



## Members Newsletter December 2021



### A Message from the Chair

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Committee to every one of our members.

Here's hoping that 2022 sees an end to the pandemic and then we can all engage fully in everything that the u3a organisation has to offer.

**Kathy Platt**



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## November Monthly Meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021

### Sheep Tales and Spinning Yarns – A talk by Margaret Brown

The October meeting almost didn't happen, because of some technical computer issues. How many u3a members does it take to successfully connect a laptop to a digital projector? The answer is, in this case, four! But we got there in the end.

Margaret started with her quiz. She had laid out several unusual items on a table, and we had to guess what they were. There were about a dozen things, ranging from a gadget to take the top off a boiled egg to an item of clothing to protect a female turkey's back whilst receiving the energetic attention of a male. The mind boggles! The winners of the quiz were given an entrance ticket for The Armstrong's Household and Farming Museum at North Charlton, which is run by Margaret's mother.

The key theme of Margaret's presentation was based on a DVD, "*Sheep Tales and Spinning Yarns*", a fascinating video slideshow of beautiful photographs accompanied by an interesting, evocative and thoughtful voiceover. This DVD pays tribute to the countryside, shepherds and farming communities of North Northumberland.

The slideshow is based on an archive of photographs, some of them quite old, covering various communities and activities related to sheep farming in North Northumberland. Every now and then, Margaret paused the DVD to explain a particular picture – perhaps a family posing together, or a musical gathering, or a sheep auction, or a group of school children on an outing to the seaside. The photos cover the period from the late 1800s up to the early 2000s and give an interesting insight into life as a Northumberland shepherd. At the end, Margaret was thanked warmly by the audience for a most informative talk.

Featured below are a few photos from the Archive. More examples can be found at [www.sheep Tales.org](http://www.sheep Tales.org).

Trevor Robinson

 <p>Sir Walter Bosanquet and an unidentified gentleman with a Border Leicester sheep on the Rock Estate in Northumberland, 1869</p>	 <p>Three shepherds and their sheepdogs beside a peat stack at Commonburn Farm in Northumberland, 1960</p>	 <p>Lunchtime break at the peat cutting at Langleeford in the Cheviots, Northumberland – late 1920s/early 1930s</p>
 <p>Hay-drop by helicopter in Jan 1963</p>	 <p>"The Shepherds" playing at Morpeth, 1980s</p>	 <p>Loading hay on a cart at Langleeford Hope, Northumberland, 1930s</p>

## December Monthly Meeting – 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021

The December Meeting and Christmas 'do' did not turn out the way we had planned it, mainly because the guest speaker pulled out at 10am on the day, with a heavy cold! However, thanks to sterling work by Kathy and Colin, with support from committee members, we had Christmas music, a couple of Christmas Quizzes, some of Tom's Tales and last but by no means least, a good spread of festive nibbles and mulled wine.

Everyone had a good natter, and the lack of a speaker did not really detract from what I think everyone would agree was a very enjoyable event. A couple of photos of the happy crew below.



### Trevor Robinson



## Monthly Meetings in 2022 – a Preview

### 20th Jan - Jessica Turner – 'Anglo-Saxon Bamburgh & St Aiden's Congregation'

Jessica Turner is an archaeologist with Bamburgh Heritage.

### 17th Feb - Baroness Quin of Gateshead – 'Walking Newcastle'

Baroness Joyce Quin is Vice President of Newcastle Association of City Guides.

### 17th Mar – Susan Fulton – 'Canine Partners'

Describing how Canine Partners assistance dogs are trained to help their disabled owners with everyday tasks.

### 21st Apr - Clare Byas – 'Ad Gefrin'

An introduction to the whisky distillery currently being built in Wooler, with its exhibition centre which will celebrate the golden age of our Anglo-Saxon heritage.

### 19th May – Bill Bland – 'The History of Ordnance Survey'

Ordnance Survey from its origins up to the present day.

### 16<sup>th</sup> June – Andy Griffin – 'Hadrian and his Wall'

In celebration of the wall being 1900 years old.

## National u3a News

**Trust u3a** is an online u3a that gives you the opportunity to join groups, talks and courses. Like any u3a, activities are run by members for members. The Groups page gives details of Trust u3a groups, courses and talks:-

<https://u3asites.org.uk/trustu3a/groups>

Trust u3a members can join groups etc via the Trust u3a, Beacon Members Portal; groups can be joined by existing u3a members once they have paid £5 to Trustu3a to become an associate .

