, the brick works was disused by the 1890s.

Why did this happen? Cone shaped ovens, called Scotch kilns, were easier and quicker to use. The water used in this kiln process helped farmers with flooding issues. They utilised the steam, combustion gases and smoke being released at the top, and the rows of narrow firing holes below reduced and controlled the air flow. A Scotch kiln could take only a week to fire a batch. Accordingly, the price for bricks and tiles dropped causing the Burkett family to cease production.

A small patch of unusually shaped tiles was found, some with curved ends, others with regular holes. These were malting kilns with underground flues, brick channels for moving hot air underneath for barley grain processing. There was an iron floor and workers wore clogs to stem the heat. There was also some evidence for a circular kiln, overlain with a Newcastle kiln, which had developed a more effective down-draft to maintain heat.

Richard recommended a book, *Brick Works of the North East* by Peter J Davison, 1986. If you would like to scout out a site, one way to recognise a brick and tile site is the pond which clay extraction has left behind. There is a painting of Crowtrees colliery by the artist J. Wood (c. 1840) held in the Beamish Museum collection.

NEXT MEETINGS AT THE WITHAM

The Committee is taking a break in December; please join us again for interesting monthly meetings with excellent speakers in 2026.

22nd January 2026 - David Williams will talk about George Stephenson "Tribulations, Trials and Triumphs"

As part of the 200th anniversary celebrations of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, the critically acclaimed novel *Mr Stephenson's Regret* by author

and playwright David Williams has been republished in an anniversary edition by Wild Wolf. David will talk about railway pioneer George Stephenson from his earliest days, with particular focus on the personal relationships that underpin the fascinating story of the making of the world's first public railway, illustrated with extracts from his novel.

26th February 2026 – The title of Paul Isherwood's talk is "Child Gambler Wins Life Back"

A 10-year-old boy, lured by the magnetic pull of a four-year-old gambling addiction, having a light bulb moment, seeking help and now, well into his fifties, hasn't gambled since

[Ed Note :That's all we know – sounds intriguing !]

WORKSHOP REPORT by Diana Marks

There were fifteen of us for the Glass Workshop, creating either glass panels or tea lights. Helen, the Crafty Cumbrian Lass, showed us how to cut the glass and there was also an array of shapes and colours of glass in pots and trays to choose from. Also tiny beads of glass, bumble bees and ladybirds. In fact, just about every shape and colour you can imagine.



It was almost like being back in kindergarten where we had free rein to slosh on the glue and create a little picture! And how totally different were our creations.

Helen took the finished articles away to fire in her kiln and to either add a tea light holder or wooden stand. They will be returned to us in a few weeks time. We all loved the workshop and can't wait until the next one.

FUTURE WORKSHOPS

November 2025 Medieval Winter – a talk by local historian, Kim Harding

29th November 2pm-4pm in Guide HQ, Birch Road, Barnard Castle
Cost: £3 payable on the day

Exploring the customs of the preceding months and how late fifteenth century folk both celebrated and survived the darkest months of the year, Kim's illustrated talk on 'Medieval Winter' will reveal how festivities and feasting were only a part of the seasonal activities of Yuletide, New Year and beyond.

If you have ever wondered what medieval revelries and Christmas traditions have been handed down to us today, come and find out just how long the season of Christmas really lasted and what outrageous knavery was permitted by both the Church and the royal court in its 'topsy-turvy' days.

December 2025 Cocktails and Mocktails – led by the Workshop Committee.

13th December 4pm-6pm 27 Thorngate, Barnard Castle
Cost: £10 NB. Only ONE place remaining!

January 2026 A Users Guide to AI – an interactive workshop led by Pete Redgrave.

17th January 10am-12 noon in the Witham Room, The Witham

This is a follow on from Pete's talk to the Science and Technology group on the Perks and Perils of AI.

NB: This workshop is now FULL but is likely to be repeated as there are already eight people on the reserve list

February 2026 Classics in a Nutshell part 2 – led by Tim Meacham

21st February 10am-12 noon in the Guide HQ, Birch Road, Barnard Castle
Cost £2 payable on the day

To book a place on any of the above workshops, contact Sue Overton at the monthly meeting or email sueoverton@hotmail.com or [07512 368884](tel:07512368884)

DAY TRIPS

THEATRE BY THE LAKE, 6th DECEMBER, The Wizard of Oz

Last minute bookings are being taken for our annual trip. Please let Diana know if you are interested.

Email dianamarks813@gmail.com or
Tel [0776 262 6912](tel:07762626912) or [01833 630469](tel:01833630469) (leave a message)

GROUP REPORTS

ART APPRECIATION GROUP – Report by Tony Seward

Linda Elliott opened our November meeting by sharing her research into the famous 1932 photo of 11 ironworkers sitting on a girder high above Manhattan having their lunch. Was it a fake set-up, as many people believe? Well, no, it turns out that they were indeed sitting 850 feet above ground on the RCA tower at Rockefeller Center, and the picture was a publicity stunt to promote the new building. Fascinating! The identity of the photographer is unknown.

The third and final episode of *The Story of Welsh Art* begins with two young artists, Augustus John and James Dickson Innes, travelling to Snowdonia to paint before the First World War.



Image: Arenig, North Wales, by James Dickson Innes, 1913 (Tate)

Innes was the more revolutionary, giving startling Fauvist colour and form to the mountains, but was to die of TB in 1914 at the age of 27. John went on to fame and fortune but never returned to paint in Wales. From a young age, however, he insisted that his sister Gwen was the greater artist, who would be remembered long after he was forgotten. Both grew up in Tenby, then trained at the Slade in London. Gwen soon moved to Paris, where she became a leading figure on the art scene, and

model, mistress and muse to Auguste Rodin. After the break we watched part of an illuminating lecture on her work and life in France. While influenced by great contemporaries such as Picasso, Cezanne and especially the 'intimiste' interiors of Vuillard, she had the confidence and self-belief always to follow her own artistic path.

After the Johns we were introduced to a range of artists working in Wales, as they responded to the sacrifices of WW1, the devastating effect on the miners of the Depression, and the rise of nationalism. The latter began with the revival of interest in Welsh myth and legend, and culminated in the notorious spate of holiday cottage burnings in the 1980s.

Outstanding artists included Christopher Williams with his visionary 'Wales Awakening';



Image: Wales Awakening, by Christopher Williams, 1911 (*The Caernarfon Royal Town Council Collection*)

Also Cedric Morris and his fresh take on landscape (refusing to ignore its industrial component);

Ceri Richards, fully engaged with Modernist developments in Europe and America; and Kyffin Williams' stark and powerful evocations of mountain scenery and man's interaction with it, through agriculture and slate quarrying.



