



Members Newsletter September 2023

A Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

First, an apology. The sound at the July monthly meeting was terrible; many people couldn't hear anything, and our poor speaker had to cope with a microphone that kept cutting out. Some people said they would not be returning because the sound was so awful. I promised that the Committee would do its very best to resolve the problem. I am pleased to report that we have bought some new equipment and tested it successfully. So please do come to our monthly meeting on 21st September – sound and topic will both be great! Changing the subject, I hope you have all enjoyed the summer (which I would define as that week in June when it was warm and sunny). The Autumn is now fast approaching, and trailing in its wake will be more interesting talks and meetings, which I am sure you will enjoy.

Trevor Robinson

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Monthly Meeting – 15th June 2023

Bondagers - The forgotten workers of Northumberland & the Borders

Dinah Iredale

Bondagers were farmworkers and they played a very important part in the agriculture of Northumberland and South East Scotland. They were employed as fieldworkers under the Bondage System which ensured that the farmers had the number of workers they needed for all the tasks on the farm throughout the year.

The hind, a married ploughman, was by his bond or agreement with the farmer compelled to provide another worker. Usually this worker was a woman and because she was part of this bond she was called the bondager.

The bondager was often the hind's wife or daughter and if this was the case her daily earnings helped the family budget. If the hind did not have a family member who could work as the bondager he would need to hire a woman from the hirings and pay her a half year's wages in advance. He recouped this financial outlay when the farmer paid him a daily rate for the bondager's work.

The hind and his family, as part of his bond, had to find room in their cottage to house the bondager. This was a great imposition on the hind and his family because the cottages were very small. Sometimes the cottages only had two rooms but often there was one room only.

The hind and his family partitioned this space using box-beds to give a little privacy but housing a stranger with their family was difficult. There were many grumbles about bondagers telling tales, gossiping or being lazy and unwilling to help the hind's wife with household tasks. The hinds hired the bondagers as their servants and strictly speaking they should have worked at anything they were asked to do by the hinds and their wives, but a common comment was that the bondagers were not fond of household work.

Monthly Meeting – 15th June 2023 contd

The picture opposite is of a Bondager wearing their “working uniform”; the model was made by Anne Scott.

Their working clothes consisted of a Berwickshire hat lacquered black and lined with material, ruched red and black material was placed around the crown, and once a year the hat was taken apart and redone.



Their skirts were made of drugget (pleated hessian) with an apron called a Brat; blouses were lined with calico for warmth.

1837 was a significant year in the Border area: it was in this year that agricultural workers made a concerted effort to get rid of the bondage system. But in 1837 few farmers were ready to listen and only a few successes were reported. One such report was of Mr Tulip, a farmer at Westfield near Cornhill, who was chaired up and down the hiring fair by the delighted hinds once he had hired his men without the bondage condition.

The Bondagers tried again in 1866, holding many public meetings prior to the yearly hiring season, which began in February and ran through into March. Despite being very scattered and therefore rather isolated, the hinds, bolstered by the meetings, stood together and made objections to the system at each hiring fair throughout the area. These protests were reported in the local newspapers.

By 1866 things were quite different and the farmers were becoming more sympathetic. There were several reasons for this change of attitude, but one important change was mechanisation.

Monthly Meeting – 15th June 2023 contd

This was beginning to make a difference and the pressure at harvest-time for a very large workforce was not so great.

Farmers were also increasingly aware that they were losing their young skilled workers. Young hinds were particularly affected by the Bondage System because they often had a number of small children who couldn't work, and a wife fully occupied with caring for the children.

In this situation the hinds had no option but to hire their bondagers from the hirings and house them with their families. Many young hinds were deciding to leave the land and finding work elsewhere.

Despite these improvements, any farmer who could not readily get extra workers from a nearby town made no secret that they would look for "good families" at the hirings! By this they meant families with some members who were able to work – the dad as the hind, a son as a labourer and one or two daughters as bondagers.

The Bondage System did eventually disappear, but this was gradually over many, many years with women still being employed as part of the hind's contract at the beginning of the 20th century.

Marilyn kindly volunteered to model the Berwickshire hat, which was made by a theatre company for a stage production.



Maureen Sayers

Monthly Meeting – 20th July 2023

Climate Crisis & The Northumberland Coast Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Sarah Winlow - AONB officer for Northumberland

We were treated to an excellent talk by Sarah Winlow AONB officer for Northumberland, on the effects of Climate Change on the Northumberland Coast.

Climate change is affecting coastal areas in various ways, including sea level rise, changes in the frequency and intensity of storms, increases in precipitation, and warmer ocean temperatures. Rising atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide are causing the oceans to absorb more of

the gas and become more acidic, which can have significant impacts on coastal and marine ecosystems.

