

Newsletter January 2025

COMMITTEE

June Keeler Chair	Trevor Pitt Treasurer
Speaker Secretary	Andy Downs Groups Coordinator
Sue Mellish Membership Secretary	Sheila Simms Minutes Secretary

Chair's report

Happy new year to you all! As I write this I am watching snowflakes fall past the kitchen window adding to the six inches of snow that we have already.

In the last newsletter I mentioned that we have a new website so I hope some of you have had the opportunity to visit it. Our website manager, James Lundie has done a brilliant job and can see how many hits it receives. In the process of completing this task many decisions are taken with the guidance of the national Third Age Trust, one of which is the security of members contact details. These are 'cloaked' and when visitors to the website need to contact Leyburn u3a, they do so by using the system that's in place. Therefore, contact details in the newsletter have been removed for the moment as this information would be seen on the worldwide web. At the next committee meeting this item will form a big part of the agenda.

One option is to remove the newsletter from the website and so contact details of u3a members could then remain in it as these, with owners permission, would only be circulated to members only. When we look at other u3a websites some of them have a 'members only' area which require a password system and so this may be another option and more work for our website manager. As you have now read, the committee takes this issue very seriously and so the decision will be thoroughly discussed. The next meeting is on Friday 17th January at 12pm following our Speaker meeting. Please remember that you are always welcome to attend as an observer and invited to share an opinion.

On a less stressful item, Bob Hill has two spaces in his ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS class which runs from Thursday 16th January at 2pm. You can contact him via the website under the 'Groups' category.

And finally, phew! It's our 10th anniversary this year so if you have any memorabilia, for example, photos, meetings notes etc from the starting-up of this fantastic community group could you rake them out of the attic and keep them safe for later? My idea is to display them on our lovely recently new display boards at the July speaker meeting. Another item on the agenda!

June

Speaker Report

U3A, HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE - the history of u3a - Bob Hill

At a well-attended Christmas social this year we had the pleasure of listening to a Leyburn u3a member giving a short, but detailed presentation about the history of u3a.

In spite of speaking from behind his own lectern, this wasn't a sermon but a very passionate delivery of the u3a movement and the opportunities it creates for us all. Bob described his own experience of setting up a branch in Torrevieja, Spain where he and his late wife had recently retired to.

The brief history lesson started in 1968 where legislation in France required universities to provide more community education. The first seeds of what was to eventually become the u3a were sown in 1972 in Toulouse where the first Summer School was held. Pierre Vallas was the man responsible for the concept of seeking to improve the quality of life for older people by connecting them with academic programmes run by a university. The slogan then was "Lifelong Learning for Older People".

In 1981, a trial u3a began in England at Cambridge University which modified the French model and developed a mutual-help organisation. This would become the blueprint of future u3as. The idea of providing educational opportunities for older people was already in the minds of four eminent people in the UK, Michael Young, Peter Laslett, Eric Midwinter and Dianne Norton. The emerging u3a movement designed itself on groups of people getting together to learn what interested them, with a group leader or convenor to coordinate and help guide their efforts. Their purpose must be educational in its widest sense meaning that it can have leisure and social purposes too.

Quite quickly, three big u3as became established in England; Cambridge, London and Huddersfield. By the early 1990s a u3a was opening somewhere in the UK every 2 weeks. Today there are over a thousand u3as operating in Great Britain alone comprising of half a million members. By October 1983 the u3a's national organisation, to be known as The Third Age Trust (TAT) had been formed and is a limited company and a registered charity.

Why university? It has become recognised that u3a is in fact a university but in the original sense of the word - a voluntary community of people devoted to learning, coming together to share and pursue knowledge in all its forms. Why 'third age?' it's a phase in one's life which comes usually with retirement and senior citizen status. However, the national organisation does not specify any minimum or maximum age for membership and no proof is required to show that one is not in full-time employment.

Moving into today's technical age, there is a u3a podcast, and worth listening to, on the radio. And as the latest U3a slogan says... 'It's time to make the rest of your life the BEST of your life'.

Bob closed his presentation with a sound recording of 'Feliz Navidad' by Jose Feliciano.

MARRICK PRIORY OUTDOOR CENTRE

In our first talk of 2025, on Friday 17 January, we will move from the past to the present day. Marrick Priory in Swaledale is an outdoor educational and residential centre which hosts more than 3000 young people each year from across the North of England. Whilst staying at the Priory youngsters learn new skills and develop their self-confidence through engaging in activities such as high ropes, canoeing, caving and archery.