Image: Ash Dome, *by David Nash, planted 1977 (photo July 2009)*

Better known, perhaps, to English audiences, are the wood sculptures of David Nash, not least his 'Ash Dome' which often pops up on television. Sadly, it recently succumbed to ash die-back, which he philosophically accepts as just another manifestation of natural forces at work.

We learned a lot from this excellent BBC series and its lively presenter Huw Stephens. It built up a convincing case for the distinctiveness of Welsh art and introduced us to many interesting artists we had not encountered before, as well as a few well-known in Britain and internationally.

AUTOMOTIVE GROUP – Report by David Yeadon

The U3A Automotive Group zoomed (well, definitely within speed limits, and quite right too - did anyone see that the police had a speed camera at the bottom of The Bank on Sunday afternoon? It's a 20 mph limit, but seeing how vehicles of ALL sizes fly up and down, you wouldn't think it.) - er, where were we? Oh, yes, zooming down to West Auckland to visit Carrosserie classic and vintage car restorers.



A real mix of cars in various stages of restoration - 1920s Rolls Royce, various Jaguars from the 1950s and 60s, a Mini Cooper, 1930s Morris Oxford, Range Rover - the list goes on.

All of this done to a very high standard, so, you are talking in telephone numbers £££\$\$\$!

BIRDWATCHING GROUP – Report and Photos by Andrew Lapworth

RSPB Leighton Moss visit and ‘Target birds’

Sometimes when we go out on our monthly field trips we have a particular bird or species we especially want to see or hear: for example, Ring Ouzels in May in Upper Teesdale, the first migrant warblers such as Chiffchaffs in March on the Demesnes. Sometimes we see or hear these “target” birds; sometimes we don’t. As the leader of our group I get real satisfaction and enjoyment when we all see or hear our target bird(s); equally I can be disappointed if we don’t find our target (or if not all the group gets to see or hear the bird).

So I had some trepidation when 13 of us met in the car park at Leighton Moss in Silverdale on 20th October. The reason for going there was to try and ensure everyone in the group got to see (and see well) a delightful little bird called a Bearded Tit or more correctly a Bearded Reedling; it is not a member of the Tit family. On previous visits to this RSPB reserve we'd had tantalising glimpses of birds in flight over the reeds or we had just heard their distinctive calls.

These remarkable birds feed on insects during the spring and summer, but in autumn and winter they switch to eating the tiny seeds of the reeds in which they live. To digest the seeds and extract their nutrients they need grit in their crops to help fully digest this diet. Some years ago, the previous warden at Leighton Moss came up with the idea of providing grit on birdtables in the reedbeds; this has enabled hundreds of birdwatchers to visit the site each October and November to see and photograph the normally elusive Bearded Tits. It was important we got there as early as possible.

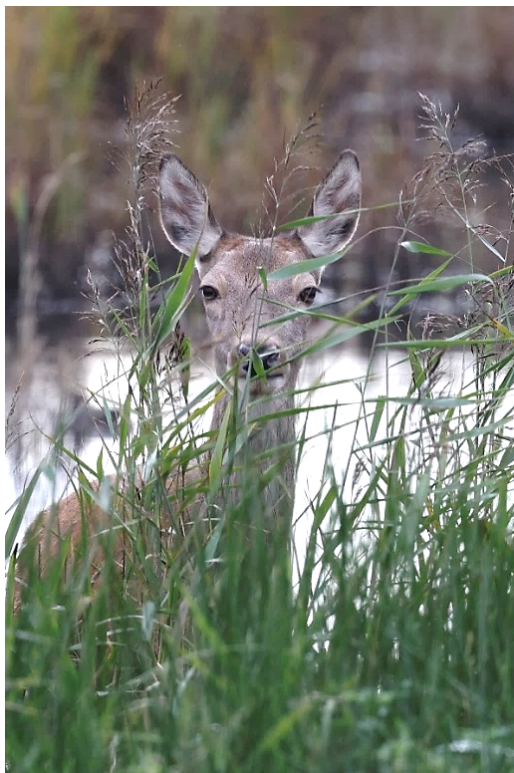


Image: Bearded Tit flock at Minsmere, July 2024

In the event we were a little too late; as we made our way to the viewing area, coming in the opposite direction were numerous birders and photographers. As we arrived at the patch there were just two Bearded Tits on the grit trays.

Luckily all but one of us got to get a clear but brief view of these smart little birds for about 30 seconds; for most of the group this was the very first time they had seen this species. But these last two birds (there had been between 30-50 birds present earlier) flew off into the reedbed. We waited another 30-40 minutes at the spot but none returned; a skulking Water Rail making a brief appearance was some consolation. Maybe next year we'll try again but we will have to be there much earlier!

After coffee and brunch in the cafe we visited several hides along the paths and boardwalks. The air was still and the light soft and we had good views of many of the ducks coming in to breeding plumages, especially Gadwall and Pintails.



With the aid of telescopes we found lots of very well camouflaged Snipe around the edges of the pools. We watched Marsh Harriers hunting over the reedbeds and had close views of a Great White Egret with a Grey Heron; the latter caught 2 quite large fish as we watched. 5 Buzzards were in a thermal above us, and we saw a smaller raptor (a Sparrowhawk or Peregrine) mobbing another buzzard.

So.....partially successful with our Bearded Tit views but nonetheless a very enjoyable day's birdwatching in this beautiful wetland reserve.

Over 35 species seen; our last sighting was of a fine Red Deer hind feeding near us in the reedbed. *Image: Red Deer, Leighton Moss, Oct 2025*

BOARD GAMES – Reports and Photos by Hazel McCallum and Celia Chapple

In October we welcomed some new members and hope that they will join us again! This time, we played three different games at separate tables: Ticket to Ride, Cascadia and Rummikub. Ticket to Ride and Rummikub are group favourites and proceeded at a jolly pace. Cascadia was new to the group and received favourable reviews from Jane, Clare and Vivien.

