



Members Newsletter

August 2021

A Message from the Chair

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer whilst the good weather holds. During August, the Committee will be preparing to welcome all members back to the regular groups and monthly meetings in St Michael's Parish Hall, which will be starting in September. As a responsible committee, we will be taking measures, to the best of our ability, to ensure the safety of our members as we return to the hall and begin to re-establish the sense of community within our u3a, which I feel we have all been missing during the last 18 months. The committee is eagerly looking forward to welcoming returning and new members - masked or otherwise! We hope to see you all in September.

Kathy Platt

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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 13th September, and the contributions deadline is 10th September.

Zoom Groups

The list below shows all Zoom Groups operating at the time of writing. The Committee will provide updates when we can resume face to face meetings, and of course Group Leaders will be keeping their members up to date.

<u>ARCHAEOLOGY</u>	<u>ARCHITECTURE</u>	<u>ART APPRECIATION</u>	<u>BOOK GROUP 2 (Fairfields)</u>
<u>BOOK GROUP 3 (St Michaels)</u>	<u>HERB GROUP - Exploring Plant Medicines</u>	<u>HISTORY</u>	<u>LATIN ADVANCED GROUP</u>
<u>LATIN FOR IMPROVERS</u>	<u>PHILOSOPHY</u>	<u>POETRY 2</u>	<u>SCIENCE</u>

They have all had their second job and are living life to the full again



A reminder from the Membership Secretary – Alwick u3a year 2021/22 starts on 1st September when subscriptions are due, so when you are contacted please pay promptly. Otherwise, it will be very difficult for Committee to plan for our future.

August Photos

Just a few this month, as there is a great selection of photos in the article on bridges. These were taken at Warkworth Castle by Trevor Robinson.



Tom's Tales

A drunk staggers into a Catholic Church , enters a Confessional booth, sits down but says nothing. The Priest coughs a few times to get his attention, but the drunk continues to sit there. Finally, the Priest pounds 3 times on the wall. The Drunk mumbles “ain't no use knockin', there's no paper on this side either”.

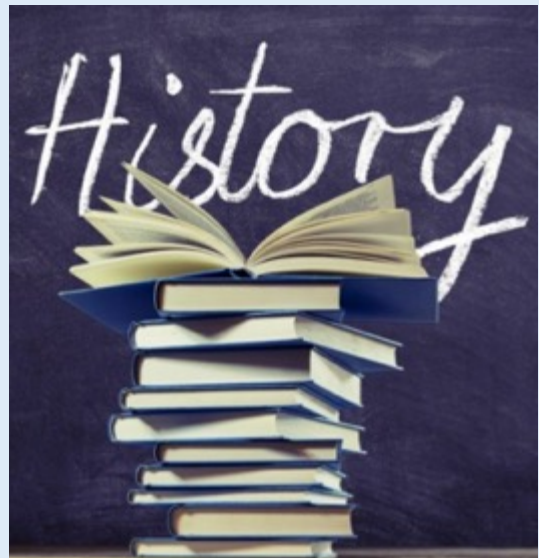
From Tom Burroughs

Spotlight on an Interest Group - History Group

History is the knowledge of and study of the past. Anything that happened before today is History, or as some say it's His-story. History is the story of who we are, where we come from, and can potentially reveal where we are headed.

