



Members Newsletter January 2022

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A Message from the Chair

Hi everyone. It's beginning to feel that a more positive time is just around the corner. Bulbs are starting to push up through the soil; little by little the evenings are becoming lighter, and now Covid restrictions appear to be lifting too. So, we can all look towards a brighter time to help us weather whatever February has to offer before Spring is with us once again.

Kathy Platt

Monthly Meeting – 20th January 2022

Anglo-Saxon Bamburgh & St Aidan's Congregation

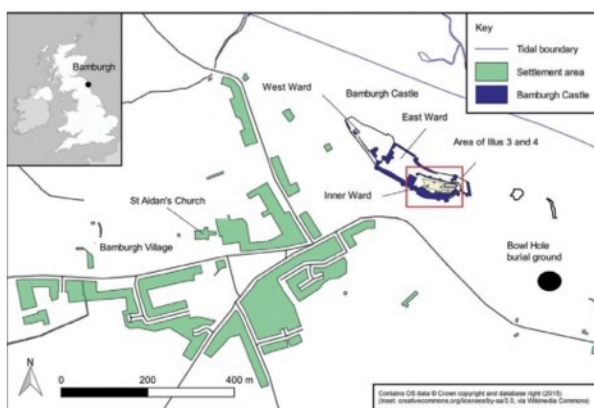
A talk by Jessica Turner

This very interesting and informative talk was about aspects of Anglo Saxon Bamburgh, but mainly it was about bones, and an Ossuary. It was also very good that we had a sizable audience – more than 55. That is very encouraging, and bodes well for future meetings.

An Ossuary is the final resting place of human bones following a temporary burial elsewhere. If burial space is scarce, a human body may be first buried in a grave and then later the bones dug up and placed in an ossuary. An ossuary may take many forms including a box, well or an area in a particular building such as a church, and enable the remains of many more people to be stored in a smaller area.

The main theme in Jessica's presentation was the excavation, study and reinterment of the skeletal remains in an ossuary in St Aidan's Church, Bamburgh. All the individuals in this ossuary came from the 'Bowl Hole' graveyard. Jessica also told us something about St Aidan, after whom the local church is named.

There were over one hundred skeletons of men, women, young adults and children excavated at the Bowl Hole. The archaeologists only dug one small part of the land and they think that there are probably a lot more burials under the sand dunes.



First revealed by a violent storm in the 19th century, the Bowl Hole graveyard is hidden within the sand dunes a few hundred metres south of Bamburgh Castle. Victorian romantics interpreted the skeletons as the remains of Viking raiders, but the real story turned out to be more complicated. Many individuals were uncovered during excavations between 1998 to 2007

The Bowl Hole skeletons were fully analysed during a research project between 2006 and 2010, from recording their sex and age at death and estimating height, to looking at their health and well-being and their origins and diet using stable isotope analysis. After this project, it was appropriate that the skeletons were laid to rest in the crypt of St. Aidan's Church at Bamburgh, close to where they were found.



An example of the skeletons found

Jessica told us about the various scientific methods that can be used to get information from bones. After the investigators had laid out the skeleton in anatomical position, they first estimated its biological sex. People who are not adult when they died cannot be sexed with any certainty, unless ancient DNA analysis is used. The pelvic bones are mainly used for

adult sex estimation (their shape reflects a woman's ability to have children). There were men, women and new-born babies, children and adolescents found at the Bowl Hole.

Age at death for people who were not adults when they died is estimated using the development and eruption of the teeth, and growth and fusion of the bones. It can be quite accurate. However, the many methods used for ageing adult skeletons are not very accurate, so broad age ranges or labels like 'older adult' are given, remembering that people's skeletons degenerate at different rates according to their lifestyles. The people buried at the Bowl Hole ranged in age from new-born babies to older adults.

The investigators also estimated height from measuring the long bones of the legs (femur, tibia and fibula) and arms (humerus, radius and ulna) and used a mathematical equation to estimate height. It's not a perfect science but it does show who is shorter or taller in a population, and the information can be compared with other archaeological sites. The Bowl Hole skeletons revealed people who were shorter and taller than the average for that period of time.

Samples of teeth from the Bowl Hole skeletons were also analysed to explore values for strontium and oxygen isotopes, which gives us an idea of the 'place of residence' of a person – were they local to where they were buried or not? The work on the Bowl Hole skeletons indicated that over 50% of those buried had not been born and raised in the Bamburgh area, and some came from as far afield as Scandinavia and possibly North Africa during their lives. The archaeologists estimated that some of the skeletons were about 1,400 years old and they were early Anglo-Saxon people, not Vikings. So all this analysis shows that the North East was something of a cosmopolitan crossroads in Anglo-Saxon times.

