



## Newsletter December 2023

Contact us; u3a 07561 626690 Website [www.berwickupontweedu3a.org.uk](http://www.berwickupontweedu3a.org.uk)

### Welcome to your December Newsletter

#### News from the Chair

As I write this I'm finding it difficult to process that this is the last newsletter of 2023. Where has this year gone?

We've had a good year with new groups, our scone and tea events, new members, interesting talks at open meetings and three good placings in the Regional Quiz held in Newcastle. Thanks to everyone who has contributed this year in any way.

I hope you have a lovely holiday season.

#### News From the Committee

Our next open meeting will be **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024** at St Aiden's Hall 10.00 am for 10.30.am

The speaker will be Madaleine Ravetta on 'The Foundling Hospital Collection'

#### November Meeting

Fittingly, in Remembrance week, we had a talk on the Battle of Britain in the North East by Denis Harry Fox, a prominent military history expert and artist who took the long trip up from Durham. He concentrated on the great air conflict that took place on 15 August 1940 above the coast of Northumberland, which paved the way for the defeat of the Luftwaffe. The Germans made a big mistake in thinking that all our aircraft were down south. Denis explored the background, lives and personalities of some of the airmen who bravely shot down German planes on that day: miraculously none of our pilots perished.

Denis's evocative paintings of aircraft in action have been exhibited, among other places, in Durham Cathedral, Durham Town Hall, Ripon Cathedral, Hexham Abbey, and Bamburgh Castle.

**Hilary O'Shea**

## **News From the Groups**

### **Book Group 3**

We met this month as usual in the library, with only one member absent! The book we discussed this time, 'The Postmistress' by Sarah Blake', was a little lighter than the previous month's Orhan Pamuk's 'My Name is Red'! It generated a lot of interest, as it concerned the effects of war, on those who are in the thick of it, and on those who only view it from afar - in this case, World War Two as seen through the eyes of 3 women, one of whom is an American radio journalist who travels to Europe to tell the stories 'by letting the small things speak', and the other two, who remain in small-town America, but whose lives, nevertheless, are changed by war.

All of us were touched by the resonance with our lives today, viewing the horrific effects of war in Ukraine and Gaza from the comfort of our living rooms.

As always, we shared a wide variety of views, but there was lots of agreement too.

### **Tai Chi**

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all our Tai Chi members.

We've had a very good 2023 in which all members have progressed well. The summer outdoor program was a great success, with the surprisingly good weather, and continued indoors in September with new sessions starting. Well done everyone in 2023.

Our indoor sessions will continue until Tuesday 19th December and re-start on 4th January 2024

The New Year is always a good time to think about getting fit and healthy, so maybe other U3A members would also like to improve their health and have fun while doing so. Interested?

The beginner's session is on Tuesday mornings from 09:30 - 10:30, starting in the New Year on 9th January 2024. Don't forget our successful Seated Tai Chi for the less steady.

For more information and contacts, go to the Berwick U3A website and look up Tai Chi:- <https://u3asites.org.uk/berwick/groups>

**Pete Barnes**

## **Art 1 and 2**

IMPORTANT—We are doing watercolours from the beginning of December. I have not had time to devise a full programme for the first three months of 2024. Any ideas would be exceedingly welcome and, please, as soon as possible.

ART 1; December 6 Xmas card design. Single card and envelope provided any extra cards are 2 for 50p.

ART 2; December 13 —please read above.

ART 1; December 20- winter scene in water colour.

On January 4th both groups are invited to coffee to celebrate the New Year. Hope you can all come. New programme will be handed out then.

We still have 2 spaces in both groups. Why not come and paint as one of your New Year resolutions. **Sue Handoll**

## **Scrabble**

Really pleasing play on one of the tables—EQUATING with a score of 40 plus bonus 50, though sadly not quite a winner. Still have space for another table. Next meeting 3rd Monday, 18th Dec., at 2 pm.

I read today that a Gaelic scrabble game will be out for the Christmas market. All our big score letters are not included!!!

**Sue Handoll**

## **Needles and Hooks**

The group will meet a week early on Friday December 15. Please remember to bring in a piece of work completed earlier so we can have a display. **Sue Handoll**

## **Busy Bees**

You will all have heard that Hazel suffered a stroke and is still in Hospital and won't be with us for a while. Theresa has already been booked to take Busy Bees on Friday December 8th. Please bring the cards we did last time.

Theresa has 10 people on her list to crochet a WORRY WORM - who can bring in wool dk and a hook 4? The six people who are doing a mermaid will be provided with all the materials. Some are doing their own thing.

We have decided we are all going to bring in simple nibbles - nothing messy - and you must take back your leftovers at the end of the session. Tea and coffee will be provided by myself. I will also collect money and pay the rent for this month only.

We will carry on with the group on the 2nd Friday of the month even if we do our own work. Ideas welcome.

