



Newsletter October 25

COMMITTEE

June Keeler Chair		Trevor Pitt Treasurer	
Melanie Geldeart Groups Coordinator		Mary Sadler Speaker Secretary	
Sue Mellish Membership Secretary		Sheila Simms Minutes Secretary	

Chair's report

Welcome to the October newsletter .

Have you ever seen so many acorns? Apparently it's due to stress!

The only news I have this month is the development of our new bank account with the Coop. All payments to u3a are to be made by cash or BACS as we are now digital! A lot of hours have been spent organising this by our committee.

We are now looking into the possibility of joining a national platform that u3a uses to organise the membership. This, again, will involve the committee spending many hours training to use the system. We hope that it will help the membership secretary to coordinate this in a more efficient and easier way.

June

Monthly Meeting

Wheelchair Adventures

by

Brett Crossley

Brett is 51 years old, lives in Leeds and has faced a major life challenge. His talk is about suffering a spinal cord injury in a serious motorcycle racing accident in 2006 that left him wheelchair dependant. He considered this as his worst nightmare and thought his life was as good as over. He felt he would be never again be able to do the things he had previously enjoyed and couldn't see a way forward. It took a long time to come to terms with his situation; a couple of years before he started making some positive steps and start to seek out new challenges which took him on many adventures, which he will tell you about on Friday 17 October.

Visitors and new members are always welcome. Doors open at 10.00 for 10.30 at Leyburn Arts and Community Centre, Richmond Road, Leyburn DL8 5DL. For details contact Membership secretary www.leyburn.u3asite.uk

Speaker report

Lady Isobel Chator, Aviatrix - Georgiana Sale

Another well-attended speaker presentation at TOSH last month listened to a fascinating story about the life of a baker's daughter from Croft-on-Tees who became a pioneering aviator and fashionista.

Isobel was born in 1890 the 7th child of twelve. In 1890 the family moved from Glasgow to Middlesborough and then in 1901 they moved to Darlington. Her father's business was growing successfully and at that time Darlington was deemed as 'posh'. She met Edmund Chator who was a stockbroker and the 3rd son of a baronet and in 1912 they married. Between 1896 and 1913 his two older brothers had died as well as his father. And so Isobel became Lady Chator and her life became a whirl of parties, fashion and glamour. She and Edmund had four children and divided their time between Croft Hall and Witton Castle. In 1922 they moved to Chelsea and sold the Croft estate. Isobel became a journalist and a huge party-thrower. Cannily, she advertised her events in advance to the press. She also became a fashion writer.

In 1931 the Daily Mail reported that Lady Isobel was to fly to Australia in an open-top Gypsy Moth. She'd had flying lessons but no licence. Whilst at the Brooklands School of flying in Surrey she met Rab Richards, a much younger man who had had a licence for just 2 months! His father owned shipyards and Rab had graduated as an engineer. In the absence of flying maps they used the AA roadmap instead and flew in daytime. Her flying suit was made by Fenwicks in Newcastle and she named the plane 'Miss Beefex'. Isobel didn't miss an opportunity to advertise in advance where they would be landing and what she would be wearing. In Australia she continued to tour around endorsing products of fashion as she went. Rab sold the plane and it was used for the Flying Doctors, and they sailed home.

She and her husband moved to the USA and in 1935 Edmund died. He was buried at Witton-le-Wear near Bishop Auckland. So, of course she was no longer LADY Isobel. she re-married 5 months later to a wealthy American businessman . It seems that her family didn't like her but they liked him! He died 5 years later and left her £2000 a year. She then went to Madeira and gave more parties until she died in 1968, alone. She is buried in an unmarked grave. Our speaker, Georgiana is collecting funds from her presentations to buy a headstone.

u3a Bird Group Visit to RSPB Saltholme 8 th September 2025

Leaving a showery Leyburn, the u3a bird group headed North up the A1 to this well-regarded RSPB reserve near Billingham. Surrounded by iconic Teesside sights including the Transporter Bridge, this wetland oasis offers a warm welcome to all the family. As we parked up, we noticed the very well-equipped wooden playground packed full of bird theme climbing frames. The visitor centre boasts a well-stocked shop and café although our first stop was the indoor viewing area which offered a panoramic view of the reserve. Moorhen, and Lapwing along with a small group of Sand-pipers and a Ruff were enjoying the muddy outcrops. A Snipe was also present but took us a tad longer to locate with it being rather far away and most unhelpfully with its back to the viewing area! The feeder area just in front of us provided close quarter views of Goldfinches (juveniles) as they hadn't yet acquired the distinctive red band near the beak, Chaffinch and Greenfinches.