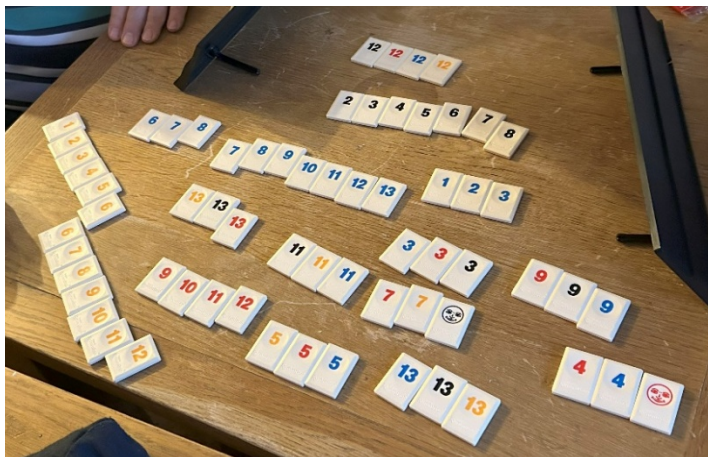


Image:
*Ticket to
Ride USA*

In November, 13 members attended, including a new member Jeff. Hazel and Jane introduced 2 tables to Cascadia, a colourful, attractive game featuring the landscape and wildlife of the Pacific Northwest. Each player can place hexagonal tiles and tokens to build their habitat and wildlife populations. Points are won for the largest habitat area created, and for animals such as elk, bears and hawks to be placed in an appropriate way. For example, the solitary hawk fights for its own territory; the bears want to be in pairs; foxes want a myriad of different animals around them.

Jack Dee somehow gets the Radio 4 audience of *I Haven't a Clue* to robotically chant, '*and points mean prizes.*' Our prize is admiration and recognition: Kate, Hazel and Jane won the various Cascadia games and there was enthusiasm to play this new game again.

On the other table, 5 members were absorbed in the strategic game, Rummikub, (see *photo*) where skill and luck combine.



Annie won twice (well done Annie, it can't just be luck), and Viv also won a game

Some quick games of the word-finder game, Boggle, were also played and won by Jane, Clare and Jean. If you'd like to join us, we meet on the second Monday of the month from 2pm in The Breakfast Room at The Old Well Inn.

Next meeting: Monday 8th December, when we'll have *A Ticket to Ride* tournament where there really will be prizes!

BOOK GROUP 2 – Report by Ruth Stables

“Precipice” by Robert Harris

If you want a book with a real life scenario, that will surprise (if not shock) you, then we recommend “Precipice” by Robert Harris, published in 2024. It describes the affair between Asquith, aged 62, Prime Minister of the last Liberal Government, from 1908-1916, and the 26-year old Venetia Stanley.

It is based on the 560 letters Asquith wrote to Venetia. Venetia's letters to Asquith do not survive. Letters from Asquith, often passionate, were written 3 times a day and during the First World War. They frequently included classified information and were written during meetings. Read in the back of a taxi, Asquith would screw up some letters and throw them out of the back of the car. Found by members of the public, a young intelligence

officer, Deemer, was charged with finding out their source. Who could have believed they were from the Prime Minister himself?

The plot twists and turns and reveals the absolute belief of some of the aristocratic class in political power that they were above the law and that nothing could touch them. As with all Harris's novels, the book was meticulously researched. It is well written and moves at a pace. I, for one, could not put it down!

Our next meeting is our Christmas lunch when we will be bringing a poem of our choice – and we resume our book-reading at our meeting on 12th January. Do come and join us by contacting our Convenor.

ROOM TO READ BOOK GROUP- Review by Ann Whitfield

Orbital by Samantha Harvey

This Booker prize winning novel has attracted very polarised critical views, being described both as an 'amazing read... a skillful sweet lament to planet earth' and otherwise 'a short dull novel... with unlikeable and undeveloped characters.' It made for an interesting discussion as opinion in our group was similarly divided.

It is the story of six astronauts who live on a space station for months at a time, and their journey around the earth over the course of 24 hours. It details mundane routines as they experience the reality of life in conditions of weightlessness, with 16 orbits of the earth (and associated 16 periods of daylight interspersed with darkness in those 24 hours), conduct scientific experiments and collect meteorological data.

We learn something of the characters of the astronauts, their motivation and relationships with their friends and family back on earth. We see their confusion as detached observers (literally) of their entire world. The book is a meditation on the fragility of our existence, both as individuals and in our place in the cosmos. As the book progresses, there is more focus on what humankind is capable of, and whether in the process of achieving this we are destroying our planet (as evidenced by climate change and the accumulation of space junk orbiting around the earth.)

One member described it as a brilliant and unique description of what it's like to be trapped in a really weird environment. But it also offers for some a profound insight into the irrelevance of humanity within our universe. However, for others, this was a very challenging read.

It meets few of the traditional requirements of a novel, by way of character development or plot, and even those who loved it agreed it was more akin to a poem or a philosophical meditation than a novel. It is repetitive to an irksome degree unless you are fascinated by the mundane details of life on board a spaceship. It contains a large amount of factual detail which depending on your viewpoint is very well researched or simply tedious.

We enjoyed a lively exchange of views about this book, and all agreed that as a book for a group discussion it was a good choice. We were somewhat less likely to recommend it to a friend though. Scores for discussion rounded up to 4 out of 5 but for recommendation to a friend averaged 2.5 out of 5

CHESS GROUP – Report by Diana Marks

We continue to thrive as a group with nine of us attending this month. We have moved to our winter quarters in The Old Well as the conservatory is too cold now and also has a bit of a leak! The breakfast room at the front of the pub is warm and dry.

Our two expert players had a return match and they have now won one game each. We lesser mortals either played or watched (or chatted!) We meet again on 4th December.

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS GROUP – Report by Kate Bailey

With COP30 beginning in Belem, Amazonia, without the USA's participation, we heard about the Action Agenda proposed by Brazilian leaders. The smallest most vulnerable countries will have an equal say in discussions about civil society, social justice and global equity.

Major themes will be agreements and partnerships for countries to transition to low carbon economies, together with finance to reward tropical forest conservation and funding for adaptation, particularly for small island states.

A recent book published by Ani Dasgupta, the CEO of the World Resources Institute, offers an optimistic outlook towards a global economic transition. Economies based on oil have had 200 years of success; oil is in everything we use including clothing and cosmetics.

The remaining oil and gas reserves are concentrated in 3 regions - the US, Russia and the Middle East. The rest of the world, including China, India, developing countries in Africa and South America, have few long term reserves. These emerging economies and new partnerships no longer want to be in debt for their oil imports and they are all focusing on renewable energy for their future energy security.

Dasgupta's message to world governments is to ignore the oil and gas lobbyists who will inevitably continue to resist and oppose change in order to safeguard their companies' profits. He urges politicians to focus instead on policies that create employment and retrain people to move towards '*low carbon, people-centric, nature-positive economies*', in order to secure healthy food, clean air, clean water and clean energy for future generations.