**u3a Communities** is an online u3a which is more than 40 years old, operating throughout world communities, and it is free to join any group, examples of which are: Science, Book Group, Art History and Climate Change. Details can be found at:

<https://u3acommunities.org>

**MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses)** give people the chance to learn new things with short courses presented by experts. Details at:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/advice-on-moocs/welcome>

## TOM's TALES

**Paraprosdokians** are figures of speech in which the latter part of the sentence is unexpected. Some examples:

- 1) Discretion is the better part of Valerie, though all of her is nice
- 2) Where there's a will, I want to be in it
- 3) Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak
- 4) If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong
- 5) They begin the evening news with "Good Evening," then proceed to tell you why it isn't
- 6) I didn't say it was your fault, I just said I was blaming you
- 7) Behind every successful man is his woman; behind the fall of a successful man is usually another woman

## December Photos

This month's theme is, of course, Christmas. All photos taken by Trevor Robinson (except where noted).



*Kate Rusby concert at The Sage*



*Christmas in Acklington*



*Wallington Hall (National Trust)  
Reindeer come out in November*



*Newcastle Christmas Market  
(courtesy Newcastle Council)*



*Christmas Eve, SeaWorld Florida*








*A December tableaux*



# Christmas Quiz



<p>1. Why does it sound as though two of Santa's reindeers have been named after meteorological terms?</p>	<p>13. On Boxing Day 1991, what was formally dissolved?</p> 
<p>2. In Hungary, turkey does not feature on the Xmas menu. What replaces it?</p>	<p>14. Who made mince pies illegal in the 17<sup>th</sup> century?</p>
<p>3. In the poem 'The Night Before Christmas', visions of what danced in children's heads?</p>	<p>15. Where did Del and Rodney go on holiday in a 1991 Only Fools and Horses Xmas special?</p>
<p>4. Traditionally you're supposed to eat one daily during the 12 days of Xmas to bring good luck. What are they?</p>	<p>16. Tom Smith, a confectioner, invented what additional item for the Xmas table?</p>
<p>5. In the American states of Georgia, Arizona, and Indiana, some towns share the same Christmassy name. What is it?</p> 	<p>17. Which British city's civic Xmas tree is an annual gift from the Norwegian city of Bergen, in thanks for the part played by its soldiers in liberating Bergen from German occupation in WW2?</p>
<p>6. Popular in Victorian England at Xmas, and mentioned in Dickens' A Christmas Carol, what is 'Smoking Bishop'?</p>	<p>18. Several spices used in Xmas dishes or drinks, originate from the 'Spice Islands'? What is the correct name for these islands?</p>
<p>7. In which year did Bob Geldof and Midge Ur write the song 'Do They Know It's Christmas?'</p>	<p>19. Who wrote the first ever King's Xmas message - it was for George V in 1932?</p>
<p>8. Turkeys in Victorian England were walked to London markets from Norfolk. What were they said to be wearing for the journey?</p>	<p>20. Which one of the following did Elizabeth 1 eat for Xmas dinner to celebrate the English victory over the Spanish Armada: a. fish b. peacock c. goose d. eel?</p>
<p>9. Which country was the first to use the tradition of the Xmas tree?</p>	<p>21. St. Knut's Day marks the end of Xmas and the holiday season in which European country?</p>
<p>10. 'Beeswing' is the term for the crackled translucent crust that forms on old bottles of which popular Xmas drink?</p>	<p>22. What are you eating if you are enjoying 'March Bread'?</p> 
<p>11. Which Xmas carol, based on a poem by English poet Christina Rossetti, has been set to music, most famously by Gustav Holst?</p>	<p>23. What or who was created by Robert May in a 1939 booklet?</p> 
<p>12. What traditional food do the Portuguese eat with boiled vegetables on Xmas eve?</p>	<p>24. Before turkey, the traditional English Xmas dinner included a pig's head smothered in what?</p>
	<p>25. Which biblical town's name means 'house of bread' in Hebrew?</p>

# Odds and Ends

When Facebook and WhatsApp went down for six hours, I had nothing better to do so I chatted with the wife. Turns out she lost her job at Woolworths in 2009.

I had been out drinking, so I took the bus.

That may not seem like a big deal to you, but I've never driven a bus before.

A recent study found that people who take their coffee black are more likely to exhibit psychotic tendencies. And people who order a quad shot, non fat, vanilla soy, extra foam, light whip with caramel drizzle are more likely to be their victims.