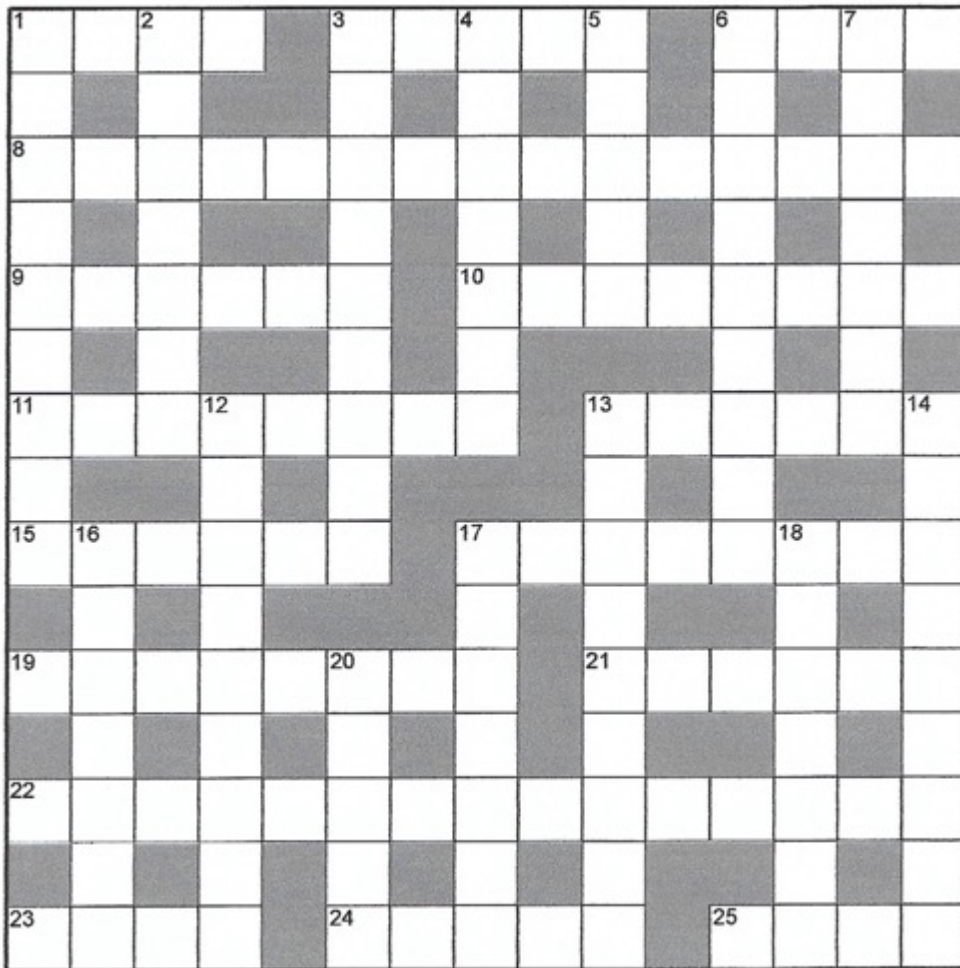
All people and cultures are living histories. The languages we speak are inherited from the past. Our cultures, traditions, and religions are all inherited from the past. We even inherit our genetic makeup from those that lived before us.

If you dive deep into your own family's history, you can understand how your family interacted with larger historical change. Did family serve in major wars? Were they present for significant events? We all have our story to tell and at our meetings we tell many interesting stories of other people from the past.



Anne McMillan
History Group Leader

Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Dreary place full of rubbish (4)
- 3 Part of a solicitor's job that is lawful (5)
- 6 Base measurement (4)
- 8 He was in the same class as Dwight D. Eisenhower (3,5,7)
- 9 Inspire folk to take the elevator (6)
- 10 A mad girl bursting into song (8)
- 11 Crumbs! Is that all that's left of these? (8)
- 13 A tenacious horse (6)
- 15 It's got 'Rover' written all over it (3,3)
- 17 Gardener confused over what he had gathered (8)
- 19 Black plastic bin bag flying through the air (8)
- 21 Time will pass by while asleep perhaps (6)
- 22 Speed merchants (4,11)
- 23 Number of appearances in a concert (4)
- 24 What are the odds that seven will change? (5)
- 25 Took advantage of something that's secondhand (4)

DOWN

- 1 Disrupted one who was troubled (9)
- 2 To lose these would be insane (7)
- 3 Very quickly the weather turns wild (9)
- 4 Flanagan and Allen found these "underneath the arches" (7)
- 5 Tried weirdly until exhausted (5)
- 6 Facets in a whirl attract attention (9)
- 7 Work in a theatre (7)
- 12 Make a list of what's to go in the brochure (9)
- 13 Both politicians and doctors hold these (9)
- 14 Remedied the fact that one has changed gear yet again (9)
- 16 Defeat after only six balls and a single run on the scoreboard (7)
- 17 The gaffer and I saw one while on safari (7)
- 18 These weapons need repairs done badly (7)
- 20 Hold your bottle? (5)

Pentimenti, overpainting and “that sort of thing”

On the 15th July at the u3a monthly meeting, on Zoom, members were treated to a very interesting and informative talk by George Ellames on the subject of Pentimenti – the revealing of part of a painting to find another painting beneath. In the case of overpainting, what we see today may have been as the original artist first painted it, or it may have been subsequently modified by another hand, or even the artist themselves.

Sometimes you can see shadows, which could be a clue to something else beneath; recently, x-ray methods have allowed a look at a hidden painting, without touching the surface (and potentially damaging it). An example is Gainsborough’s *Blue Boy*. One of his most famous works, this is a historical costume study as well as a portrait; the painting of the youth in his seventeenth-century apparel.

