

Newsletter April 2025

## COMMITTEE

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

### Chair report

Welcome to April's newsletter. The sun is shining on Leyburn!

The first thing to say is a reminder that there is not a speaker meeting this month as the third Friday of April lands on Good Friday. So the next thing to remind you about is the AGM on May 16th 10am for 10.30 start with cakes! This replaces the speaker meeting in May and so I'm looking forward to seeing you all then.

In case you are not aware ... the whole committee resigns on that day and a new one is elected. This is achieved by the members of u3a proposing individuals to join the committee. Forms for this task will be sent out soon by your membership secretary. Current committee members are not allowed to take part in this process so if you still want a committee then it's up to you to start approaching people, in a polite way of course, and propose them. There are plenty of roles that need filling. I'm happy to stay on the committee as Chair or Secretary or Speaker secretary. I have experience of all three.

We will be looking for a Groups Coordinator too. Most of the current committee members are happy to stay on too, thank goodness, but there are still key roles to fill. We now meet four times a year and conduct some business electronically which saves time and journeys.

See you at the AGM,

June

## Speaker report

Boundary Stones - Hilary Jones

Leyburn u3a welcomed the return of the Vice-Chairperson of the Milestone Society to talk about a different type of stone called a Boundary stone.

What does a boundary stone do? I hear you ask. Its purpose is to mark the ownership OF land and the responsibility and liability FOR the land.

How do I find one? All O.S maps have them with a BP/BS marked on them. You can find a lot on Grinton moor!

There are different types of Boundary stones. In the 10th century, stones were introduced to denote the parish boundaries so that tithes could be paid to the relevant priest, and continued up to the 19th century. They were also useful for the census. In 1836 the Tithes Commutation Act determined any disputed boundaries and in 1882 the Divided Parishes Act caused Boundary Stones to move as parishes changed. An amusing story told was that "Beating the Bounds" was a walk round the parish boundary to check the boundary markers. A young boy would accompany this group to be told exactly where the stone should be and may have received a physical reminder too! This happened every 7 years after Easter before crops became established. In Richmond it still continues and this year it will happen on Wednesday August 27th at 9 am should you wish to witness it.

Boundary markers have random designs. Those marking the county or parish are usually inscribed or painted. Local designs, for example, in the Craven district are double-headed. Some are even Grade 2 listed. In rural areas they are made of stone and in urban areas cast iron was used as industry was developing. Another type of stone from the Elizabethan era is linked to the person responsible for maintaining highways; a lengths man. You will see 'Here ends Leyburn road' or 'Here ends East Witton Road' or even 'here Old Slend road begins 1837'. For the latter it would seem that Old Sleningford hall was responsible for the road. The division of North and West Ridings is marked on a bridge. Lead mining rights on Grassington moor were called 'meer' stones. A meer was about 30 yards by 15 yards and the original finder of the mineral vein was granted 2 meers. In the 1760s stones were set in the ground to help mark out the extremities of the leases and numbered over 140 spread out over the moor. Estate BMs, eg, B for Bolton are well-maintained and more common in the north of England due to grouse moorland. So next time you're out and about look out for these interesting markers. If you would like any further information you can access the [www.milestonesociety.co.uk](http://www.milestonesociety.co.uk) and learn even more.

## Monthly Meeting

There is no talk on Friday 18 April as it's Good Friday and Leyburn Arts & Community Centre (LACC) is closed.

Did you know that your u3a is active in making Leyburn a better place. We organise a regular litter pick on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, and some of our members are involved in the Better Leyburn Group which has recently refurbished the market shelter and has an ongoing programme of town centre benches improvement. Other members have planted wild flowers and revitalised green areas and work in the LACC community garden. Find out more from our new website [www.leyburn.u3asite.UK](http://www.leyburn.u3asite.UK)

Our next meeting is the AGM on 16 May and our next talk in June is from Steve Erskine of the Green Howard's Museum.

## Helping Your Committee

Thank you to all those who have offered to meet and greet or organise the coffee at the monthly meetings. All slots filled until April 2026. Hooray!

Melanie

## Bird Group

Bolton Ponds 10th March 2025

The drive across to Bolton upon Swale was a rather misty one in stark contrast to the previous weekend of wonderful sunshine. However, as the saying goes "every cloud has a silver lining" - the small band of U3A birders were treated to a splendid display of over 39 species!

Bolton Ponds is a small but very important site managed by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and in common with Marfield and Nosterfield reserves, was a former sand and gravel quarry. A short walk to the first of the two hides provided an excellent vantage point to see numerous Reed Buntings at very close quarters. The males' heads were distinctly darker than the females and one advantage of the rather dull light conditions was that it enabled clearer identification of bird species, many of whom were in breeding plumage. The reed beds weren't too thick, and this enabled us to get clear sight of Chiffchaffs, a small olive brown warbler, flitting through reeds, with a distinctive tail-wagging movement. Their distinctive song was also heard which is a delight to hear after the long winter. To one side of the hide was a good array of feeders which after a cold night provided welcome feast to Dunnock, Great Tit and Chaffinch along with a host of energetic Tree Sparrows.

There was some discussion on the importance of keeping feeders clean between top ups. Trichomonosis is a parasitic disease that is passed from bird to bird via saliva. This happens wherever birds feed intensively, including hanging feeders or bird tables. Whilst many species can become infected, finches are the most affected. The symptoms are lethargy, difficulty in swallowing, drooling, regurgitation, fluffed feathers. Shockingly, the British greenfinch population is now endangered and may face extinction after falling by a huge 66 per cent since 2006 due to this disease and other common garden birds are also susceptible to Trichomonosis.

