

## Teesdale U3A

Everyone has a story about the Tan Hill Inn and Neil Hanson, the speaker at Teesdale u3a, had many that we had not heard before. Neil became the landlord of the Tan Hill Inn in 1978, having worked in a variety of jobs, travelled round the world twice and also been editor of the Good Beer Guide. The facilities at the Tan Hill Inn were fairly primitive. On average it rained 250 days per year and it was common to be snowed in for several weeks during the winter. It helped that the farming community were very supportive. This support included Faith, a charming elderly lady from Keld who travelled in the post office van sitting amongst the post bags, as there were no passenger seats then. There were many instances of lock-ins because of the poor weather and on one occasion when the British Naturalist organisation were staying, the weather was so cold the naturalists were indistinguishable from the normal visitors.

Neil and his wife left the pub for a period but 4 1/2 years later, they were offered the opportunity to buy it. After a good deal of haggling with the owner known for his 'thrift', a price was agreed and they bought it. The Inn was not in good condition but after 2 hectic weeks of refurbishment, they reopened it. This decision was popular with the locals and even Faith returned, still being transported in the post office van.

The windows in the Inn were in very poor condition and Neil decided to involve the manufacturer Everest to replace them, offering the firm an advertising opportunity in return. We all remember the advert involving Ted Moulton and the feather, showing the draught free qualities of the windows. In the ad Ted lost his hat in the gale outside, but Neil revealed that a hidden fishing line was actually used to pull the hat off. The advert was very good for business and despite the conservation officer's objections, planning permission was granted.

Neil now spends his time as a public speaker and writer, being the author of over 60 books, including some ghost written for others.

This was a very engaging and entertaining talk which brought back memories to many in the audience.

The next meeting is on Thursday 25th April when local photographer Andy Beck will be speaking on 'Wainwright in the Dales'.

Ian Reid  
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