The impacts of climate change are likely to worsen problems

that coastal areas already face.

The main driver for global warming are energy only emissions, derived from power, heat and transport.



Hauxley Beach, showing evidence of coastal erosion

Monthly Meeting – 20th July 2023 contd



One of the areas needing improvement in Northumberland is transport emissions, especially as a county we rely heavily on the two million tourists who visit Northumberland each year.

Our Farne Island Puffins (left) may appear to have an idyllic island life but their beautiful

surroundings mask a hidden enemy in the form of climate change

Since 2010 there has been an increase of 5% in our transport emissions, aided by an increase in car ownership of 8% in Northumberland in the last 10 years. Given the rural and wide-ranging nature of the county, particularly to job and destination sites, there is a reliance on the motorcar in the absence of widespread high frequency bus services seen in cities. Increasing the use of public transport vehicles supported by the reduction of short duration car journeys will allow for that improvement.

An outline plan to provide a bus service along the coastal route without diverting into Alnwick is one of the routes under consideration. Hopefully, this will encourage tourists to ditch their car in favour of public transport.

All areas are squeezed as the sea levels rise; many habitats are disappearing due to climate change. Tourism will be affected if there is less wildlife to see.

Warmer seas have reduced numbers of sand eels, a main food source for puffins, while the increased incidence of flooding from heavy storms has seen more eggs and chicks destroyed.

Monthly Meeting – 20th July 2023 contd

Wildlife will respond to climatic changes in different ways. Certain species might be able to adapt or migrate to habitats with more suitable conditions. Where species are unable to adapt and conditions become inhospitable, populations are likely to become threatened and, in extreme cases, species may face extinction.

Unfortunately, predicting the consequences of global warming is one of the most difficult tasks for the world's climate researchers.



River Aln 2008



Storm Arwen November 2021

The natural processes that cause rain, hail and snow storms, increases in sea level and other expected effects of global warming are dependent on many different factors. It is also difficult to predict the size of the emissions of greenhouse gases in the coming decades as this can be influenced by political decisions and technologies.

While individuals alone may not be able to make drastic emissions cuts

that limit climate change to acceptable levels, personal action is essential to raise the importance of issues to policymakers and businesses.

Using your voice as a consumer, a customer, a member of the electorate and an active citizen, will lead to changes on a much grander scale.

Maureen Sayers

Footnote – during the Q&A session, an audience member suggested that excess atmospheric carbon dioxide is caused by volcanoes. Sarah was surprised by this suggestion, and she and I have discussed it since. Current scientific consensus is that volcanic eruptions are often discussed in relation to climate change because they release CO₂ (and other gases) into our atmosphere. However, human contributions to the carbon cycle are more than **100 times** those from all the volcanoes in the world - combined. More information can be found at <https://climate.nasa.gov/faq/42/what-do-volcanoes-have-to-do-with-climate-change/>

Trevor Robinson

Remaining Monthly Meetings in 2023

Sept 21st Professor Brian Ward, American Studies, Northumbria University - "Transatlantic Blues: 60's N.E. Music Scene & the Civil Rights Movement"

Oct 19th Edward Cartner, Published Author - "Amusing tales from the R.A.F."

Nov 15th Sam Stephenson, Senior Coastguard, Seahouses - "The work of the Coast Guard"

Dec 14th Martin Shingler, Senior Lecturer in Radio and Film Studies, University of Sunderland - "Diana Dors: Film Star, Actor and Paperback Writer"

The AGM will take place at 13:30 on 19th October, prior to Edward Cartner's talk.

Note that the December date is one week earlier than normal, due to hall availability. The Christmas Social will also take place on that day.

Membership Renewals

Enrolment for 2023/23 started on 1st September. Downloadable membership forms have been placed on the website:-

<https://u3asites.org.uk/alnwick/page/130168>

September Photos
Beningbrough Gardens, Yorkshire
taken by Trevor Robinson in July 2023



New Group – Board Games

Do you like playing board games, especially with a little twist where you can remove your opponents from the game and win in the end? I have set up a regular meeting in the Small Hall at 2pm on the 3rd Wednesday of every month, starting on September 20th, 2023.

Pompeii and the Great Balloon Race are amongst my favourite games. I would like people to bring along their favourite games so that we can all have a bit of fun.

The Great Balloon Race is a retro game and is a bit of a classic, but unfortunately, I don't have one of my own. I would like to purchase it if anyone knows of anyone who has a copy.