There was lots of good news this month –

- a company in London, Emergent Energy, is working with Hackney Council to install solar panels on social housing;
- bridges are being built in Kent to connect fragmented habitats for Bison to roam;
- in Wiltshire, food is being grown on a former landfill site, using heat from waste;

Thanks to the many members who are supporting our 'pilot' blister-pack recycling project - the big bin is already almost half full.

Please don't forget to make a small donation when you bring your blister packs to the monthly meeting so we can buy another bin - after all, most of us don't have to pay for our prescriptions!

- Sweden has succeeded in eliminating all 'caged hen' farming practices;
- an endangered Bonobo baby ape has been born at Twycross Zoo, the closest living relatives of humans; and
- massive rewilding schemes in Ukraine, including two new National Parks, are supporting a project called 'Nature for Veterans' that helps injured soldiers and their families by immersing them in nature far from the front-line.

News too of a new island, Surtsey, off the southern coast of Iceland. It began as an undersea volcanic eruption in the 1960s that built an island over the course of 3 years and then became dormant. Iceland declared Surtsey a nature reserve in 1965 and the island has become a natural laboratory for studying the colonization of plants and animals without human intervention. In 1986, 15 plant species were recorded; by 2008, that number had grown to 69. Surtsey demonstrates that

"Even in the harshest environments resilience and renewal are possible. If space is given, nature will always find ways to return, often faster and more creatively than we expect." [source: <https://earthsky.org/earth/surtsey-and-the-birth-of-new-islands/>]



CROCHET GROUP – Report and Photo by Hazel McCallum

There are two meetings of the new Crochet Group on the third Thursday and the fourth Monday. We enjoyed our new venue at Enterprise House with coffee included.

Around ten of us met at each session and started a range of projects to learn new stitches or act as a refresher.

We covered chain, slip and double crochet stitches and progressed onto half treble stitches and changing yarns. We are developing our bilingual skills so we understand both US and UK crochet terms.

The sessions are good natured with many creative and 'creative' efforts to show at the end. New members are very welcome.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD GROUP - Report by Sue Overton

A full house of 12 for the November session. We worked in two groups to tackle a couple of Times Quick Cryptic crosswords plus one from the Telegraph. The latter proved the most difficult – it was the final one of the day and we were definitely tiring by this time despite a break to top up on our caffeine and sugar levels!

Here are some of the easier clues for you to try – one is an anagram and the other a hidden clue type:-

Lion cub playing with me in plant (9)

Aversion revealed by some Methodist as "terrible" (8)

Did you solve last month's clue?

Engineer can't find site for debugging aid? (12)

'debugging aid?' is the DEFINITION

'engineer' is an anagram INDICATOR

'can't' + 'find' + 'site' anagrammed gives us the answer –
DISINFECTANT

Please contact me if you would like to join us at our next session on Wednesday 10th December at 2pm in the Guide HQ, Birch Road, Barnard Castle Sue Overton [07512 368884](tel:07512368884); sueoverton@hotmail.com

DISCUSSION GROUP – Report by Glen Howard

Topics discussed in October included:

- The demise of the Tory Party
- Does Trump deserve the Nobel Peace Prize
- The BMA and A&E
- Trump, Biden and Gaza
- GP's burnout true or false?
- Britain's downsizing crisis
- The Gaza peace plan and
- The struggle to protect young people from conspiracy theories

In November the topics discussed were scams; use of pepper spray; the BBC; home schooling; COP30; the Southport killer; wind power and Sarah Cox.

New members are always welcome so do give Glen Howard a ring or text if you are interested in joining us tel [07975705816](tel:07975705816); email glenhow31@gmail.com. We meet on the second Friday of each month.

FAMILY HISTORY INTEREST GROUP – Report by Alan Swindale

Half a dozen members of the group listened to a talk on using wills to assist your family history research. The low numbers (due to rain?) meant a much more interactive talk.

Wills are an invaluable resource for the family historian and efforts should always be made to discover if the subject of research made a will and, if so, what were the contents of the will. There will always be information identifying the testator (the person making the will) – their name, abode and occupation. Anybody benefiting from a bequest will be named, usually together with a relationship to the testator.

From 1530 to 1782 every executor had to appoint three or four local men to appraise or value the testator's personal estate at the time of death and provide the probate court with a full inventory or list. This provides an insight into the testator's lifestyle and wealth though real estate (land) was not included. There is also valuable information if the individual was mentioned in someone else's will but these wills are harder to find. Alan related how he was able to positively identify his grandmother's great-grandmother from mentions in the wills of her brothers and sister.

The next talk will discuss probate records, where to find wills, and their use to progress your family history research. It will be held on the second Thursday of December (11th), at 13:30 in Enterprise House and followed by a practical session "Help your neighbour", so please all bring laptops or your usual devices.

GARDENING GROUP – Report by Kate Keen

In November our guest speaker was Kate Bailey who is a Teesdale U3A Member and Convenor of the Climate Solutions Group. Kate came along to talk about Wildflower Gardening. Part of the mission for the Climate Solutions Group is to raise awareness of U3A members about positive ways we can adapt to climate change and contribute to nature recovery.

The UK is the most nature depleted country in Europe and much of the land is used for agriculture. Traditionally, many farmers sprayed out unwanted weeds, which are actually wild flowers, used chemical fertilisers, cut or removed hedges and heavily grazed their fields. However, recent changes to the UK farming support systems encourage a more nature friendly approach and some farmers are adopting 'regenerative agriculture' principles. Large organisations such as local authorities, the National Trust, the Royal Horticultural Society and many large estate owners are now establishing parks and gardens where wild flowers are allowed to flourish.

Wildflowers are an essential link in the food chain that supports all life on earth. They provide food, shelter and egg laying spaces for a wide variety of birds, insects and invertebrates as well as producing oxygen, absorbing

carbon, adding nutrients to the soil, retaining moisture and preventing soil erosion.

Those of us with gardens can help by having some wild flowers in our borders, particularly those that encourage bees and other pollinating insects. Red campion, pulmonaria, meadow cranesbill, bluebells, snowdrops, vetch, bugle, white dead nettle and ox eye daisies are just some of the flowers which are attractive and beneficial to nature and generally easy to look after. This was an interesting and informative talk well received by the group who had plenty of positive contributions to make.

In December we will be having a coach trip to a Christmas event. In January we will have a break and then our meetings will restart in February.

GEOGRAPHY GROUP - Report and photo by Jane Harrison

We were delighted to welcome back Sarah Woodroffe, Professor of Geography, at Durham University. Sarah previously spoke to us in 2021, when she talked about sea level change in Greenland. On this occasion her topic was *“Searching for Eustasy in the Tropics”*.

