



Members Newsletter

May 2021

A Message from the Chair

Hi everyone, the last fourteen months have highlighted how important it is to maintain connections with others to avoid feeling isolated. Your u3a committee has endeavoured to keep in touch throughout this time by letting you know what has been happening within Alnwick u3a and within the wider u3a network, but I am aware that nothing can substitute for personal social interaction. Although we are all eager to start mixing together again, there may be some members who will take longer to feel confident in groups. Let me assure you that the committee will be following all the guidelines to ensure a safe return to indoor meetings when the time is right. Meantime, enjoy the sunshine – if you can catch it!

Kathy Platt

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Zoom Groups

Here again is the table showing the Groups currently Zooming or continuing by other suitable methods. For more information, click on the Group. If you haven't yet tried a Zoom meeting, give it a go. I am sure you will enjoy it!

ARCHAEOLOGY	ARCHITECTURE	ART APPRECIATION	BOOK GROUP 1
BOOK GROUP 2 (Fairfields)	BOOK GROUP 3 (St Michaels)	CREATIVE WRITING	HERB GROUP - Exploring Plant Medicines
HISTORY	LATIN ADVANCED GROUP	LATIN FOR IMPROVERS	PHILOSOPHY
POETRY 1	POETRY 2	POPULAR CLASSICAL MUSIC	SCIENCE

Walking Groups

We are slowly getting back to some kind of normal, thank goodness, with the restarting of 2 of our groups. The Long Walks Group is returning on May 26th with a walk from Wooler Common and the Short Walks Group returns on June 21st. They have a walk planned from Embleton to Craster and back. If you would like to join in with either of the walks, please contact the Group Leaders whose details are in the yellow book.

Anne McMillan, Group Coordinator

QUIZ - IT HAPPENED IN 2020 (answers are at the back –don't peep!)

1	In February, a powerful storm battered the UK. What was it called?
2	What is the name of the British Army officer knighted in July?
3	At the beginning of 2020, why was a third state of emergency declared in New South Wales, Australia?
4	Boris Johnson and Carrie Symonds welcomed a new baby son in April, what is his name?
5	Which rapper ran for president in America?
6	In December, which comedian won Strictly Come Dancing?
7	Which new bank note entered circulation in February and features the face of artist JMW Turner?
8	EastEnders celebrated which birthday back in February?
9	Black Lives Matter protests were sparked worldwide after who was killed during a police arrest in America?
10	Boris Johnson announced the first national lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic in what month?
11	What is the name of the new Vice president in the USA?
12	What is the name of the senior adviser to the Prime Minister who drove 260 miles during the coronavirus lockdown?
13	In July, Victoria and David Beckham's eldest son announced his engagement to actor Nicola Peltz. What is his name?
14	Who resigned as Chancellor of the Exchequer in February?
15	A Manchester United footballer successfully campaigned for children to receive free school meals, what is his name?
16	People took to their doorsteps to clap for the NHS and key workers at 8pm on which day of the week?
17	Which was the first ever non-English-language movie to win best picture at the Oscars?
18	In December, Coronation Street celebrated which anniversary?
19	In April, who addressed the nation in their first ever Easter message?
20	In February, Paige Turley and Finley Tapp won which ITV reality show?

Feedback & contributions are very welcome!

Please send any comments on this newsletter, suggestions for improvement and contributions for future editions to:

Newsletter.Alnwick.U3A@gmail.com

The next newsletter will be published on 21st June: contributions deadline is 18th June.

More Spring Photos

The first two photos were taken by Colin Platt at The Alnwick Garden; the others were taken by Trevor Robinson at Belsay Hall and Gardens.



Spotlight on a Group

PHILOSOPHY GROUP

Philosophy is a matter of questioning how we live, what our values are, why we adhere to them and whether we can learn from thinkers from the past about how we address the issues of the present. Recently we have been considering human rights, emancipation, freedom and social and political constraints. At present we are considering the writings of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill as a backdrop to discussing the issue of domestic vaccine passports.



These have been criticized as “decisive and discriminatory”. Have lockdown measures taken away our liberty and if so, is it justified? Mill argued that the curtailment of liberty was justifiable only if it was to prevent harm to others.