Pompeii is set in the time of the great Mount Vesuvius Eruption. The game is in two parts where the families gather in their homes in the city. Then the second half starts with the volcano erupting and people desperately fleeing the city, and of course this is where it all becomes a free for all, where some people become trapped behind the city gates and perish.

So, if anyone is interested in stretching their imagination, please join us on 20th September or on the third Wednesdays thereafter. And do bring along your own favourites, so that we can all have the opportunity to enjoy them as well.

Mary Matthew

Special u3a Meeting - 29th September

How to Avoid Being Scammed

Chris Balfour will be giving a talk on avoiding scams on Friday 29th September at 2pm in St Michaels Church Hall.

There are many types of scams that any of us can fall victim to, sadly scams are becoming increasingly common:

- Doorstep scams
- Mail scams
- Phone scams
- Email and online scams
- Relationship scams
- Identity scams
- Investment, Banking and Pension scams

The good news is that there are ways to help avoid being taken in by a scam if you know what to look for.

Please join us on 29th September to find out ways in which you can help protect yourself.

New Members Meeting –

St Michaels Hall - 26th October 2pm

We hold these meetings twice a year, for our new and recently joined members. It is an opportunity to tell people who we are and what we do. They can also meet some of our Group Leaders.

Your Committee Members

This is a feature where Committee members say a bit about themselves. This month it is **Maureen Sayers**, our Secretary.

I started my nurse training in Newcastle upon Tyne on a new initiative, a combined SRN RSCN course. It lasted 3 years and eight months, which reduced the time scale of taking both adult and children nurse training together.

I qualified in 1975, got married and moved to Alnwick, a very busy year.

I was fortunate enough in 1982 while working as out-patient sister in Alnwick infirmary to be offered a job as a Practice Nurse. Plans had been passed for an extension to the surgery housing a new nurses suite. This took two years to complete; this two-year period gave everyone the time to decide what they wanted from me and what new initiatives I felt could be implemented quickly.

This threw up all sorts of interesting challenges, not least as Practice Nursing was in its infancy, training and further education were limited, and we were not allowed access to the NHS Superannuation Pension Scheme. It took the Royal College of Nursing until 1997 to campaign to recognise Practice Nursing as a branch of nursing in its own right; we were then allowed back into the NHS Pension Scheme, 13 years after I became a Practice Nurse.

Despite all the drawbacks, I really believed in the ethos of Practice Nursing and could see the advantages of being employed directly by a GP practice. I was very fortunate that the GPs I worked for were very forward thinking, they appreciated that Practice Nursing was going to be integral as to how they foresaw GP services developing in the future. They, along with other likeminded GPs helped set up training courses and encouraged the development of a North East Practice Nurses Group.

Your Committee Members - contd

In the early years Practice Nurse training was always at the forefront of our minds. Marie Curie wanted to help develop Practice Nurse training to cover areas such as smear taking and teaching women self-breast examination, later progressing into skin cancer awareness courses.

The difficulty was, where were we going to find teachers?

The North East Practice Nurse Group had a close association with the Durham Practice Nurse Group and between us managed to source a likely course that would suit our needs. After approaching several educational establishments two tutors at New College Durham agreed (with our help), to run a further education 730 Teaching Course.

This really was the start of making things happen for Practice Nurse education in the North East.

In 1986 Julia Cumberledge, now Baroness Cumberledge, produce a paper entitled "Neighbourhood Nursing – A Focus for Care", which introduced the concept of nurse prescribing. Not universally popular with doctors at the time, it has proved she really was a forward thinker.

It took a few years to get to Advanced Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Prescribers, but they are now commonplace in every surgery. I worked for the Practice for twenty-six years, lots of changes along the way meant there was never a dull moment.

I retired after battling with rheumatoid arthritis since I was twenty-eight and felt my body was telling me to have a rest. Less than twelve months later found me in the RVI with a broken neck, retirement was certainly the right decision.

Since then, I've spent twenty years researching my family tree, learning to play bridge and of course joining the u3a.

Seeking New Committee Members

We will need to refresh our Committee membership at the AGM on 19th October. Please take a moment to consider whether you could put your name forward. We would particularly welcome someone with IT skills.

Committee Member is a very interesting role and you would be helping our u3a to continue to operate for the benefit of our membership. Why not have a chat with one of the current Committee members? If you don't already know, you can find out who we are at page 10 of the Welcome Pack :

<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/a/alnwick/docs/welcome-packamended29-08-23.pdf>

You can also find a lot of information about being a Committee member on the national u3a website at:

<https://sources.u3a.org.uk/recruitment/bigger-and-better-u3a-committees>

The future of Alnwick u3a is dependant on members coming forward to help in a variety of ways, whether that be helping in the hall at the monthly meetings or sending articles to the newsletter, for example.