How many computer programmers does it take to change a lightbulb? Can't be done. Sorry. It's a hardware problem.

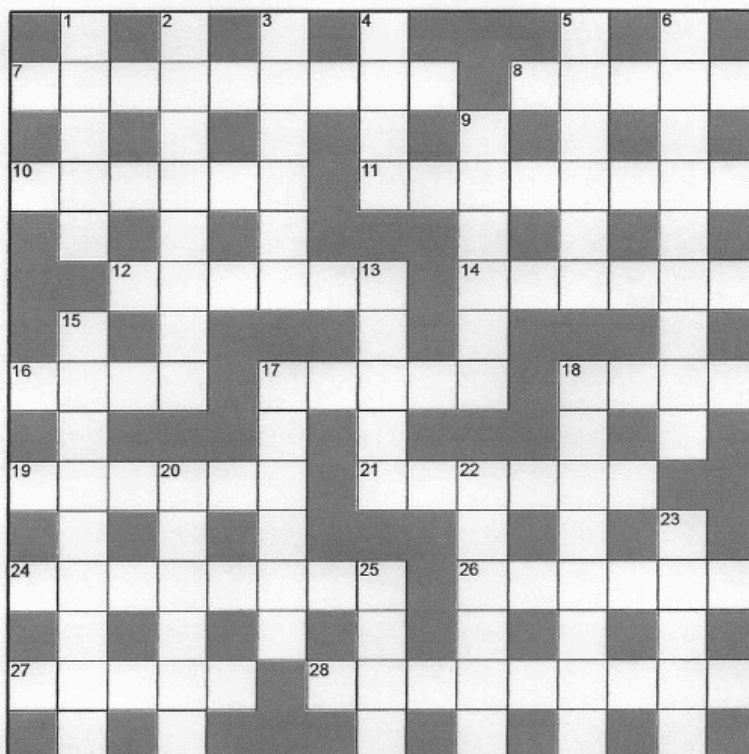
3 out of 2 people have trouble with fractions.

If a man says he will fix it, he will. There is no need to remind him every six months.

My wife says I only have two faults. I don't listen. And something else.

You only need two tools in life...WD-40 and duct tape. If it doesn't move and should, use WD-40. If it moves and shouldn't, use duct tape. Simple!

# Crossword



## ACROSS

- 7 Very steep headland in Kent (9)  
 8 You could get plastered here (5)  
 10 It may be limited in size but it's in fine form (6)  
 11 In spite of everything, you're last in the queue (5,3)  
 12 The heart of where activities are concentrated (6)  
 14 Drill exercised by a surgeon (6)  
 16 They have a strong interest in keeping the temperature down (4)  
 17 Cyril struggles to find the theatre in London (5)  
 18 Helper comes from Maidenhead (4)  
 19 Religious leader who broke the circle (6)  
 21 Just one of the problems an athlete has to overcome (6)  
 24 Pub that only opens in the spring (8)  
 26 Atmospherical line on a map (6)  
 27 Something of value that Tessa had to return (5)  
 28 Owing up to inviting someone in (9)

## DOWN

- 1 A number of stores linked together (5)  
 2 The more of these, the noisier it is (8)  
 3 Put money into underwear (6)  
 4 Part of a colossal amount of bones (4)  
 5 Sounds like he drives a wagon (6)  
 6 Three balls are needed to play this (9)  
 9 Still making a crackling noise on the telephone (6)  
 13 Heartbroken over where the foxes are living (5)  
 15 A perfect game of tennis perhaps (9)  
 17 The key to the cupboard (6)  
 18 Miscellaneous mix of sweets in one box (8)  
 20 Smoking jacket (6)  
 22 Liftin' an ingredient in a fruitcake (6)  
 23 The sort of day when jobs might get done (5)  
 25 This is a dicey game to play (4)





## CRIBBAGE GROUP

I'm starting a Cribbage Group in January, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday mornings, from 10-12, in St. Michael's Hall. This is aimed at all levels and I'll be happy to teach anyone who wants to learn this great game.



The first meeting will be held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Hope to see you there.

So, whether you are a regular player, a bit rusty, or a complete beginner, come along.

**Shelley Willis**



## VAGARIES OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

At a movie theatre, which arm rest is yours?  
Why is there a 'd' in fridge, but not in refrigerator?  
Who knew what time it was when the first clock was made?  
Ironic that the word funeral starts with FUN?  
How come Lipstick doesn't do what it says?  
If money doesn't grow on trees, how come Banks have Branches?  
If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?  
How do you get off a non-stop flight?  
Why is it called Rush Hour when traffic moves at its slowest then?