Placed in modern ossuary boxes, the skeletons excavated from the Bowl Hole were laid to rest in the crypt of St Aidan's, Bamburgh in 2016. You can view the room containing the rows of ossuary boxes through a small gate from the main crypt. The gate was made by Stephen Lunn, who works at The Forge in Red Row.



The Bamburgh Bones website contains a wealth of interesting information about the project, including a Digital Ossuary which explains more about the buried people, where they came from, something of their lives and the ailments they suffered.

<https://bamburghbones.org/>

I asked Jessica if I could use material from the website for this review, and she was happy to give approval. The website is well worth a visit, and for anyone who is interested enough to explore the topic further, guided tours of the St Aidan's Crypt are available – details are on the website.

Jessica is an excellent speaker and presenter, and clearly knows her subject very well, as you might expect given her long involvement with the Bamburgh Project. The audience in the Hall was very appreciative and showed its warm appreciation in the usual way.

Trevor Robinson

Future Monthly Meetings in 2022

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 an exhibition centre celebrating 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.

16th June – Andy Griffin – ‘Hadrian and his Wall’

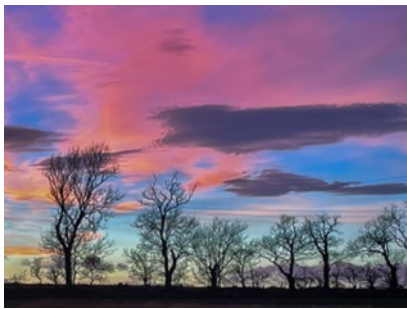
In celebration of the wall being 1900 years old.

Would it be the right time to ask the wife when would dinner be ready while she's cutting the grass?

I've been training my dog to fetch tools from my workshop.....he's not perfect yet but he knows the drill now!

January Photos

This month's theme is winter: colourful sunsets, and trees after Storm Arwen. All photos taken by Trevor Robinson.



No Longer With Us

Sadly, u3a members Kate Winkler and Linda Hockenhull passed away during January. There is an obituary of Kate on the next page

TOM'S TALES

It's not my fault I have a double chin. When God was giving out chins, I thought he said gin, so I said I'll have a double.

Pat and Mike were working for the local council. Pat would dig a hole and Mike would follow him and fill it in, working hard all day long. A passerby was amazed at what they were doing. When he asked, Pat wiped his brow and sighed deeply, "Well I suppose it does look a bit odd. You see, we're normally a three man team, but today the other guy, who plants the trees, phoned in sick."

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 14th March, and the contributions deadline is 11th March.

KATE WINCKLER (24 Jan 1932 - 10 Jan 2022)
A passion for the Natural World

Kate Winckler died of heart failure just short of her 90th birthday. Despite her age, it came as a great shock to her many friends. We all thought she was invincible, always cheerful and positive, making light of her health problems, and even laughing when she took a tumble.

I first met Kate in 2003, when we joined the Walking Group. We took to each other immediately, and I came away delighted with all my new acquaintances, but especially Kate. Over the past 20 years, Kate has contributed so much to our u3a. In the early years of Alnwick u3a, she became convenor of the Geology Group, taking this on when no-one else would, and getting it going with the help and encouragement of its members. She joined the committee and became its Treasurer. She started up a group which met for a fixed term to examine topics of scientific interest. We started with a short "History of Economic Thought" and followed this with some topics in "The History of Mathematics", both of which were greatly enjoyed by the participants.

In 2013, she founded the Science Group, calling it "Appliance of Science Group". Kate was passionately interested in science relating to our daily lives. It was her intention to investigate applications in industry, medicine and food. It has now broadened its remit and is co-convened by Trevor Robinson and Stanley Trafford. However, she kept up her interest in the field. She used to read many scientific magazines, careful to source these to avoid fraud and conspiracy theories, keeping her friends up to date with the latest findings. More recently, she became a stalwart member of the Herbal Group, to explore the history, science, and uses of herbal medicines.

Kate was also a very kind person, and particularly ungrudging with her time. She walked regularly with people in the village who needed a companion when they were recovering from illness, or had some other problem, and decided to offer this service in the form of a "Strolling Group" for u3a members in general. Some members took up this totally unselfish offer – it takes a lot of patience to potter along with a slow walker when you are fit and generally walk quite fast yourself!












