



COMMITTEE

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

**Chair report**

**A happy welcome to December’s newsletter.**

**Would you like the good news first? Annual subscriptions for new members are reduced to £5 as from this month until March next year . So if you know anyone who is thinking about joining then share the good news.**

**I like to try to keep you informed with committee decisions. At the most recent meeting it was agreed that we would go ahead with the Beacon option to manage our membership. Part of this process will involve Susie Mellish uploading data onto a very secure national platform and making the membership role easier. This will take place in the next few weeks in time for the next membership year, fingers crossed. Of course there is a cost and it is a £1 per member. The committee will be discussing the price of membership at the next meeting in January.**

**Our next speaker meeting on Friday 19th December will be a mixture of a social involving mincepies and a guest speaker, David Poole from LAACS. He will be explaining the Emergency Plan for the local area and how that affects us.**

**Some mixed news... is that James Lundie, our website manager is sadly leaving us and the area. He has spent a lot of time and retraining to ensure the website runs smoothly and looks attractive. The good news is that we have quickly found a replacement in Stella Swan who has had previous experience of website management. So a big thank you to Stella! So when you see James please give him a big pat on the back and wish him well.**

**We are still continuing to look for a secretary to support the organisation of committee meetings, but without any luck so far. Could this be you?**

**Further to this mixed news, we are now looking for a treasurer as from May 2026. Trevor Pitt sadly will be resigning then. He very kindly took this role on after much persuasion and the fact that LEYBURN u3a would have FOLDED if we did not find a replacement. And it will fold immediately after the AGM in May if we cannot find a replacement for him. Can you please think of someone who might be able to fill this role? Trevor has spent many hours researching into a new bank account and setting up other successful systems for our organisation to run smoothly. Do we want this work to go to waste? We have a thriving u3a so let’s keep it going.**

**Finally, for those of you who took little pots for the RNLI away with you after the most recent speaker meeting, remember that you can drop them off at the regular speaker meetings.**

**If I don’t see you in December have a joyous and stress-free Christmas holiday and a Happy New Year!!**

**June**

## Monthly Meeting

Members are invited to a pre-Christmas social on Friday 19 December for a chat, mince pies and coffee.

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](http://www.leyburn.u3asite.uk)

## Wooden Boats and Iron Men (a history of the RNLI) - David Hastings

Yet another fascinating speaker visited Leyburn & District u3a this week. David, chief fundraiser in the north-east, opened with a poem called Sunday Sailor. He'd been rescued twice as a sailor in the Merchant Navy, the first time when there was an explosion and a fireball bundled him out into the Caribbean sea and the second time when his ship broke down off the coast of Sweden.

A video clip followed contrasting a calm sea with a more stormy one and filming of a lifeboat. Did you know that you get 6 square meals a day at sea? 3 going down and 3 going up !

The RNLI charity covers 100 nautical miles from the coast of the UK and so some emergencies can be very far away. So how long is the history of the RNLI? In 1785 the early prototype, unimmervible lifeboats were designed by a coachman and Bamburgh was the first station to be established. In 1790 there was a competition to build a purpose-built boat and was won by Henry Greathead and used for 40 years. One survivor of 40 boats that were built in 1802 called the Zetland is in the museum of Redcar. In 1824 William Hillary instigated the RNL Institution and King George was patron. In 1838 the well-known story of Grace Darling was shared and she became the first woman to be awarded a medal for gallantry from the institution. In 1851 a self-righting lifeboat was designed.

A lovely photograph of 1891 showed the first charity street collection in Manchester where 2 lifeboats were paraded in the streets. In 1907 the biggest rescue of lives took place off Lizard Point in Cornwall where 456 lives were saved. In 1914 off the coast of Whitby a further 144 lives were saved using a motorised lifeboat. You will have heard the expression 'pour oil on troubled waters' and that is exactly what happened during the rescue. The waves were so big and needed calming. The next time you visit Cromer in Norfolk look for a statue of Henry Blogg, the most decorated lifeboat coxwain who saved a total off 873 lives in 53 years!

Moving on to 1981 and in our memories The Solomon Browne lifeboat moored at Penlee near

Mousehole went to the aid of the Union Star after its engines failed in heavy seas. After 4 passengers were saved both vessels were lost with all hands. On the anniversary of this disaster all Christmas lights are switched off in remembrance. In 2014 the Shannon Class lifeboat was built and was water-jet propelled and can turn 360 degrees around on the beach.

David closed his presentation with a very moving video showing a Penlee lifeboat which was launched on 31 October 2022 to go to the aid of a yacht in hurricane conditions and saved eight lives. Coxwain Patch Harvey was awarded a Silver medal for gallantry and his crew Silver Medal certificates.

The cost of funding the RNLI is £200 million a year and most of it from private contributions. So, if you can donate then visit [www.SavingLivesatsea.com](http://www.SavingLivesatsea.com) where you will reach the Just Giving page.



Alternatively you can take one of the little Betty's jars David has left us to fill with 5p coins. This was an idea of a volunteer fundraiser Betty Frith to collect 5p coins. The jars will be available at the December meeting. Some have been left in top u3a drawer at the top of the stairs at LACC so you are welcome to take one for you and others. We will aim to collect them back in at the January meeting so that the amount may be added to the generous donations collected at the November meeting.

**RNLI receives no money from the Government.**

## **Bird Group**

It has been a year since we last visited Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's Staveley Nature Reserve and they have been making some improvements to the reserve. New signposts have just been erected

ensuring visitors don't get lost, which has happened to us in the past.

They have also made several new scrapes at West Lagoon close to the main circular hide. Scrapes are shallow pools which provide a habitat for wading birds. It will be interesting to see if they are a success and increase the diversity of birds there.

On arriving we had scarcely time to focus our binoculars when a Marsh Harrier swooped low over a lagoon and was gone. It is a large and magnificent bird.

At the other end of the scale we observed a tiny male Stonechat flittering among the bushes. It has a white neck and beautiful terracotta underparts.

At the main lagoon there were many ducks including Pochard, Wigeon, Tufted Duck and Moorhens. Our next visit in January is to Spennithorne.

New members are always welcome.

## Current Affairs Discussion Group.

This month, eight of us discussed the budget. There was a general feeling that it lacked direction and any vision the government may have had was diverted by its own back bench MPs. Concern was expressed about the ever increasing welfare costs, mental health issues and the number of young people not in education or employment.

Our next meeting will be on the second Friday in January, The 9th, when we will air our views on the Trump administration. We meet as usual at 2pm at LACC.

Gerald Hodgson.

## Walk and talk Group

The November walk and talk group had a lovely walk round Aysgarth Falls, visiting the lower middle and upper falls. It was a spectacular sight because the river was full with all the recent rain.



Ukulele group playing at Richmond for people with dementia and their carers.