Every contribution no matter how small helps to make Alnwick u3a a more vibrant group.

Quiz (Courtesy of Shelley Willis)

Connecting Word

Find the connecting word that finishes the first word and starts the second word.

Example: Pole Wars The connecting word is Star
(Pole Star & Star Wars)

1	Gate	.....	Haste
2	Fancy	.....	Rehearsal
3	Princess	.....	Marines
4	Parents	.....	Primrose
5	Brake	.....	Pushers
6	Direct	.....	Man
7	Narrow	.....	Hatch
8	Sweet	.....	Trifle
9	Stick	.....	Repellent
10	Tread	.....	Proof
11	Change	.....	Free
12	Upper	.....	Room
13	Crowd	.....	Panel
14	Foot	.....	Pigeon
15	Dutch	.....	House
16	Alternative	.....	March
17	Stainless	.....	Wool
18	Beauty	.....	Walk
19	Ploughman's	.....	Box
20	Village	.....	Proof

Odds and Ends

Actors in black and white movies often put themselves in danger during driving scenes, as they couldn't tell if the traffic lights were red or green

Jellyfish have survived for over 650 million years, despite not having a brain. This gives hope to so many people.

I swallowed a bunch of scrabble tiles by accident. My next trip to the bathroom could spell disaster.

You have reached tech-support:-

Press one if you're frustrated

Press two if you're aggravated

Press three if you're angry

Press four if your face is turning red

Press five if there's smoke coming out of your ears

So I knocked on the door of a B&B and a lady stuck her head out of the window, saying "What do you want?". I said "I want to stay here". She said "Well stay there" and shut the window.

I was thrown out of the staff room of local Tesco yesterday. They asked me what I was doing there. I told them I was on a break. They said you don't work here. I said I'd just finished using the self service till so clearly I do.

The Wonderful World of Ladybird Book Artists Bailiffgate Museum & Gallery – 8th July to 5th November 2023

Bailiffgate Museum & Gallery is exhibiting *The Wonderful World of Ladybird Book Artists*, telling the story of the talented artists who illustrated Ladybird books for more than 30 years.

This beautiful and colourful exhibition is displaying an unparalleled collection of books, original artwork, and artefacts, demonstrating how the many talented Ladybird illustrators played such an enormous role in the extraordinary success of the company.



Tracing the interconnected work of these artists, the Ladybird story itself is recounted over its 'golden years' – 1940 to 1975. Both visually rich and varied, the exhibition will evoke many memories of childhood. Vintage Ladybird books encapsulate much of the history of Britain in the 20th century and hundreds of these books will be available for visitors to browse through at the exhibition.

There were many different factors behind Ladybird books' phenomenal success in the 1950s – 80s but as Ladybird books were essentially picture books, it was the illustrations that attracted and engaged users. The exhibition explores questions such as who were the artists, are they known for other work and who were the models for the pictures?

In the process of answering these questions, the exhibition tells the fascinating story of the little Loughborough print business which became a giant in children's publishing.

The exhibition is curated by Ladybird expert and enthusiast Helen Day, who has spent more than 20 years researching the company and collecting books and more.

There is a Ladybird search, I Spy a Ladybird Book, and dressing up for adults and children in the various character costumes. Or you can go and sit in the reading chair and enjoy one of over 300 books available you to read.



Tickets are £5 for Adults, £4 for Concessions, £1 for ages 5 - 16s and under 5s. More information can be found on www.bailiffgatemuseum.co.uk

No Longer With Us

Paul Hill's daughter has informed us of his death. Many of you will have known Paul through his love of walking and participation in the intermediate walks. He was a cheerful and friendly guy, who always had a smile and a joke to share with everyone. He will be missed.

Another person no longer with us is Margaret Kilvington, who died in August. She was a founder member of Alnwick u3a.

Helen Anstis has also recently passed away. No one on the Committee knows about her association with u3a, but if any of you have details, please let us know and we will post an appreciation in the next newsletter.

Tom's Tales

A man says to his friend "I'm thinking of buying a Labrador." "You must be bonkers" says his friend, "have you seen how many of their owners go blind?"

Statistically, 6 out of 7 dwarfs are not Happy.