Its building has a fascinating history; Marrick Priory began as a 12th Century Benedictine nunnery which was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1540. **Sandy Carter** will guide us in the 'footsteps of the nuns' from the Priory's creation in 1155 to the present day.

Sandy has been the Centre's Development Officer since 2011. As well as booking in youth and adult groups for a day, week or weekend of outdoor activities, she is also responsible for bringing the history of the Priory to life again. She does this by hosting tours for people attending the successful Spring and Christmas Lunches, via heritage days throughout the year and speaking to local groups.

Over the next few years, the Priory has ambitious plans to develop its services to a wider audience – thereby allowing more people to realise the magic of the Marrick Priory Experience!

Monthly Meeting

Doors open at 10.00 for 10.30 at Leyburn Arts and Community Centre, Richmond Road, Leyburn DL8 5DL. Visitors and new members are always welcome. Annual membership is £12 or £20 for two people at the same address, For details contact Sue Mellish Membership Secretary via website .

The Garden Group

I am stepping down as Convenor of this group after 10 years. It is time for someone else to take on this role. Someone with new ideas! It is not a very arduous role but some computer skills are needed!

What is involved:

1. All U3A Groups must have a convenor.
2. The Convenor is responsible for contact with the committee and holds all the contact details of the members of the group.
3. Some computer skills are needed to communicate with members, arrange and send out the program, arrange outings and events and keep members informed of activities.
4. Write a report for the Newsletter
5. Monthly meetings.

We are meeting as a group at Rose Connor's home 9 Bishopdale Close, Leyburn on Tuesday 14th January 2pm to take this group forward. Any body who is interested is very welcome.

Below is a list of most of activities over the last 7 years.

Castle Howard

Ravensworth Demo x 2

RHS Bridgewater

Braithwaites Nursery Demo

RHS Harlow Carr

The Glebe Field Wensley

Warnall Hall Cumbria

Greshgarth Gardens Caton

Jervaulx Abbey

Himalayan Garden and Sculpture
Park

Kiplin Hall

Harrogate Spring Flower Show

Sion Hall

Ripon Workhouse

Langton Farm NGS

Thorpe Perrow

Constable Burton

Helmsley Walled Garden

Scampston Walled Garden

Levens Hall

Littlethorpe Manor

Ripon Walled Garden

Parceval Hall

Newburgh Priory

Coverham Abbey

Ampleforth Orchards Cider
Making

Beningborough Hall

Larch Cottage

Egglestone Hall

Wynyard Gardens

The Grange Skipton NGS

Fountains Abbey

Castle Bolton

Strikes Garden Centre

Members' Gardens Leyburn

Member's Gardens Askrigg

Member's Gardens West
Witton

Hay Meadow Bellerby

Redmire Church & Nappa Hall

Plants bulb & seed swaps

Plant Hunters

Famous Gardeners

Tree Identification

Making Christmas Decoration

DVD and Quiz

Indoor Plants

Raby Castle

Lowther Castle

Church View Appleby NGS

Eden Cottage Nursery

Martin Fish Garden

Broaches Farm NGS

The Forge Ravensworth NGS

Norton Conyers

Dark Star Plants

Thornton Hall Gardens

Mary Sadler

Needlecraft Group

This craft group resumes after the extended Christmas break on Wednesday January 22nd 2-4 pm.

We are hoping to attract new members to our group, as unfortunately some have moved out of the area or (for many reasons) have not renewed their u3a subscription. We currently meet twice a month in each others homes. We are a very welcoming friendly bunch, who enjoy each other's company and sometimes we even manage to do some Needlecraft! The group is open to all - yes even you gentlemen and even if you haven't done any craft for years or would like to learn, do feel free to come and meet us and see what we do. If you are interested and would like more details you can contact me through the Groups link on the Leyburn u3a website.