Eustasy is sea level change caused by factors such as the melting of polar ice caps or the heating of the oceans which lead to a change in volume. Isostasy, on the other hand, is movement of the land relative to the sea caused, for example, by crustal rebound that follows deglaciation. At a specific location the rise and fall of relative sea level can reflect either eustatic or isostatic movement or a combination of the two.

Information on sea level change comes from tide gauges and more recently from satellites. To reconstruct sea level change before such records existed, Sarah relies on examining sediments and microfossils. Since the 1990s average sea level rise has increased from around 2mm to over 3.5mm per year.

To establish whether eustatic change has occurred, a location far from ice sheets and glaciers and therefore the influence of isostatic change is a prerequisite. Sarah identified Queensland, in Australia, as a location for her doctorate on eustasy. In temperate latitudes salt marshes preserve a detailed record of sea level change and she hoped to transfer tested research methods to a subtropical location.



Image of Queensland mangroves left high and dry by Jane Harrison

Mangroves, with their complex root systems, are very sensitive to sea level change. Sarah described some of the problems she encountered in collecting her data. The mangroves proved highly impenetrable as well as being extremely hot and humid. There were biting insects and worse still – crocodiles!

She discovered that the marker species of foraminifera (microscopic, shelled organisms), found in intertidal zones, rapidly disintegrated in the mangroves so were not found in core samples. Some flexing of the broad shallow continental shelf had also occurred leading to higher relative sea

levels than expected. Her later research in the Seychelles resolved some, but not all, of these issues.

The audience were very envious of the locations Sarah had visited and suggested locations for her future research! Discussion ensued about the consequences of sea level rise. These ranged from the Thames Barrier being too low, changes to the Gulf Stream and the problems faced by island states such as The Maldives.

Next meeting: Thursday 18th December. The Witham. 2pm. By popular request – Gerald Blake “*Geography of the Nativity*” plus mulled wine and mince pies!

GEOLOGY GROUP – Report by Bob Tuddenham

In October, David Saville gave a further talk on ‘*Life in the Silurian and Devonian*’ following on from his excellent talk in May. These two periods which span some 86 million years from 443 mya, were fundamental in the shaping of the living world that we live in.

Key changes through this time resulted in rapid land colonisation and biodiversification of life on Earth and is sometimes called the Silurian-Devonian Terrestrial Revolution. Tectonic plate movements including the Caledonian Orogeny resulted in major changes in the planet’s atmosphere and climate with low sea levels and a more stable climate with less extensive icecaps. An increase in oxygen concentration with reduced carbon dioxide promoted plant life and the increase in ozone enabled the colonisation of the land by plants and animals. Vascular plants, fungi and early land animals like arthropods became well established.

David showed us some excellent slides and videos of the likely plants and animals at this time but he reminded us that the fossil evidence is usually incomplete with the interpretations often revised over time. He mentioned the Rhynie Chert, a small but remarkable area in Aberdeenshire, which shows a complete fossilisation of a freshwater ecosystem from the early Devonian. The area was ‘frozen’ rapidly with silica from volcanic springs

which has resulted in the exquisite preservation of some plants and early animals. Intense research in this area from the 1950s has greatly assisted in our understanding of these periods.

The evolution of fishes is particularly interesting with early jawless fish with armoured heads and in the early Devonian there were even sea scorpions as large as the human body! David kindly produced a most helpful handout on the Silurian and Devonian which was sent out to members after the meeting. We shall all have a different view of the landscape when looking at the Howgill Fells and the Scottish Borders.

Our next meeting will be at The Witham on Monday December 15th, 10am.

All are welcome to join us. Please contact the convenor for details

iPAD and iPHONE GROUP – Report by Mike Sweeting

A full house for this month's meeting! We looked at the changes introduced in IOS26 and how they linked back to IOS18. The latest changes build on the previous version and make significant cosmetic changes.

We focused particularly on making your phone your own, i.e. personalising settings to improve the look, increasing security, making frequently used functions more accessible and adding protection from scam calls.

There will be no meeting in December with the next meeting falling in the new year on January 27th. May I be one of the first (*Ed note – the very first Mike!*) to wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year.

LUNCH GROUP – Report by Kate Keen

In October the lunch group tried out another new venue, The High Force Hotel. This was a lovely venue with a pleasant drive through Teesdale. We were welcomed with a roaring fire and excellent service. We were a group of 10 and had pre ordered our meals.

The most popular main course was the Teesdale Bangers and Mash, all those having this option cleared their plates and even asked for the supplier of the sausages. The most popular desert was the fruit crumble and custard, just right for an autumn lunch. The dark chocolate mousse and peach and raspberry tarts were popular too. The new venue went down well with Members so will be on our list for a future visit next year.

Our Christmas meal in December is at the Three Horseshoes, Barnard Castle. If anyone is interested in joining our friendly group then please contact Kate Keen

NEEDLECRAFT – Report by Glen Howard

It is always a pleasure to be able to chat with friends whilst working on our projects. This month members were knitting, crocheting, embroidering and quilting whilst catching up on our various experiences over the past month as well as talking about the challenges of getting older. Modern terminology in patterns is often confusing, as are American terms compared to British which we have grown up with. They can make all the difference in crochet, where the same stitch is called something different in the two languages.

Our next meeting will be on Monday 1st December. There will be no meeting in January, instead we will be going out for our 'Christmas' lunch. New members are always welcome so do give me a call if you would like to join us - Glen Howard [07975 705816](tel:07975705816); glenhow31@gmail.com

PAINTING GROUP – Report by Val Hobbs; Images by Martin Page



There were only three of us at the meeting on Friday, but gosh, our personalities didn't half make up for the lack of bodies!

We actually had a whale of a time sketching mini pumpkins, a host of which Anne had brought in.

We used pencil and then outlines with fine liners, taking into consideration the direction of the light and where the shadows lay, and using darker or lighter hatching to illustrate this.



We then used clean water to drag the ink into the pumpkin outline to create a 'wash' of shade and light.

After chocolate Hobnobs, coffee, and a good laugh, we resumed, and 'dropped' in some orange colour to finish off the gourd. A background was then painted in to emphasise the size and shape of the pumpkin.

. Emphasising the Halloween theme...we all had a 'wizard ' of a time.'



PHILOSOPHY GROUP – Report by Ray Lee

At the October meeting of the Philosophy group, we welcomed several new members. The aspect of philosophy under scrutiny was a consideration of the role of Natural Philosophy in the development of thinking.

We considered a Definition - Historical development - The relevance of Natural Philosophy today - The links between natural philosophy, mainstream philosophy and the philosophy of science.

The talk and subsequent discussion stressed that Natural Philosophy is the philosophical study of nature and the physical universe -why nature works the way it does rather than just how.