Donning our raincoats we headed along the well-marked and level paths to the Saltholme Pools hide. This area had undergone extensive remodelling last year to create a larger muddy area. However, the extremely dry summer has reduced the mud to rather a cracked and arid area. The two-storey hide was a great viewpoint to see a lovely group of Avocets in their bright white and black plumage and distinctive curved bills, Shelduck and a gaggle of Barnacle geese feeding on the water's edge. Using the scopes, we could see that one or two of the geese had wide white banded collars with numbers around their necks. Normally birds are ringed around their legs, so this was an interesting sight. Back at the centre, I enquired about this and was informed that the collars are used for wildlife research to track their movements, population dynamics, and migratory patterns. These collars are a form of colour-ringing, allowing scientists to identify individual birds from a distance and collect data on their behaviour and survival rates without having to recapture them. While GPS neck collars are also used, most are simple coded collars for easier field identification. Smaller birds are often caught in mist nests and their rings logged and birds weighed and measures before careful release back to the wild. Given the large size of these geese, I could appreciate the advantage of these collars to scientists! A solitary spoonbill was also spotted scoping for food with its beacon the far side of the lake. The group had been fortunate to see the breeding colony of Spoonbills at St Aidan's reserve earlier this year, so it was great to see another this far north.

Visits to the Paddy's Pond hide gave us a good view over the grassland area where a beautiful Marsh Harrier did a couple of circuits overhead. A Kestrel was seen hunting in the distance descending quickly when it had sight of its prey. Electric fencing has been used on the reserve around the large area of wet grasslands to prevent foxes getting into nesting area and this allows a good number of chicks such as Lapwings to survive. After lunch we ventured to the Phil Stead Hide which is surrounded by reedbeds. These had recently been cut back to create channels for birds such as Bitten and Heron to hunt and hide in the area. Sadly, we could not spot Bitten or Water Rails this time however it will just mean a return visit to this reserve will be on the cards. A grand total of 41 bird species were identified during our visit. A big thank you to Richard and Max & Chris for use of their scopes.

Our next outing will be at 10am at Staveley Nature reserve on 10th November 2025. New members are warmly welcomed.

The Croquet group

We have now stopped playing croquet as the grass has become too damp. The few of us who play every week, when able, have had a most enjoyable summer. Due to the lovely weather there were very days when we were unable to play. The grassy area opposite the Wensleydale Heifer in West Witton has been well mown for us by a team of residents from West Witton, we thank them. It is a very pleasant way to get some gentle exercise - we shall miss it. Play will recommence next April.

Mary Sadler

Current Affairs Discussion Group.

Six of us met to discuss the topical and complex subject "Standards in public life". This centred round the Nolan principals following the report set up by the Major government 30 years ago following the "cash for questions" scandal.

We meet next on Friday 7 November at 2.00 pm at LACC when we will consider "What practical steps should the UK and the world be taking to mitigate the effects of climate change".

THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT GREECE GROUP

CONVENOR: STUART LENNIE

FROM PERICLES TO PLATO.

When Leyburn u3a was established in 2015 I wondered whether there would be sufficient support for the formation of a group to study one of our greatest civilisations (some would say the greatest) namely the Ancient Greeks. Well, it happened - the History of Ancient Greece Group was formed & held its first meeting on October 30th 2015 making it 10 years old this month. In the light of this the convenor would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all those members who have contributed to the Group.