Importantly, there will also be a Table Decoration competition to be judged by Kirsty with token prizes.

Also, I will buy a "glamour" card so we can all send our best wishes. **Sue Handoll**

### **Art Appreciation**

On Thursday 16th November 20 Art Appreciation members met to hear about '*The Art of Coventry Cathedral*'.

Group member **Allyson Lewis** brought to life the various art genres that had caught her imagination during a visit to Coventry earlier this year.

Those who might have been expecting paintings of mediaeval religious art might have been surprised to find none of these! Instead we learned about architect Basil Spence, sculptor Jacob Epstein, Designer and engineer Ove Arup, engraver John Hutton, sculptor Ralph Beyer, glass designer Patrick Reyniens, tapestry artist and painter Graham Sutherland and sculptor/artist Elizabeth Frink and painter/glass designer John Piper.

Coventry Cathedral began as a Saxon nunnery circa AD 700. Centuries of conflict culminated in a devastating attack by Hitler's Luftwaffe resulting in smoldering ruins. A competition in 1951 produced an unusually modern design, the Coventry Cathedral of today.

We were impressed with Allyson's non-technical talk including handouts which she had carefully made by literally cutting and pasting pictures from good colour leaflets onto card. These were passed round and generated enthusiastic discussion among the group.

After the talk, Allyson was warmly applauded - we had obviously appreciated the efforts that she had made. **Lesley Angell**

### **Exploring History and Places**

The group had their first indoor meeting of the winter. We were looking at old maps of Berwick from 1961, pre WW2 and from 1924. Members were asked to find places on the maps that now no longer exist. Such as the cattle market in Berwick, and the police station in Spittal. Do you know where they were? Next meeting will be on *22nd January'24*, ( as we will not be meeting on 25th December for some reason ). **Martin Rowell**

### **Table Tennis**

The group will not be meeting on 25th December and 1st January. **Martin Rowell**

## **Ride & Stride**

Our November walk was modified from what was originally planned due to extreme muddy conditions in Shiellow Woods. We alighted from the bus at Detchant Lodge and made our way through Detchant Woods, with a lunch break just before emerging from the woods. Then with great views over Holy Island, Ross Sands and beyond we descended back down to Detchant and the Middleton Cottages bus stop. Finding that the bus was 20 minutes late, the group decided to walk the extra mile into Belford to join the bus there.

Our next walk is on Friday 26th January: 5.4 miles from Greenlaw Walls Farm to Shoresdean via Felkington. Bus 10.50 from Railway Street, or 10.55 Golden Square, route 267 to Greenlaw Walls (just beyond Duddo). Return from Shoresdean at 14.28, route 267.     **Derrick Joanes**

## **Geology Group**

I hope to see you at 9.30 – 11.30 or 12.00 – 2.00 on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December, so please bring your questions and appropriate refreshments. Remember that you can come to either session, without any notice to me.

In November the talk was on Cyprus, a classic area where geologists can see oceanic lavas above the surface in a delightful landscape with wonderful scenery, flora and archaeology. Some of you have visited already, so you would have been able to imagine the geological roots of the island.

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December             Isle of Man – rocks, volcanoes and plate tectonics

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January             Isles of Arran and Bute – volcanoes and glaciation

## **Alison Tymon**

### **Backgammon**

This has continued to be a successful and fun group enjoying the age-old game. We have welcomed new members and are happy to welcome even more if you're interested in learning or playing. Most of the group members were complete beginners or had played a long time before and were not comfortable about their playing ability.

We all play each other very happily and enjoy our tea/coffee, biscuits and chat half way through the session

### **Cribbage aka Crib**

This is one of the new groups which started this year. There have only been 3 sessions but seems to be working well. There are a number of different variations of elements of the rules which is causing lots of discussion, but as a group we're working together to agree what we will agree on. **Chris**

### **Zentangle**

This group is bringing out creativity which we didn't all know we had. We're working through basic elements then having a freehand "go" on the tiles. We've been very supportive of each other and are enjoying the mindful aspect of it. **Chris**

### **Quiz**

The members of this group have really pulled together to keep the group running in the absence of the leader, due to illness. Two of the members prepared questions and organised refreshments. The group has agreed to run the next session amongst themselves.

Thanks to the members – I'm sure Hazel will be grateful to them. **Chris O'Neill**

### **Play Reading**

Next meeting is Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December at 4.30.

We will abandon the rather tedious Heartbreak House by GB Shaw and attempt something more cheerful! Details to follow. **Judy Crow**

**Many Thanks to you all for your contributions.**

**There would be no Newsletter without you.**

**Best Wishes for the Christmas Season and a very Happy New Year.**

**Don't forget 2024 is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Berwick u3a. If you have any ideas on how to mark the occasion please share them with Rowena or another member of the committee.**

**Judy Crow**

**Editor**