Before the rise of modern science (17th century), it was the main way humans investigated the natural world. The discipline Then and Now involves both basic Aristotelian Scientific Method and Philosophical Method. Emphasis was placed on the importance of maths as an essential ingredient of the thinking.

The term "Natural Philosophy" began with the ancient Greeks who made the first systematic attempts to explain nature without gods



[Image from Google]

Anaximander of Miletus (c. 610–546 BCE) was a trailblazer in early Greek thought. By observation and thought he suggested that the cosmos is governed not by gods but by an impersonal, infinite force.

In the field of cosmology & the structure of the universe he developed one of the earliest models of the universe based on natural laws rather than mythology.

A little unexpectedly we discovered that women were strongly represented among the early Natural Philosophers, for instance Theano from the 6th century BCE, who worked on the Golden Ratio. We went on to consider the work of Plato and Aristotle in the development of the thinking. Considerations were given to the contributions of Galileo, Descartes and Newton. Einstein's thought experiments eventually led him to his theory of special relativity, which he proved mathematically; but which led eventually to, among other things, the nuclear bomb.

The final discussion debated whether the role of maths has become too powerful in the development of the thinking. The unfettered development of Natural Philosophy, most of it now in a language we cannot fathom, raises vast philosophical issues. Apparently to continue research into subatomic particles we need an even bigger piece of equipment than the CERN accelerator. The mathematics is proven. In a poverty-stricken world, do we justify the expense?

Come and join us at our next Philosophy group meetings.

We will not be meeting in December but will follow further philosophical subjects on the 4th Tuesday of the month throughout 2026, starting on 27th January when we will look at Friedrich Nietzsche.

POETRY GROUP – Report by Annie Clouston

November's theme was 'People' which enabled members to choose from a wide range of poems. My personal favourite was RSThomas' brilliantly evocative **A Peasant**. Thomas, a man who was steeped in his Welsh heritage, with obvious affection describes:

...your prototype, who, season by season
Against siege of rain and the wind's attrition,
Preserves his stock, an impregnable fortress
Not to be stormed, even in death's confusion.
Remember him, then, for he, too, is winner of wars,
Enduring like a tree under the curious stars.

In a somewhat similar way Patrick Kavanagh, in **My father played the melodeon**, a poem from his collection **A Christmas Childhood**, evokes his childhood memory of his family's peasant-like life in rural Ireland.

Outside in the cow-house my mother
Made the music of milking.
The light of the stable-lamp was a star
And the frost of Bethlehem made it twinkle.

Everyone sang by Siegfried Sassoon is a reminder of how singing particularly in concert with others can lift the gloomiest spirit (for such was Sassoon's, for whom the experience of WWI had a devastating impact)

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;
And beauty came like the setting sun
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror
Drifted away...

John Dryden writing during the reign of Charles II – a time of plotting and religious sectarianism – took poetic revenge on a man, George Villiers, whose lifestyle and character he deplored, was delivered in the satirical poem **Absolom and Achitophel**. He was...

Stiff in his opinions, always in the wrong;
Was everything by starts, and nothing long:
But in the course of one revolving moon
Was chemist, fiddler, statesman and buffoon.

Some dissent in the group! Arising from Thomas Hardy's Poem **Former Beauties**. It aroused the ire of the Sixties Feminists in its depiction of the more mature woman whom Hardy characterises as "...market-dames, mid-aged, with lips thin-drawn, And tissues sere..." We thought they had a lot to have lips thin-drawn about, particularly where Hardy was concerned!

WBYeats' poem **An Irish Airman foresees his Death** points out that war is between countries, tribes, empires and not people...

Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love.

Remembering dear Roger Stanyon we finished with a Wendy Cope favourite, **Being Boring**. Clearly resentful of all those remarks that she should "get out more" she has...

Just one ambition in life: I aspire

To go on and on being boring.

Our next meeting on 10th December will be a joint meeting with the Room to Read Book Group when we will reflect on our favourite literature of the year.

SCRABBLE GROUP – Report by Ray Thompson

In October we met at Judith and Phil's house with 8 of us present, so we split into 2 groups of 4. Paula, Jeanette, Regina and Kate played in the first group. Kate hasn't been able to attend our group for a long time due to caring obligations, and Kate won this game with a score of 174, including a 7 letter word of ROTTENS for 58 points. The second group was made up of Ray, Phil, Judith and Lillian playing. Judith won this game with a score of 231, including a 7 letter word GAUNTED for 70 points, Phil and Ray each produced a 7 letter word VENISON {58} and ARABLES (62) respectively.

We stopped for refreshments of tea, coffee, lovely homemade cherry scones, and some Greek Halva.

The next two games comprised of the 2 winners of the first games and 2 next highest scorers. Kate won again with a score of 225 including a 7 letter word YAWNIER for 95 points. Phil won his game with a score of 191. Thanks to Judith for hosting and refreshments.

In November, 7 of us met at Lillian's house, so we split into teams of 4 and 3. Marilyn, Lillian, Ray and Monica played their first game, and Judith, Jeanette and Paula made up the second team.

Ray won the first round with a score of 164 including one 7 letter word of ARRIVES for 72 points. Judith won her game with 2 7 letter words, STIRING for 74, and REALIST with 65 points, her total final score of 316.

We stopped for a tea break and delicious Victoria Sponge and shortbread biscuits.

The next round was made up with Judith, Ray and Jeanette, the two winners and next highest scorer, which Judith won with a score of 244. Marilyn, Paula, Monica and Lillian played and Lillian won this game with a score of 199 points. Well done Judith for her two wins and thank you to Lillian for hosting our meeting.

Our next meeting is at Judith and Phil's on 8th December. If you would like to join our group please call Judith on [01833 650150](tel:01833650150), or text her on [07790 407152](tel:07790407152).

UNDERSTANDING CLASSICAL MUSIC – Report by Ian Royston

In our best-attended session for some time we immersed ourselves in the penultimate part of Simon Russell Beale's History of the Symphony entitled "New Nations and New Worlds" where we encountered symphonies of no less than six composers, many of them nationalistic after circumnavigating one composer, Wagner who believed the artform was dead.

Richard Wagner saw himself as a successor to Beethoven, not in being a composer of symphonies but in a master of grand works such as Der Ring des Nibelungen, a four-part musical drama of around 15 hours spread over 4 nights. In the same year that this was first heard in Vienna, 1876, a devotee of Beethoven who envisaged the continuation of the symphony in a much more conventional way saw Johannes Brahms's 1st Symphony premiered after a gestation of many years. Brahms saw his work aimed at a much more modest audience than that demanded by Wagner and his first symphony, particularly the last movement, which itself echoed some themes of Beethoven, was a great success.

