



Newsletter January 2026

*COMMITTEE*

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

## Happy New Year to All!

Please keep contributions coming, this is your newsletter!

### Chair report

Welcome to January 2026's newsletter

As I write the temperatures are plummeting so do keep yourselves warm and snug. So what exciting things are going to happen in this new year for L & D u3a?

We are going to experience some changes mainly relating to the new platform called Beacon which we hope will help us to organise the membership system in an easier way. The committee will embark on a steep learning curve as we navigate our way through it to make it work. But a challenge is good for us isn't it?

We should also see our name in lights or rather in the TAT magazine very soon. If you remember, last year we celebrated ten years of Leyburn & District u3a. Very recently we have gained some new members and our membership is now 240. Our speakers are booked until May and I hope you'll agree that we have had some very interesting and entertaining ones in 2025. Remember, if you do attend a speaker meeting with another organisation and would recommend them then get in touch.

June

## **Speaker report**

The Emergency Community Support Plan for Leyburn and District

At the recent social meeting, accompanied by mince pies we heard a brief presentation by David Poole who is the lead volunteer at TOSH. As part of the 2023 plan, COBRA describes 7 threats to the nation as; a cyber attack, terrorism and war, severe weather, an epidemic, a materials incident and transport issues.

There are 5 levels ranging from Low to Critical and currently the nation is on severe alert for terrorism and cyber attack. The aim of the 'plan' is to 'be prepared for an emergency'. The Leyburn ; District (L & D) Emergency Support Hub is at TOSH, opposite the Auction Mart. This will support 22 Parish Councils. There are 30 emergency hubs in the local area geographically ranging from Aysgarth to the west, Bellerby to the north, East Witton to the east and Patrick Brompton. The hub needs to be staffed by 6 volunteers on a 4 hour shift system to cover any 24 hour period. Up until

the time of this presentation there were 3 volunteers only. At the end of the presentation two more volunteers were recruited. And therefore just one more is needed. So if you missed the meeting and you wish to know more just pop into TOSH and ask to speak to David.

## **Monthly Meeting**

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)

Our 2026 programme starts on Friday 16 January with a talk on **Fraud** by Andy Fox.

## **Litter Picking**

The group meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month to pick litter in and around Leyburn at 2.0p-m. We gather at the Market Store which is near the Fire Station. Please bring your own gloves, hi-viz waistcoats, bags and picking sticks are provided.

This time of year is great for finding stuff that later in the season is hidden in the vegetation. We look forward to meeting new people willing to make the environment better for all.

Please ring Rose to let me know you will be coming.

## **Beginners Spanish**

Monday mornings from 11.30 to 12.30, starting on 5th January at LACC. New members are welcome. We started a complete beginners group in September, using the BBC Talk 1 course. This group would be ideal for anyone who has learnt a little Spanish in the past or is prepared to do a little catching up. We concentrate on communication, mainly listening and speaking, with some reading, writing and grammar. We are a small, very friendly and supportive group.

For further information please contact Mavis Chapman

## U3a Bird Group December 2025 Report by Louise Fieldgate

Following a rather wet and windy weekend, the bird group gathered at Nosterfield Nature reserve for our pre-Christmas outing. Given the large amounts of rain Yorkshire has received recently, the main lake and west scrapes were much fuller than on previous visits. A good number of Greylag Geese, Wigeon, Gadwall and Tufted Duck were seen along with a solitary Black Back Gull from within the main hide. The rather blustery wind made the sighting of smaller birds were much diminished due to them taking shelter; although a festive Robin and Blackbird did venture out. While following the path to the North hide, a beautiful Kite was seen at close quarters displaying some amazing aerial acrobatics although it did draw the attention of some Jackdaws who decided to harass and try to drive it off. The Kite had its sharp claws ready to take swipec at the annoying trio but eventually decided to move away another part of the reserve.

The LUCT ( Lower Ure Conservation Trust) volunteers have been busy trimming the Willow on the central areas of the reserve, keeping them short allows for shelter and prevents them from being a perch for Jackdaws and other Corvids in general from having a vantage point from which to prey on the young Curlew, Lapwing and other waders that breed on the reserve in the Spring. Whilst walking along the paths, we noticed the positioning of large square pieces of roofing felt which nearby notices indicated that they were not to be disturbed as they were being used for survey work. The survey is a vital part of an exciting reintroduction project at Nosterfield, aiming to bring back the common glow-worm (*Lampyrus noctiluca*) after a century's absence, using citizen science and habitat restoration to create a vibrant new population in the area during summer evenings. Unlike the highly visible adult females that glow brightly in open areas, larvae are usually hidden in undergrowth or under objects. Glow worm larvae are greyish brown with distinct yellowy-orange triangular markings at the side of each segment. They have two small luminous spots at the tip of the abdomen that may emit brief or pulsating glows. The larval stage is much longer than the adult stage, typically lasting one to three years. In contrast, adults live only for 2–3 weeks after emerging in June or July! Larvae are often concentrated around the margins of a site, such as where open grassland meets woodland or hedges, where their snail and slug prey are more abundant. Hence the positioning of the ecological refugia like roofing felt tiles. The best chance of seeing glow worms is between June and July on warm, still nights with a crescent moon. Look for long, untreated grass where there are plenty of snails, their primary food source. It is recommended to avoid using torches and let your eyes adjust to the darkness for better viewing.

The North hide provided welcome shelter and gave us a clear view of 9 herons, equally spaced along the edge of North Lake. Large numbers of Teal had taken up residence there too. Later, a Kestrel was seen displaying its characteristic hovering flight eying up possibly a vole or rabbit for lunch. In total 26 bird species were seen during our short visit. The main hide is now operating under winter opening hours and is accessible between 8:00am and 3:30pm. LUCT have constructed a new hide overlooking Kiln Lake on the Quarry side of the reserve following funding from the National Lottery; this is going to be ready by Jan/Feb 2026.

The bird group adjourned to the White Bear in Masham where we all enjoyed a lovely lunch and afterwards, we reviewed and discussed the year's visits. The consensus was to slightly change our venues to include a few more local visits and perhaps include a dawn chorus walk (with a breakfast afterwards) and an early evening summer visit to catch sight of various owl species and perhaps the elusive Nightjar! A summer Glow Worm hunt is also on my to do list next year.

Next Meeting: Monday 9 th February Marfield Wetlands Nature Reserve at 10:00am. New members are warmly welcomed



'Posada' (Spanish for 'inn') is a Christmas activity which lasts from December 16<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> when small versions of Mary and Joseph travel around different households in the community and stay there for one night.

People sign up in advance, offering to host Mary and Joseph for a night. It's open to everyone, and lots of families find it's a great way to be involved in the Christmas story.

Some members of Bellerby's Posada visited the u3a ukulele group courtesy of Wendy!