We have intervals for discussion at points during and after the presentations. Lately we have extending our sessions to meet afterwards in a chat virtual pub.

Pam Owen

100 YEARS

Northern Ireland was created as a separate entity on 3rd May 1921 under the Government of Ireland Act 1920. The new autonomous Northern Ireland was formed from six of the nine counties of Ulster, four counties with Unionist majorities, and two with slight Irish nationalist majorities. The remaining three Ulster counties with larger nationalist majorities were not included. The reasons that Ireland was divided is complex and the origins of problems in the region stretch back centuries to the Anglo-Norman intervention in Ireland in 1167.

Anne McMillan, History Group Leader



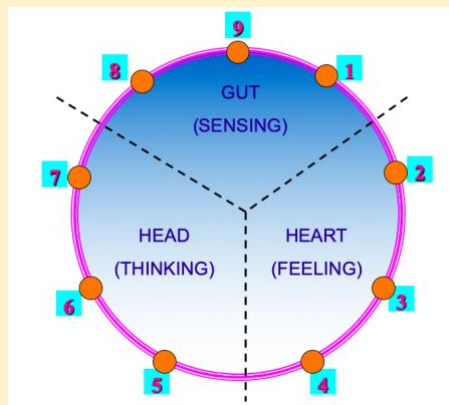
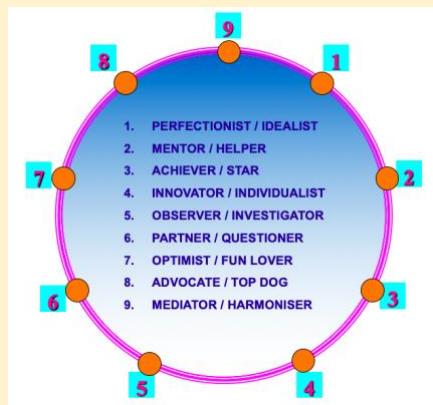
Volunteers Wanted

The Committee is working on u3a publicity, which will include leaflets and posters. If you would like to be involved in materials distribution (eg on noticeboards in various locations), please get in touch, by email to Newsletter.Alnwick.U3A@gmail.com

Monthly Alnwick u3a Meeting

On 15th April, we had our second full u3a meeting since last March, via Zoom. We were presented with a very interesting and thought provoking talk given by Colin Platt, with the title “**Who do you think you are?**”.

Colin’s presentation was based on the Enneagram, which is a model describing 9 types of personality and how they interact with each other. He emphasised that all types are equal hence the connection with the circle as shown.



When trying to determine our type it is useful to break the circle down into three ‘centres’ as shown. These are the Heart; the Head and the Gut. For example the types 2,3 & 4 operate predominantly from their heart/feelings. It’s quite common to hear someone say ‘that doesn’t ‘feel’ okay or I ‘felt’ very positive about the outcome today. Conversely a type 5,6 &7 might want to ‘think about that’ or ‘understand more about the consequences of that’. Last but not least the types 8, 9 & 1 operate predominantly from their ‘Gut/Instinct. Colin began his presentation by showing 9 caricatures and asking the audience to chose any one whose life motto seemed to fit theirs. Reference to each caricature was made throughout the presentation.

The talk was very interesting and it certainly made me think about my own personality type. If only I had known this 40 years ago! A huge vote of deserved thanks to Colin.

The next full u3a Zoom meeting will be on 20th May, with a presentation given by Ed Cartner entitled “**Manhandling the Prince of Wales**”. In 1978 when Ed was responsible for the initial military parachute training of all UK forces, he was tasked to prepare and deliver such training to a very, very senior Army officer. The parachuting bit was relatively straightforward; and the attendant protocol distractions were sometimes amusing, occasionally infuriating. However, it all worked out OK in the end. So who was this senior officer? No less than the Prince of Wales. Oh, and his brother came along too!

As the June talk happens before the next Newsletter is published, it would also be useful to make a brief comment about the June meeting on Thursday 17th June at 2pm, where there will be a talk entitled “**Flodden, The Anglo-Scottish War of 1513**” given by Bryn Owen - an English exile, living in Scotland.