Anton Bruckner was a devotee of Wagner and perhaps in imitation attempted to bring a style of enormity of expression to his symphonies but the local boy took a long time to make any impression on Vienna.

With the Habsburg Empire losing influence, Dvorak capitalised on populist Bohemian sentiments and was prominent in promoting Prague as an alternative to Vienna, bringing music to an even wider public. Though his Slavonic Dances remain popular it was a move to the USA, where he wrote Symphony No. 9 "From the New World" that firmly established him on the international circuit. Incorporating American and Negro Spiritual themes this was first heard in the new Carnegie Hall in 1893 and helped establish New York as a cultural centre too.

Further nationalistic composers followed: Sibelius, a proud Finn who raged against Russian oppression in the Karelia Suite and the tone poem Finlandia, works which made him a national hero. Mahler, a German, who like Wagner believed that loud, big and long were the ways to go. Finally, Tchaikovsky who redefined the symphony in what he saw as a style which embraced both traditional Russian and more progressive western elements.

In the second part of our meeting we discussed how we wanted to continue with the group into 2026 and beyond. Many new ideas came forward, including a popular opinion that we find time to discuss what we have just heard or that members could introduce musical topics for discussion.

The next meeting concludes our year with the final part of History of the Symphony: "*Revolution and Rebirth*" at 10:00 on Friday 24 October at Startforth Community Centre

WINE GROUP – Report by Tim Meacham



By popular request, in October we went back, courtesy of Majestic wines, to look again at some of the recent offerings emerging from Eastern Europe. Just across the border from Italy, **Slovenia** has been producing some vegan Pinot Bianco wines which include the **Krasno Pinot Bianco 2024**, at 13%, which features a strong mineral finish. Opinions on this were divided, but moving further eastwards we were more impressed by a couple of wines from the Incanta vineyards of **Romania**. The **Incanta Feteasca Regala** (undated: 12.5% and £8.50) was a great value white wine with its very Romanian Feteasca grape complemented by its very British producer, Philip Cox. This packed real power, like its red counterpart, the **Incanta Pinot Noir** (undated: 12.5% and also £8.50). Both were full-bodied satisfying wines at a very reasonable price.

On we moved to **Greece** with its ever-improving reputation. Here the **Agapi by Kintonis Rosé 2024**, 12.5% and £10.25, our second recent wine from the Peloponnese area, was rather disappointing given the £10+ price. Rather harshly criticised by one reviewer as ‘quite flavourless and sour’, we did find it rather unexciting compared to some of the recent rosés we had tried. Our furthest venture east was to the home of wine, **Georgia**, for our last two wines. Our white, the **Tbilvino Qvevris Rkatsiteli 2022** (13% and £12.50) may have been made by an age-old process using the qvevri (a large clay amphora in which the wine was fermented underground) but the flavour was described by one of us as ‘very peculiar’, while the Georgian

red, a **Tbilvino Saperavi 2023** (13% and £12) was a much more mainstream wine with a really full body showing off the obvious merits of the local Saperavi grape, with its 'pleasant astringency'.

All in all a pleasant afternoon but not one to make us abandon our west European favourites!

WIMMIN' SWIMMIN' GROUP - Report by Annie Clouston

There have been great strides – or should I say strokes – made in the sessions at Teesdale Leisure Centre where we have exclusive use on Saturdays once a month from 4-5pm. Our two non-swimmers now have become waterborne as a result and we are very proud of them. I can't help thinking that there must be other women members who, terrorised by previous pool experiences or just unfamiliar with pool routines, would really

benefit from the joy of weightlessness and non-load-bearing exercise and the satisfaction of conquered fears. The supportiveness and encouragement of the group is an added bonus.



Image: Annie in the River Tees below Egglestone Abbey

My mother, a lifetime supporter of swimmers, but who was exceptionally timid about swimming, eventually had lessons aged 66 and regretted she hadn't done it much sooner. Admittedly she would never win a medal in the veterans' swimming championships, but she did get a great deal of pleasure

in Aquarobics and could keep an eye on father, whose prowess in the pool attracted a fair bit of rival female attention.

When summer returns some of our swimmers may feel emboldened to take a trip to an open water venue; the river Tees offers some excellent pools, see below, the Mill Pond at Bowes is beautiful, and our nearest swimming lake at Ellerton near Scorton offers a safe and clean swim for the more confident swimmer.



The Mill Pond, Gilmonby – photo supplied by Annie Clouston

Our next session is on Saturday 22 November, and because of proximity to Christmas there will be no session in December. We will resume in January at a date to be arranged. All women are welcome, contact Annie for further information.

WALKING GROUPS



SHORTER (3-4 MILES) WALKS - Report by Liz Colley

The King's Walk, Middleton-in-Teesdale

Our walking group gathered outside the Teesdale Hotel in Middleton-in-Teesdale with a couple of new members joining us for a walk fit for royalty. The plan was to walk up Townhead and dip down to The Kings Walk. It was a bright autumnal day just right for enjoying a walk through the woods. The many beech trees in Hudeshope woods were looking splendid.

Our route took us onto a permissive path up through the woods to follow the Snaigill loop. Although there was a steep section, we were rewarded with a bench to take a rest. From this high point of the walk we continued to follow the path down to Snaigill beck, the ground underfoot was quite challenging due to the tree roots and rocky surface, but thankfully we all stayed upright. As we crossed the bridge over Snaigill Beck we looked for the wooden fisherman but sadly he has disappeared to find better fishing.

As we followed the path towards Hudeshope Beck we could see Heatherbrae up on the hillside. One of our local members fondly remembered the dances and parties she had attended there in her youth. It is now a very well reviewed holiday let.

Reaching the path down beside the beck the, impressive Parker Lime kilns can be seen just off to our left. Our walks in Teesdale often bring its

industrial heritage to light. From this point the walking became easier on a flat level surface heading back to Middleton-in-Teesdale. We crossed over the beck using the green bridge and followed the track through a wood of beautiful beech trees. Then passing by a couple of cottages we descended some steps to the Hude and back to the Teesdale hotel.

7-9 MILE WALKING GROUP – Report by Alan Kenwright, Photographs by Ian Royston

On 15 October twelve members of the 7-9 mile walking group met up at the interestingly named “Old Man’s Grave” on the road from Stanhope to Blanchland. The name is interesting because as far as anyone can tell there is no old man buried there, though there was at one time a boundary marker that looked somewhat like a gravestone. Who knows? The day was grey and overcast, but it wasn’t raining and there wasn’t much wind, so it was good weather for strolling.