Kate was born in New Zealand and lived in Lesbury. Her house was built in an old orchard, which had been established by a past member of the Percy family. She had many well-loved apple, pear and plum trees, and was devastated when many were blown down in Storm Arwen. She went organic when her family were young, and when, if you wanted organic food, you had to grow it yourself. Over the years, she acquired a walk-in polytunnel, as well as smaller ones, glass frames and a greenhouse. She would grow anything, particularly if it was edible or useful in some other way. There was even a New Zealand kiwi fruit. There was even space for bee-hives, and on a number of occasions she provided other bee-keepers with replacement bees when their hives had been wiped out because of varroa.

Kate was one of the nicest people I have ever met. Kind, considerate and generous, she also possessed a quiet gentleness. She will be greatly missed.










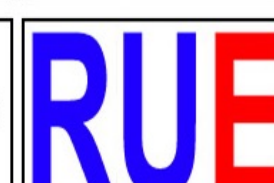


Dilys Carter

Quiz

DINGBATS SET A

			
01	02	03	04
			
05	06	07	08
			
09	10	11	12

DINGBATS SET B

			
01	02	03	04
			
05	06	07	08
			
09	10	11	12

Odds and Ends

Love is a Skin

love is a skin
that protects you,
a warmth that spreads
from the tips of your fingers
to your heart

**sorry – not love –
glove, I meant glove**

The bloke who received a pig's heart has given his first radio interview. I tried to listen, but could only hear crackling

I used to think that drinking coffee was bad for me. So I gave it up, completely.
...thinking, that is. I gave up thinking.

BREAKING NEWS

In a shock move, English Cricket Board have announced Novak Djokovic as temporary batting coach.

“We acknowledge he doesn't have a background in our sport, but we couldn't overlook the fact that it took Australia two weeks to get him out.”

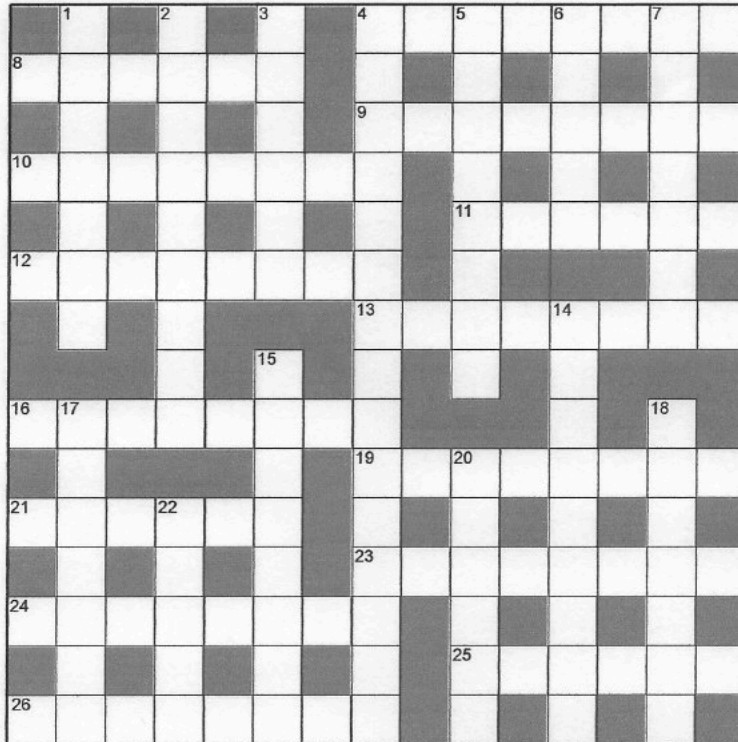
Sleeping next to someone you love makes you fall asleep faster, reduces depression, and helps you live longer.

UNTIL THEY START TO SNORE

I asked a supermarket worker where they kept the tinned peaches. He said, “I'll see” and walked away. I asked another worker and she also said, “I'll see” and walked away.

In the end I gave up and found them myself, in Aisle C.

Crossword



ACROSS

- 4 Big deficit in fuel (8)
- 8 Part of the layout mostly is of the highest degree (6)
- 9 A capital fellow (8)
- 10 Vagrant was first and went by foot (8)
- 11 The childminder was an easy catch (6)
- 12 Alternative route to the barbers (8)
- 13 Consider again the need to change your opinion (8)
- 16 Tobacco farming is in such a state (8)
- 19 Communications sent by an intelligent man in a plight (8)
- 21 It won't drip until it thaws (6)
- 23 Used the key to break the code (8)
- 24 A heavenly feast that comes in a tin (8)
- 25 This goes even deeper than the ocean floor (6)
- 26 Strange pose used and adopted (8)

DOWN

- 1 Extremely formal carbohydrate (7)
- 2 You'll have a job throwing this away (9)
- 3 Oblique character (6)
- 4 One of a band of border controllers (10,5)
- 5 He runs up and down the pitch flagging as he goes (8)
- 6 Lad on the lookout for a bit of talent (5)
- 7 Undying need to slow down the process of getting on (7)
- 14 Scored, then had it cancelled (9)
- 15 Smouldering aromas that makes one angry (8)
- 17 Comes in specially to collect their wages (7)
- 18 Backs some of the team (7)
- 20 Halves the bananas before having them for dessert (6)
- 22 Items that go by vehicle first (5)

Tai Chi Group

Classes to improve general health, fitness and mental health.