Happy New Year,
Ann Lundie

BIRD GROUP

Nosterfield Reserve December 2024



The final u3a bird group visit of the year was to our most local reserve at Nosterfield. After the weekend visit of Storm Darragh, it was of no surprise that water levels on the main reserve were high meaning the birdlife was a tad closer than usual. An abundance of wildfowl was seen including Widgeon, Lapwing, Shelduck, Teal a couple of Redshank were also seen feeding in the outer pools. Flying in, a pair of Mute Swans and Cormorants must have been relieved that the wind speeds had lessened enabling a smooth water landing. Curlew were present in far fewer numbers than our last visit back in July however using Max's Scope we were able to spot a Ruff; the range of this wading bird in much of Europe is contracting because of land drainage, increased fertiliser use, the loss of mown or grazed breeding sites, and over-hunting. This decline has seen it listed. The ruff is a migratory species, breeding in wetlands in colder regions of northern Eurasia, and spends the northern winter in the tropics, mainly in Africa. Some Siberian breeders undertake an annual round trip of up to 30,000 km (19,000 mi) to the West African wintering grounds! There is a limited overlap of the summer and winter ranges in western Europe so perhaps this one had been blown off course. Golden Plover and Dunlin were tricky to identify but with our experts Max, Chris, Richard and Liz on hand we were confident of their identity despite the winter plumage being much duller and harder to match up with the identification guides.

During the walk to the North Hide, a small herd of twenty Hebridean sheep were grazing happily on the grassland surrounding the Main Lakes. Hebridean Sheep have established a reputation as the breed for the management of delicate ecosystems. Their dietary preferences are different from those of other breeds and this, coupled with their ability to thrive on vegetation with poor energy values, makes them a unique management tool. They are used to control the growth of several different unwanted invasive plant species and encourage biodiversity. A recent addition to the reserve has been the attractive and informative panels by Amy Horton, Nosterfield's Community Liaison officer and talented artist, along the paths

and around the hides informing visitors of what to look out for. A Little Egret, Grey Heron along with a beautiful Mistle Thrush wrestling worms out of the mud margins along with a Little Grebe brought the total species count to 30+. A partial rainbow toward Masham signalled it was time to head for a lovely Christmas Lunch at the Golden Lion.

Next Meeting: Monday 10 th February 2024 Nosterfield Quarry Entrance Reserve just outside village at 10.00 am. New members are warmly welcomed.

Leyburn & District u3a Laptop & Technology Group (Tech Group)

We did not hold a Tech Group session in December, particularly as the date fell so close to Christmas.

However, we're back in business from this month with our next session being held on Monday January 20 th at the usual time 2.00pm to 4.00pm at Leyburn Arts & Community Centre, Richmond Road, Leyburn. DL8 5DL

Here to help you

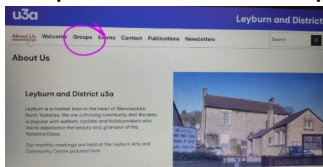
The u3a Tech' Group aims to provide basic help and assistance in a safe, friendly and welcoming environment. The ethos of u3a is all about mutual learning and we look to give advice and information that helps the member to solve their own tech problem wherever possible, so that if a similar issue occurs again they know what to do and even be able to help someone else who has the same problem. Nothing beats that satisfying feeling of having solved a problem yourself.

An Apology

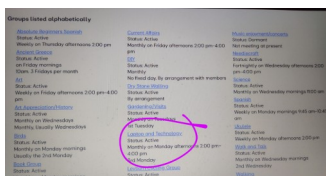
In previous meeting reports we have always included contact details for the Tech Group Convenors to make it easy should you wish to get in touch or let us know you'd like to join the group. Unfortunately for the time being no member contact details are permitted in the newsletter. Therefore if you you'd like to get in touch or wish to attend the next session or be added to the meeting reminder circulation please visit the Leyburn &

District u3a website at <https://leyburn.u3asite.uk/> and follow these steps:

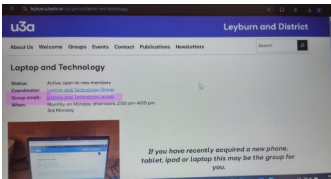
Step 1: Click on 'Groups'



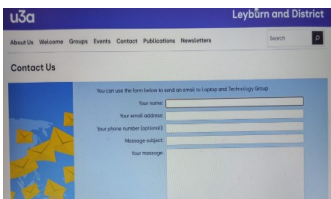
Step 2: Click on Laptop and Technology



Step 3: Click on Group email: Laptop and Technology Group



Step 4: Fill in the form that appears and add your message.



What it costs

All we charge is £2 per member which helps cover room hire. Coffee and Tea are available for a small donation of just £1. Non u3a Members can attend up to two sessions before deciding whether to take up u3a membership so feel free to bring a friend.

And finally!

If you are coming to a session, please bring your device and any connecting lead or charger AND most importantly have available any password related to it or to your query. We look forward to welcoming you.