We made our way over the equally interestingly named Chop Hardy (no idea) and gently descended into Edmundbyers (at one time the site of Edmund’s cow shed apparently).

After a couple of hundred yards on roads we once again branched off across country and stopped for lunch, where we were treated to a display of sheep herding by a local farmer that drew a fair amount of

less than favourable comment. Fortunately, the farmer was on the other side of the valley and could not hear what was said.

After lunch we continued on our way and came to realise that we had been gently descending all the way from our point of departure to Edmundbyers and so now had to gently climb all the way back to the cars.

It is surprising how much more noticeable uphill is than downhill! But we made it back to the cars by 2-00pm and agreed that we had all enjoyed the walk through the quiet, open countryside.



For our walk on 17 December Lynda will take us on a 7 mile walk from Hury to Goldsborough Loups Crag along to East Stoney Lodges and return to Briscoe. She is promising us some steep sections plus slippery muddy and boggy bits - so the mince pies will be well earned!

Please contact nickygrace729@gmail.com if you would like to come along

THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD AT HMP DEERBOLT IS SEEKING PART-TIME VOLUNTEERS

Are you interested in joining the team that, on average, makes 2-3 visits a month to this Category C (lower risk) training and resettlement prison? They have unrestricted access to all the Deerbolt facilities and opportunities to engage with the prisoners.

You can make a real difference to prisoners' lives by supporting their education, training and preparation for release back into the community, as well as by being a good listener with a willingness to help where possible.

If you are interested in this varied and rewarding role and would like to know more, contact Patrick Neill (u3a member) or Charlie Ing (Chair of Deerbolt IMB) or look on the IMB website www.imb.org.uk

COFFEE AND CHAT

Coffee and Chat on Thursdays 2.30-3.30pm:

Thursday 11th December at the Witham

**Thursday 8th January at Cotherstone
Community Cafe**

ANOTHER MONTH WITH THE GRUNDYS (formerly known as The Archers) – Report by Annie Clouston

I find myself somewhat frustrated, for though I had had just about enough of The Archers, this month's final shift into an everyday story of countryfolk named Grundy has really done in my already deeply disappointed head.

This month we have we been subjected to a character reversal from Egregious George back to the old Whining George, a lovesick, hard-done by, what-did-I do-wrong sort of a chap who just doesn't get it why people in Ambridge might not want to cuddle him snugly to their bosoms (an image which frankly I regret putting into your mind's eye). I've heard him say to Airhead Amber one time too many "I love you sooooo much" – anything over once or even not at all would have been too much – and she has reciprocated, when she could tear herself away from her phone and "influencing", in sickeningly saccharine tones. I think we have already cottoned on to the fact that WG's days as her beloved are numbered. This was never a true-love match, more of a paddy-with-her-parents rebellion in which WG was a useful stooge.

The whole George thing seems to have split the village, much as the Brexit debacle did. Are you in the "he's done his time camp"? Or "they should have thrown away the key camp"? Mostly, the family, with a few outliers (liberal do gooders), are in the former cadre. Alice's, the Victim's, family (the posh punitives) are in the other. Outrage is common to both!

Back with the posh punitives, the Archers Clan are off on holiday to a remote castle courtesy of a legacy bequest by that indomitable old tartar, Peggy. Kate, she of Spiritual Home, a bonkers haven where shakras, green tea, yoga and heavy breathing are the order of the day, is presently going off on one with her pregnant daughter Phoebe. Poor lass, subjected to enough gushing to flush out the River Am, has alas little prospect of pethidine, gas and air, or an epidural, just a glut of raspberry leaf tea and unctuous verbal excess as her mother threatens to be alongside her at the birth. The guilt of her abandonment of Phoebe in early childhood seems largely to blame for

Mothering with a capital M that amounts to Smothering with a capital S. Meanwhile the rest of the Clan hardly seem to be approaching their family holiday with unfettered enthusiasm. I expect birthing-with-noise will be on next month's agenda.

Talking of which, I am giving up quizzing you the readers on the Archers Saga of Old since not one of you has been in touch with any answers. Quel surprise!

GLAXO 60's/70's SOCIAL EVENT – PHOTOS by Pete Redgrave



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
Crochet Group	Varies	Hazel McCallum 01833 316484
Cryptic Crossword	2 nd Wed pm	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 am	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

Group	Meeting Time	Contact details
Philosophy	4th 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	Sue Overton 07512 368884
Wine Group	3 rd Tues pm	Tim Meacham 07847 182554
Walking Groups		
Shorter walks 3-4 miles	3 rd or 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

20 NOV - 24 DEC

the
witham
Culture • Community • Commerce

Barnard Castle's Community Arts Centre

www.thewitham.org.uk



Andy Parsons: Please #@\$ off to Mars (14+)
Thurs 20 Nov | **Comedy** | 7.30pm | £17-£19

Tina Live - The Tina Turner Experience
Fri 21 Nov | **Tribute** | 7.30pm | £22-£26

Barnard Castle Soul Club:
Northern Soul Night
Sat 22 Nov | **Music & Dance** | From 5.30pm | £6

Steeleye Span **SOLD OUT**
Mon 24 Nov | **Music** | 7.30pm | £32.50

Royal Ballet & Opera: Cinderella
Tues 25 Nov | **Live Screening** | 7.15pm | £12-£14

National Theatre Live: The Fifth Step (15)
Thurs 27 Nov | **Screening** | 7pm | £12-£14

Martin Harley
Fri 28 Nov | **Roots & Blues Music** | 8pm | £20

Qween UK
Sat 29 Nov | **Tribute** | 7.30pm | £20

Midwinter Revels
Fri 5 Dec | **Folk Music** | 7.30pm | £14

John Robertson Plays with his Audience (14+)
Sat 6 Dec | **Comedy** | 7.30pm | £15

The Unthanks **SOLD OUT**
Mon 8 Dec | **Folk Music** | 7.30pm | £32.50

Royal Ballet & Opera: The Nutcracker
Wed 10 Dec | **Live Screening** | 7.15pm | £12-£14

Santa's Jingle Jamboree
Thurs 11 Dec | **Family** | 6pm | £12 Adult or Child £40 Family

The Jive Aces: Swingin' Christmas Show
Fri 12 Dec | **Jazz & Swing** | 8pm | £20-£22

D'Ukes of Scarth: The Ukulele Christmas Sessions
Sat 20 Dec | **Community Music** | 2pm | £6

From Teesdale to the Top of the World
Sat 20 Dec | **Spoken Word** | 5.30pm | £20

Box Office: 01833 631107

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