Trevor Robinson, Newsletter Editor

Hobbies and Interests

This is a regular item in the Newsletter, where u3a members can tell us all about their hobbies and interests. If anyone would like to write something for a future Newsletter, please do contact us at Newsletter.Alnwick.U3A@gmail.com. This contribution is from Pat Ashton.

Walking

I find it strange to call walking a hobby. Isn't it something everyone does if they are physically able? One of the milestone moments for a parent is when a toddler raises him or herself from 4 limbs to 2, or in the case of a bottom shuffler from 1 to 2. Walking to me was/is just a normal activity of daily life. Walking to school, to work, shopping, meeting up with friends etc

I must admit I've always preferred to wander and explore on foot, with a guide or a map rather than hop on a tour bus or drive in a car much to the frustration of the children when they were younger and some of my friends. Getting lost was/is not an uncommon occurrence, which I suppose added to their frustration.

Now 'the children' are older they quite like exploring on foot too, although it's now I who experience frustration when I'd like to sit down, have a cup of tea and a cake, or a beer!!

It was my 50th birthday treat to myself that really got me started on more adventurous walking. I was on my own, the children were at college, it was winter in the Pennines. A friend suggested a walking holiday in the Sierra Nevada, Southern Spain. She'd been there and thought I would enjoy it, and how right she was. The sun shone as we walked through almond blossom covered hills. I didn't know almond trees were so hardy, growing high up in the mountains and blossoming in the snow. We explored attractive white washed villages built on inaccessible hillsides by the moors over 500 years ago until they were finally driven out by Ferdinand and Isabella, and picnicked amongst almond blossom and spring flower mountain meadows.

I didn't know anyone in the group but soon made friends. I've been back a number of times over the last 20 years including celebrating my 60th birthday. My last trip was just before Covid struck in 2020. The walks may not be as challenging, we are all 20 years older, including the couple that lead, but just as enjoyable.

The trip to the Sierra Nevada got me hooked. I booked another walking holiday in Spain that year and then went farther afield. Walking with camels along the Moroccan coast, with donkeys in the saffron fields of the High Atlas, in the Andes to Machu Picchu and even wilderness walking in Tasmania with my sister. The hardest 10 day walk I've ever done. If I had known – but she's my elder sister so if she says we're going we go.

These were all holidays. At home with a full time job, a big house and garden to maintain, meeting up with friends, usually involving a pub lunch, was really the extent of my walking enjoyment. However when I retired I joined a number of walking groups and went exploring the Pennines, Dales, Derbyshire and the Peak District. It a great way of getting to know an area, as well as meeting people and making new friends.

One year, as well as meeting up walking each week ,4 of us decided to go on a walking holiday together and that's how I came to walk the St. Cuthbert's Way from Melrose to Holy Island. The next year it was the Northumberland Inn Way, a spectacular walk down the Coquet Valley from Rothbury to Warkworth, 2 days coastal walking to Bamburgh, inland to Wooler, across the Cheviots to Alwinton and then back to Rothbury.

That was when I rediscovered Northumberland again. I'd already decided to move, the house and garden were too big and becoming a chore to maintain now the children had flown the nest and for me Northumberland was the perfect choice.

At first I couldn't get enough of just walking along the coast on my own or with friends who came to visit. I discovered Howick Gardens and walking through the arboretum and then along the coast. Still a favourite walk of mine. Then with the Alnwick u3a Short Walk Group I began to explore and learn more about the area. And so it continues having joined the u3a Long Walk Group and other walking groups in the area.

Walking for me is not just getting from A to B but what you experience, learn and enjoy along the way. Being outside, experiencing the changing seasons, meeting and talking to people, making friends, learning about the history, geology, flora and fauna of the area. A normal way of life.

This glorious picture of the gorse covered hillside was taken by a friend on a walk very near Wooler Common car park a few weeks ago.



No Longer With Us

Sadly, May Allen passed away in April.

Covid stories

I caught my son chewing on electrical cords,
So, I had to ground him.
He's doing better currently,
And conducting himself properly.

Tom's Tales

Two aliens were visiting earth to research local customs. One stumbled across a game of cricket but mistook it for a strange religious ceremony, and described it to his fellow alien later.