Tai Chi is slow and gentle and doesn't leave you breathless, yet improves overall fitness.

New Tai Chi Groups will start on Wednesday 16th February in St Michael's Church Hall, Alnwick, in the small hall.

Clas times:

Stand up group starts 12md to 1pm. (6 members)

Sit down group at 1pm to 2pm. (14 members)

Group teacher - Pete from Berwick u3a

Group leader Hazel

You can get contact details from Anne McMillan, Groups Coordinator at groups.alnwick.u3a@gmail.com



Tai Chi is slow and gentle and doesn't leave you breathless, yet improves overall fitness. The number one goal of our group is to enjoy Tai Chi whilst gaining these health benefits.

Seated Tai Chi



Seated Tai Chi allows physically less able members to enjoy the health benefits of the art to make big improvements to their physical and mental well being

Hobbies and Interests

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



I was asked several years ago by a friend if I would like to learn to play bridge. With trepidation I went along and found that I really enjoyed it.

Bridge is a very popular game, it's fun, it's sociable, it's a great way of meeting new friends and keeping your brain active. So, it isn't a surprise that each year many people decide they want to learn how to play.

Believe it or not, there are said to be significant benefits to health and wellbeing if you play bridge regularly. This was shown in a study undertaken by Professor Marian Diamond from Berkeley University in 2000.

Playing a game of bridge requires you to concentrate. This helps keeps your brain active and, apparently, helps boost your immune system!

We all know the adage – “use it or lose it”. With more and more people living long, healthy lives and surviving to a ripe old age it is important to keep your brain active and alert.

Bridge is a social game. It's a great way of getting out and meeting new people. It's a good excuse for friends to meet regularly, enjoy a few games and exchange news and gossip..... But I must warn you bridge can become addictive!

Maureen Sayers

NEW GROUP

Intermediate walking group

to meet on a Tuesday starting from the 1st March 2022

Are you interested in walking and able to walk between 6 to 8 miles of medium difficulty – then this new group is for you.

The intermediate walking group will meet every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month. The walks will start at 10.00am and will last approximately 4 hours. Walks will normally include a lunch stop so you will need to bring appropriate provisions. Each walk will have a different starting point which will be no further than 1 hour's drive from Alnwick.

A draft walk programme has been developed covering both coastal and inland, however if anyone has a favourite walk or would like to lead a walk the programme can be amended. Further details will be circulated prior to each walk covering distance, terrain, altitude, etc.

Dogs will be permitted on the walks but it is the responsibility of owners to ensure adequate control at all times.

For further information and a copy of the draft programme please speak Julie Hall or Peter Hall: they will be attending the next monthly meeting on the 17th February at St Michael's Church Hall if you would like to chat with them about the walking programme. Or get contact details from Anne McMillan, Groups Coordinator at groups.alnwick.u3a@gmail.com

Dingbat Answers

SET A

1. Short sighted
2. Rock Star
3. Pat on the back
4. Ants in your pants
5. Forty Winks
6. Balancing Act
7. Head in the sand
8. Head on collision
9. Welcome back
10. United States
11. A drop in the ocean
12. Up for grabs

SET B

1. Can't spell for toffee
2. Look both ways
3. Slice of life
4. Bunch of flowers
5. Bob up and down
6. Just for fun
7. Honesty is the best policy
8. In Black and white
9. Middle age spread
10. Are you ready
11. Go along for the ride
12. Feeling under the weather

Crossword Answers

ACROSS - 4 Colossal. 8 Utmost. 9 Londoner. 10 Trampled. 11 Sitter. 12 Shortcut. 13 Reassess. 16 Virginia. 19 Messages. 21 Icicle. 23 Unlocked. 24 Ambrosia. 25 Trench. 26 Espoused.

DOWN - 1 Starchy. 2 Boomerang. 3 Italic. 4 Coldstream Guard. 5 Linesman. 6 Scout. 7 Ageless. 14 Scratched. 15 Incenses. 17 Incomes. 18 Defence. 20 Splits. 22 Cargo.

End Piece

Haiku

*Snowdrops in ivy
Keep watch over the garden
Where trees are at rest*

Mary Atkinson