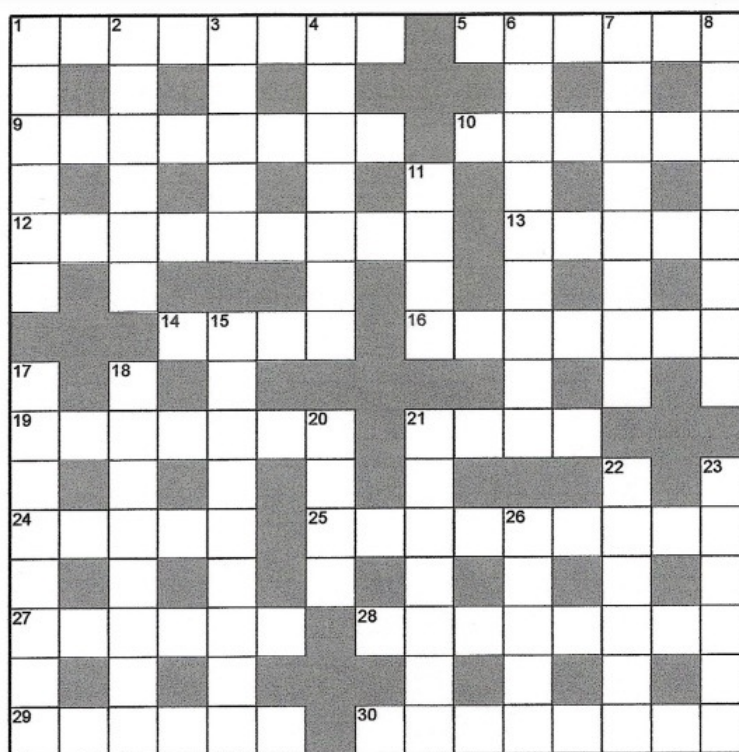
Feedback & contributions are very welcome!

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 6th November, and the contributions deadline is 3rd November.

Crossword – courtesy of Alan Sayers



ACROSS

- 1 The type of victory achieved on a footbridge (8)
- 5 Spike Milligan's favourite cake (6)
- 9 Inscribed something serious in the end (8)
- 10 Close encounter (6)
- 12 One's useless when it comes to dining out (9)
- 13 Partly rediscovered dance venue (5)
- 14 Mark for attention what's in the hole (4)
- 16 Victory some might describe as appealing (7)
- 19 Stencil made especially for customers (7)
- 21 Leading man is a bit of an upstart (4)
- 24 Plans put aside somehow (5)
- 25 Hit this and points are deducted (9)
- 27 Leaves container to get a drink (6)
- 28 Gripes so about the blabbermouth (8)
- 29 Feathered creature sadly ripped apart (6)
- 30 Foxes can apparently suffer from white-finger syndrome by the sounds of it (8)

DOWN

- 1 It's a pain not having this in the toolbox (6)
- 2 The French idiot goes for a dip here (6)
- 3 Examinations taken within a choral society (5)
- 4 Squaring things up later on in the day (7)
- 6 Ocean laid out north of the border (9)
- 7 Guess one wouldn't want to put money on this runner (4,4)
- 8 Vessel laden with drink (8)
- 11 Misrepresent the angle (4)
- 15 Unfortunately there's a blot on this piece of artwork (9)
- 17 Predicts somehow what's going to be written for the play (8)
- 18 Sacked a politician for ignoring the risk to miners (8)
- 20 The law that deals you a bad hand (4)
- 21 Doubt he'll join in any Christmas carol (7)
- 22 Soldier had his papers ruined (6)
- 23 Loves adverts about metal container (6)
- 26 You can wash your boat down here (5)

Quiz Answers

1	Post	11	Hands
2	Dress	12	Class
3	Royal	13	Control
4	Evening	14	Stool
5	Pedal	15	Auction
6	Action	16	Route
7	Escape	17	Steel
8	Sherry	18	Sleep
9	Insect	19	Lunch
10	Water	20	Idiot

Crossword Answers

ACROSS - 1 Walkover. 5 Eccles. 9 Engraved. 10 Clinch. 12 Chopstick. 13 Disco. 14 Flag. 16 Winsome. 19 Clients. 21 Star. 24 Ideas. 25 Dartboard. 27 Teabag. 28 Gossiper. 29 Dipper. 30 Reynards.

DOWN - 1 Wrench. 2 Lagoon. 3 Orals. 4 Evening. 6 Caledonia. 7 Long Shot. 8 Schooner. 11 Skew. 15 Landscape. 17 Scripted. 18 Firedamp. 20 Sods. 21 Scrooge. 22 Sapper. 23 Adores. 26 Basin.

End Piece

*The fishing boats are at rest
Seaweed sleeps on the shore
Where birds ponder and walkers wander.
A cormorant watches from the rocks
As a group perform Qi Jong
To the rhythm of the waves
And the sky smiles.*

Mary Atkinson