"I went to a large green field shaped like a meteorite centre. Around the edges several thousand worshipers gathered. Then two priests in white coats walked to a rectangular area in the centre of the field and hammered six spears into the ground, three at each end. Then eleven more priests walked out also clad in white robes. Then two high priests, wielding clubs, walked to the centre and one of the other priests started throwing a red orb at the ones with the clubs."

"Wow" said the other alien. "What happens next?"

"Then it begins to rain, and they all leave the field."

Thanks to Tom Burroughs for this

Maureen's Memories - Communication

Right from the start, we made communication with members a priority. During that first year we sent out newsletters, often more than once a month, to keep members informed of developments, and we wrote to everyone who enquired about joining, enclosing newsletters and general information about U3A. This was before emails and access to information on the web. Postage was cheaper then, but still ate up a large proportion of our subscription income.

As the months went on, we realised that our groups had settled and become more established. We thought it was time to produce some sort of programme of activities for a whole year, instead of constantly sending out newsletters, which often repeated themselves. Anne Bagley took on the task of collating information about groups, our list of speakers for the following year was complete - what more did we need?

During the weeks leading up to the October 2001 AGM, using Anne's layout skills and my limited computer knowledge, we came up with the first Yellow Booklet - yellow for no reason other than that we had a supply of yellow paper to use up. Apart from the slicker appearance, the booklet really hasn't changed since then.

The Yellow Booklet and the newsletters - still produced regularly to give up to date information - served their purpose, but did not really involve members. Concerned about this, the committee thought it would be good to have a way of giving members an opportunity to tell their stories and share their experiences, poems and anecdotes. In April 2004 the first issue of Profiles came out, containing a variety of contributions.

We had eight editions before enthusiasm and articles dried up at the end of 2007. An attempt was made the following year to combine newsletters with articles of interest, but this didn't survive beyond the first edition. It didn't even have a name. The first one, entitled 'No Name!', asked for suggestions for a name but, other than 'Alnwickdotes' being given the thumbs down, no further progress was made. It is good, therefore, to see the success of the new-style newsletter.

Maureen Stephenson

Quiz Answers

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|----|---|-------------------|
| 1 | In February, a powerful storm battered the UK. What was it called? | Storm Ciara |
| 2 | What is the name of the British Army officer knighted in July? | Captain Tom Moore |
| 3 | At the beginning of 2020, why was a third state of emergency declared in New South Wales, Australia? | Bushfires |
| 4 | Boris Johnson and Carrie Symonds welcomed a new baby son in April, what is his name? | Wilfred |
| 5 | Which rapper ran for president in America? | Kanye West |
| 6 | In December, which comedian won Strictly Come Dancing? | Bill Bailey |
| 7 | Which new bank note entered circulation in February and features the face of artist JMW Turner? | £20 |
| 8 | EastEnders celebrated which birthday back in February? | 35th |
| 9 | Black Lives Matter protests were sparked worldwide after who was killed during a police arrest in America? | George Floyd |
| 10 | Boris Johnson announced the first national lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic in what month? | March |
| 11 | What is the name of the new Vice president in the USA? | Kamala Harris |
| 12 | What is the name of the senior adviser to the Prime Minister who drove 260 miles during the coronavirus lockdown? | Dominic Cummings |
| 13 | In July, Victoria and David Beckham's eldest son announced his engagement to actor Nicola Peltz. What is his name? | Brooklyn Beckham |
| 14 | Who resigned as Chancellor of the Exchequer in February? | Sajid Javid |
| 15 | A Manchester United footballer successfully campaigned for children to receive free school meals, what is his name? | Marcus Rashford |
| 16 | People took to their doorsteps to clap for the NHS and key workers at 8pm on which day of the week? | Thursday |
| 17 | Which was the first ever non-English-language movie to win best picture at the Oscars? | Parasite |
| 18 | In December, Coronation Street celebrated which anniversary? | 60 years |
| 19 | In April, who addressed the nation in their first ever Easter message? | The Queen |
| 20 | In February, Paige Turley and Finley Tapp won which ITV reality show? | Love Island |

End Piece

Green

*It's in the sharp edge of grass
It's in the smoothness of moss
It's in the music of rain
It's in the hope of spring*

Mary Atkinson