In the distance, we could see a flock of Fieldfares resting high in the tree line surrounding the lake. Moving the short distance to the second hide, we were able to get a better view of the reserve's wildfowl and waders. A personal highlight was a pair of Teal whose plumage was so distinctive and beautiful the colours were just like the identification guides. Shoveller, Golden Eye and Tufted ducks along with a larger group of Widgeon grazing on the steeper margins of the lake were easily spotted. The drakes had a fine chestnut coloured head and neck whilst the ducks had a grey, brown mottled plumage. As if on cue, we had a fly past of a Little Egret followed by a low flying Heron. A solitary Red Shank (perversely sporting a pair of orange legs) was seen feeding on the stony shoreline.

We were joined on this visit by Andrew Lapworth from Barnard Castle U3A, who some members may recall gave a very informative talk about birdlife in the Outer Hebrides at Richmond Town Hall. It was interesting to hear how populations of birds were faring further afield. It is hoped that we can liaise with Andrew to arrange a visit his birding haunts and widen our range of birding locations on the Northwest fringes of our patch Thank you to Liz for leading us round her local birding reserve. It is definitely worth a visit and its very close proximity to Leyburn and size make it ideal for engaging younger members of the family /grandchildren with nature.

Next Meeting: Monday 12th May at Redmire Moor at 10.00am. New members are warmly welcomed.

Here is the contribution from the **Garden group**.

Our March meeting took place in West Witton Village Hall. Each of us brought along our favourite book or books on a gardening theme. There was a surprising variety from notebooks in which we recorded the plants in our own gardens or gardens we had loved to well thumbed reference books and books written by inspirational gardeners. They stimulated a lot of discussion, nostalgia and ideas for future reading. We all enjoyed sharing our knowledge and enthusiasm very much in the spirit of the founding principles of U3A.

Our next meeting is at Constable Burton at 2pm on April 13th (Palm Sunday). Meet in the car park. Tickets are available through the website [constableburton.com](http://constableburton.com) and are £8 each. Please let me know if you intend joining us to enjoy the beautiful spring flowers.

Paul

## **Ukulele group.**

The ukulele group continue to play for singalongs. We do Singing for Pleasure for folk with dementia and their carers. Birthday celebrations at Kirkwood Hall, and celebrations for VE Day. If you fancy having go at ukulele, come along on Monday at 2-00 at TOSH, we can lend you a ukulele for you to try. Learning a musical instrument is good for the brain! And does lift your spirits.

## **Croquet**

We are hoping to play Croquet again this year, if there is enough of us! We shall aim to play weekly again starting Thursday April 24th at 10.30, opposite the Wensleydale Heifer in West Witton. New members welcome, lifts available if needed. We have some equipment but are missing a few mallets and balls from the original sets. So if any members who find they have any equipment hiding in their garage please let me know and I will collect them.

Please contact Mary Sadler if you wish to play croquet this year.

## **Current Affairs Discussion Group.**

The Chancellor's Spring Statement.

Many members had sent apologies or were tempted by the sunshine into their gardens so we had an uncharacteristically thin attendance.

Nevertheless, We had a good wide ranging discussion which deviated some way from the original subject. We strayed onto whether exponential growth was a feasible objective, whether the growth in autism was because we are all being poisoned, the foreign ownership of our water and steel industries and whether the USA was a democracy as the Senate and House of Representatives appear to have no control over a demented dictator.

Our next meeting is on Friday 2 May at LACC at 2.00pm when we will discuss a topic to be suggested by members.

New members are very welcome. Please contact convenor Gerald Hodgson if you are interested.

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

Numbers attending the March tech session remained low, but the reduction to 90 minutes to reduce the room hire cost, meant we were just about able to cover it.

It was an interesting session with a good outcome in most cases. Here's a selection of things we covered.

### Transferring data from Phone to Phone...

Whenever we change our phone or have other reasons why we need to transfer information from one phone to another, we might find it a bit daunting and need a bit of help. That's exactly what one member came to the session in March to do. There are various ways to do this and personal circumstances vary but happily all the required data, contacts etc was successfully copied over and a factory reset was carried out on the old iPhone that was no longer needed.

### Adding contacts to a BT Email Account...

It's easy to take some things for granted when you know how things are done, but we all have to learn initially. Adding names, addresses and email addresses to their Bt email account was what one member needed to be shown and by the time the session ended, she was all sorted and able to add further addresses as and when required.

### Sorting Email Group Contacts - Options...

Every email account provider does things different, but the query one member had was whether you can list email contacts by surname rather than first name. The member in question had a large number of contacts within a Group and for various reasons in her Outlook account wanted to list this Group in order of surname. This has defeated us so if any u3a member knows if there are options in how to sort and one of these options is by last name, do let us know.

### Passports and Visas...

A requirement to apply for a travel visa was slightly foxing one attendee - the application being completed on their phone was going well but an image of their passport needed to be uploaded. Assistance was given, but before the photo could be uploaded, for reasons unknown, the previously entered information across several pages had disappeared!!!

Technology is great except when it isn't!!

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 may even be able to help someone else who has the same problem. Nothing beats that satisfying feeling of having solved a problem yourself - with the help of Google occasionally.

Feel free to email either myself (John), Christine or Sue if you'd like to attend or to be added to the meeting email list.

Next Meeting...

We meet the third Monday of each month. However, there won't be a meeting this month (April) as it falls on Easter Monday so the next meeting will be on Monday May 19th.

Meetings take place 2pm - 3.30pm at Leyburn Arts & Community Centre. £2 per member which helps cover room hire. Coffee and Tea are available for a small charge 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.