In 1939, an X-ray was taken of the painting that revealed the canvas had once been an incomplete painting of an older man, before it was cut down and repainted with the boy. But that’s not the only X-ray surprise—in 1995, it was discovered that the artist had originally painted a dog to go alongside the boy. But it got covered up by a pile of rocks.

When Picasso painted *Woman Ironing* he was roughly 22 years old. Living in Paris, with little money, he would often start a painting on a canvas, abandon it, and later use the same surface to paint over a new work. Since 1989, when an infrared camera was used to examine *Woman Ironing*, art historians and conservators have been aware of the existence of another portrait beneath it.

Pentimenti, contd

Sometimes, with reuse, the painting underneath is more interesting than the subsequent one. For instance, in *Portrait of a Woman* by Degas, the hidden portrait is arguably better than the one on top.

Infrared techniques have more recently been used to study paintings. For example, analysis of Van Eyck's *Arnolfini* portrait shows that the artist made some changes to the man's right hand.

Often, owners of pictures made changes because it suited them following a change in circumstances. *The Wounded Man* is a self-portrait by Gustave Courbet. He painted himself in a romantic theme as a suffering heroic man. Originally, there was a woman leaning on the artist's shoulder, but she was replaced by a sword at the end of a love affair.

Sometimes, changes were made to a picture for reasons of vanity, and often by a different painter. Gainsborough painted a picture of Susannah Trevelyan of Wallington Hall. An x-ray found a second head and a different dress, plus a dog. Someone apparently disliked the original painting, and Reynolds was commissioned to do some overpainting.

Another reason for overpainting might be that the original was considered inappropriate. Glindoni painted a picture of John Dee, an alchemist, performing an experiment before Queen Elizabeth I. Recent X-ray imaging of the artwork revealed that Dee was originally surrounded by human skulls before the ghoulish image was painted over, probably because it was too odd for the buyer.

This review has covered just a few of the paintings that George discussed. The presentation was very enjoyable and, certainly for me, revealed an aspect of painting (see what I did there?) that I previously knew very little about. Thanks George!

Trevor Robinson

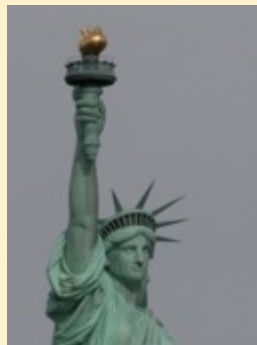
September Monthly Meeting

At our next monthly meeting on Thursday 16th September, Trevor Robinson will give a talk entitled ***My Love Affair with North America***. He has said that while this will include photographs taken on holiday, the purpose will be to give a flavour of many different aspects of life in the USA and Canada, rather than bore everyone with interminable family portraits!

Here are a few photos as a taster.



Afghanistan War Memorial,
Santa Barbara



Statue of Liberty,
New York



Westwood Memorial
Park, Los Angeles

ALPHABET QUIZ

A Which Artist created the sculpture Angel of the North?	N What is the name of the annual half-marathon starting in Newcastle
B Which Barbara is famous for saying 'Walkies'?	O What is the name of the parish beadle in Oliver Twist?
C Which author created Caractacus Potts?	P Who wrote the Play Private Lives?
D Which author born in Dublin wrote Dracula?	Q Name any two of the four members of pop group Queen.
E Which Ealing Comedy starred Alec Guinness in nine different roles?	R Which Real Role did Ben Kingsley play in a 1982 film. 8
F Who was the First Female to win a Nobel Prize?	S In the Swinging Sixties, which model was nicknamed The Shrimp?
G Which TV Game show has been hosted by Bruce Forsyth, Larry Grayson, Jim Davidson and Graham Norton?	T Terry Wogan hosted the Radio 2 Breakfast Show in which decade?
H Which Henry was the 18th century chemist who identified Hydrogen?	U What is the state capital of the US state of Utah?
I Which Italian jockey won seven races in one day at Ascot in 1996?	V In which country is the Volcano Vesuvius?
J Which Joseph was the US senator at the centre of the 1950s Communist witch-hunts?	W Which is the smallest National Park in Wales?
K Which acting Knight starred in Death in Venice in 1971?	X Name the two countries whose names contain the letter X.
L Name 2 Landlocked countries beginning with L,	Y In which Year did James Callaghan replace Harold Wilson?
M What was Marilyn Monroe last completed film?	Z What is the name for a group of Zebras

Hobbies and Interests

This is a regular item for 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.