Despite the Group's small numbers (4-5) we have had many wide-ranging discussions on many aspects of Ancient Greece, examples of which are set out below

- the construction of the Parthenon on the Acropolis
- the Elgin Marbles – to be retained in the British Museum or returned to Greece
- the origin and organisation of the Olympic Games
- the myths such as the murder of Agamemnon by his wife Clytemnestra & her murder by her son
- the dramatic works of the great tragedians, Sophocles, Aeschylus & Euripides.

There are many sources of information on Ancient Greece for members to tap into to find specific topics of interest. Apart from books there are newspapers & magazine articles & TV programmes made by Bettany Hughes and Alice Roberts.

What of the future? Will the Group continue? The answer is yes if its present members want it to. What however would be encouraging would be if we could attract somewhere in the region of 3 new members.

We meet on the first and last Fridays of the month and the next meetings will be on the 31st October and the 7th of November. So, after you have done your shopping on the market pop around the corner between 10am and 12 noon to LACC and transport yourself back some 2500 years to a civilisation which was the forerunner of ours.

Here is my report from the Gardens Group

We are all looking forward to our visit to Ripon Walled Garden on Tuesday October 7th. It's popular with many of our members, not least for having reasonably priced plants for sale and a nice café. The apples in their historic orchard will be a bonus.

Paul

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

I am sad to say that the September meeting of the u3a Tech Group has proven to be the last under the umbrella of u3a – see below 'Now to the future'. I had pointed to that possibility in my last report, but it just could not be sustained with such low attendance.

However, we were nonetheless able to assist three u3a members who came along seeking help with their various devices, so we finished on a positive note.

One member needed to link her new Blu-ray Apple Ear Pods to her new Apple i-Pod which was a quick thing to sort out. This members second issue was not so simple but ought to have been. It concerned uninstalling Norton Internet Security from their laptop as the renewal price was way too expensive – this part was simple to do. The next step was to install the same Internet Security package which had been purchased off Amazon. This can typically be bought from around £11 for a one year subscription for installation on up to three devices. Other options offer up to five or 10 devices which obviously cost a bit more but still far less than the Norton £80direct renewal price!!

Unfortunately when entering the Norton 'Product Key' for the 10 devices package that had been purchased for circa £20 it brought up an error message saying that this key is not authorised for your country! When purchasing something like this on the internet it is an easy mistake to make. We suggested this member contacts Amazon to explain what had occurred and see if a refund was possible. Another member needed some help to properly understand the implications outlined in a letter they had received from their Mobile Phone service provider Sky. This explained that the 3G network would no longer be supported by Sky (and most others) from early next year and this meant the mobile phone they were using would no longer work with many apps etc. The phone was a Samsung A14 which was only purchased 18 months ago from Tesco for circa £190, which I personally think ought not to have still been on the market as 3G has been being phased out since 2023. This member must now purchase a more up to date phone which will work with 4G and 5G networks. 5G coverage is still somewhat limited but my advice to anyone needing to replace their phone now would be to buy a 5G compatible one.

A third member was shown how to add the Messenger app to her phone, and how to find any messages received, either using that app or using Facebook – of which Messenger is linked to.

This member was also shown an easy way on to find out if an unwanted app can be uninstalled from their android phone. Bingo they now have a much less cluttered phone. Many apps come pre-installed. Some are sponsored by the app maker (paid to be pre-installed), others are essential, whilst some are not essential but cannot be uninstalled – although most can be removed from the display to hide in the background if not wanted.

Now to the future.

I am pleased to report that we have agreed to become a part of the existing Digital Support Drop-in Sessions held weekly at LACC and therefore our tech sessions are going to continue, same day, time and venue as before – the third Monday of the month, 2pm – 3.30pm at Leyburn Arts & Community Centre (LACC) – but it will no longer be as part of u3a. This means that any member of the public can come along, there is no room hire for us to pay, no charge to attend and even better coffee is free too!

These are weekly sessions and times and days can vary for the other weeks – phone LACC for details, but the one that Christine, Sue and myself (John Sutton) will host will always be third Monday of the month as explained above.

So if you have a tech query and want help and guidance to show you 'how to' solve it, install it, remove it, delete it, download it or whatever, do pop along to any of the weekly sessions.