## Hobbies and Interests

This is a regular item for the Newsletter, where u3a members can tell us all about their hobbies and interests.

### Yoga saved my health

Yoga is an ancient method of self discovery and self improvement which originated in India thousands of years ago. The word is derived from the Sanskrit for 'yoke' and is literally about yoking the mind and body together in harmony.

The ancient yogis did not do postures but mainly meditated sitting cross legged – or sometimes upside down – for hours on end.



Today's form of yoga started in the early 20th century when travellers to and from India brought back the ideas and philosophy of the discipline. Since then many different schools of yoga have developed, but the gentlest type is hatha yoga, which is what I trained in.

Typically a class will consist of 3 elements:

#### *Breath work*

The ancient yogis discovered there is a close link between the breath and the emotions. Deepening your breathing has many benefits for your physical health and for relieving stress.

#### *Postures (asanas)*

A series of progressive exercises which aim to stretch, bend or compress certain parts of the body, thus keeping muscles and joints supple and applying gentle massage to the internal organs.

#### *Relaxation*

Everyone needs to relax but many find it difficult to do so properly. The yoga methods of relaxation are simple but effective and easily adapted to modern life.

I was introduced to it in 1972 when there were very few qualified teachers around. I found it an excellent antidote to a stressful job and made some wonderful friends through it.

In 1979 I fractured 2 vertebrae in a rock climbing accident and thought my yoga days were over but in fact it became the path to my recovery and I am still practising it 42 years later. Some people think it is about putting your body in impossible positions and chanting 'Om' but a good yoga teacher will introduce beginners to a wonderful gentle stretching experience within each person's limits, so they go away from the class feeling both energised and relaxed at the same time.

I can strongly recommend it. It literally saved my health.

**Tessa Nichol**



## Public Health Wellbeing Services

These services are run by Northumberland County Council in conjunction with GP Practices. The role of Health Trainers who work with this department, is to help people make healthier lifestyle choices. They do this in several ways such as clinics, health checks, health walks, talks, programmes and coffee mornings, some of which are held at the local surgery. It is a free service that offers one to one and group sessions. If you would like to know more about the service and how it may help you, the contact details are:

[Chloe.Courtney@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Chloe.Courtney@northumberland.gov.uk)

or telephone 07815508607.

I read about a dairy farmer who believes that talking to his cows helps them to produce more milk. It goes in one ear and out the udder!

If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and talks like a duck...it probably needs more time in the oven.

## 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](mailto:Newsletter.Alnwick.u3a@gmail.com)

The next newsletter will be published on 31<sup>st</sup> January, and the contributions deadline is 28<sup>th</sup> January.



# Christmas Quiz Answers



1. Donner and Blitzen - the names mean 'thunder' and 'lightning' in German.	13. The Soviet Union
2. Carp	14. Oliver Cromwell
3. Sugar Plums	15. Miami, Florida
4. Mince pies	16. The Xmas Cracker
5. Santa Claus	17. Newcastle upon Tyne
6. A type of mulled wine	18. The Moluccas or Maluku Islands
7. 1984	19. Rudyard Kipling
8. 'Boots' were created by walking the turkeys through warm tar followed by sand, to prevent their feet becoming blistered on the journey.	20. c. goose
9. Germany	21. Sweden
10. Port	22. Marzipan
11. In the Bleak Midwinter	23. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
12. Salt cod or 'bacalhau'	24. Mustard
	25. Bethlehem

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

**ACROSS** - 7 Sheerness. 8 Paris. 10 Finite. 11 After All. 12 Centre. 14 Trepan. 16 Fans. 17 Lyric. 18 Aide. 19 Cleric. 21 Hurdle. 24 Bluebell. 26 Isobar. 27 Asset. 28 Admitting.

**DOWN** - 1 Chain. 2 Decibels. 3 Invest. 4 Ossa. 5 Laurie. 6 Billiards. 9 Static. 13 Earth. 15 Faultless. 17 Locker. 18 Allsorts. 20 Reefer. 22 Raisin. 23 Rainy. 25 Ludo.

## End Piece

*A feather alights on a pine cone  
Quills of light inscribe the forest  
Illuminated branches wait in quiet hope*

**Mary Atkinson**