My Talks on Bridges

The thought of giving a zoom talk to the Architecture Group was to me daunting, but Maureen bent my arm and kicked my derriere and off I went in search of information and photographs on “Bridges”. It was a subject that I knew little of and yet they have always fascinated me.

At first I thought I was doing it to help Peter out as he was looking for volunteer speakers. Then I thought it was to entertain and inform the members of the group but now that both talks have finished, I now realise, unknowingly at first, that I have ended up doing it for myself, too. The time spent on research has been well worth it because I have learnt a great deal more about the architecture and engineering of bridges and the vast variety of designs there are, whether ancient or modern.

According to Mr Google, there’s approximately 465 billion bridges in the world and I attempted in the two zoom sessions to show everyone what was out there. What I didn’t want was my laptop screen full of people dropping off to sleep so in the hope of keeping the talks interesting enough I knew I had only one option and that was to bombard everyone with a picture gallery. In other words, I would let the photographs do the talking. Incidentally, the number of slides I used totalled 117.

I was surprised but very happy and relieved to hear the complimentary comments at the end of each talk. So why am I telling you all this? Well, if you have a topic that you’re passionate about, I’d like to encourage you to share it. Do it for your group leader, your fellow members and for yourself as well. It makes you delve deeper into your subject and you’ll enjoy the effort and time that you’ll put into it. I know I did. Look on the bright side folks, the more volunteer speakers there are, then you won’t have to suffer a “Bridges Part 3”!

Alan Sayers

A selection of interesting bridges (all photos by Alan Sayers)



Landwasser Viaduct, Switzerland



Conwy Suspension Bridge



Forth Bridges



St Lawrence Bridge



Pont Julien, France



Pont de Langlois, France

SOCIAL CLUB

The social club which used to meet once a month in various restaurants reasonably close to Alnwick is due to resume on Wednesday 1st September at 6.30pm. All are welcome to come along to enjoy good food and friendship.

This first meeting will be at the Fishing Boat Inn in Boulmer. Because I have to book, please let me know if you would like to come by Monday, 23rd August by phoning me, Meryl McConnell, on 01665 572384 or message me on 07763 330092 or email mcconnedy@btinternet.com. I hope to see you there.

Meryl

A Reminder

Next year marks National u3a's 40th anniversary. To mark the occasion, the Trust is launching an Anniversary Quilt competition on the theme of positive ageing. Members are asked to submit a square and judges will select 40 that they feel best represent the movement's message on positive ageing through its strapline 'learn, laugh, live'. "We see the finished quilt as a moment in history for future generations of u3as" says coordinator Michaela Moody. Any member or group can enter. The deadline is 15 November 2021, and the winners will be published in the February 2022 edition of TAM. For more details, go to the u3a 40th Anniversary tab in the Events section at u3a.org.uk



CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS - 1 Dump. 3 Licit. 6 Foot. 8 Sir Nigel Gresley. 9 Uplift. 10 Madrigal. 11 Biscuits. 13 Stayer. 15 Dog Tag. 17 Garnered. 19 Jetliner. 21 Elapse. 22 Drug Traffickers. 23 Once. 24 Evens. 25 Used.

DOWN - 1 Disturbed. 2 Marbles. 3 Lightning. 4 Columns. 5 Tired. 6 Fascinate. 7 Operate. 12 Catalogue. 13 Surgeries. 14 Redressed. 16 Overrun. 17 Giraffe. 18 Rapiers. 20 Nerve.

QUIZ ANSWERS

A	Anthony Gormley	N	The Great North Run
B	Barbara Woodhouse	O	Mr Bumble
C	Ian Fleming	P	Noel Coward
D	Bram Stoker	Q	Brian May, Freddie Mercury, John Deacon, Roger Taylor
E	Kind Hearts and Coronets	R	Mahatma Gandhi
F	Marie Curie	S	Jean Shrimpton
G	The Generation Game	T	1960's
H	Henry Cavendish	U	Salt Lake City
I	Frank Dettori	V	Italy
J	Joseph McCarthy	W	Pembrokeshire Coast
K	Sir Dirk Bogarde	X	Mexico, Luxembourg
L	Laos, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein	Y	1976
M	The Misfits	Z	A Dazzle

End piece

*Remember the breath of air and smell of the
flower Take the touch of the past with you
And then taste the sweetness of memory*

Mary Atkinson