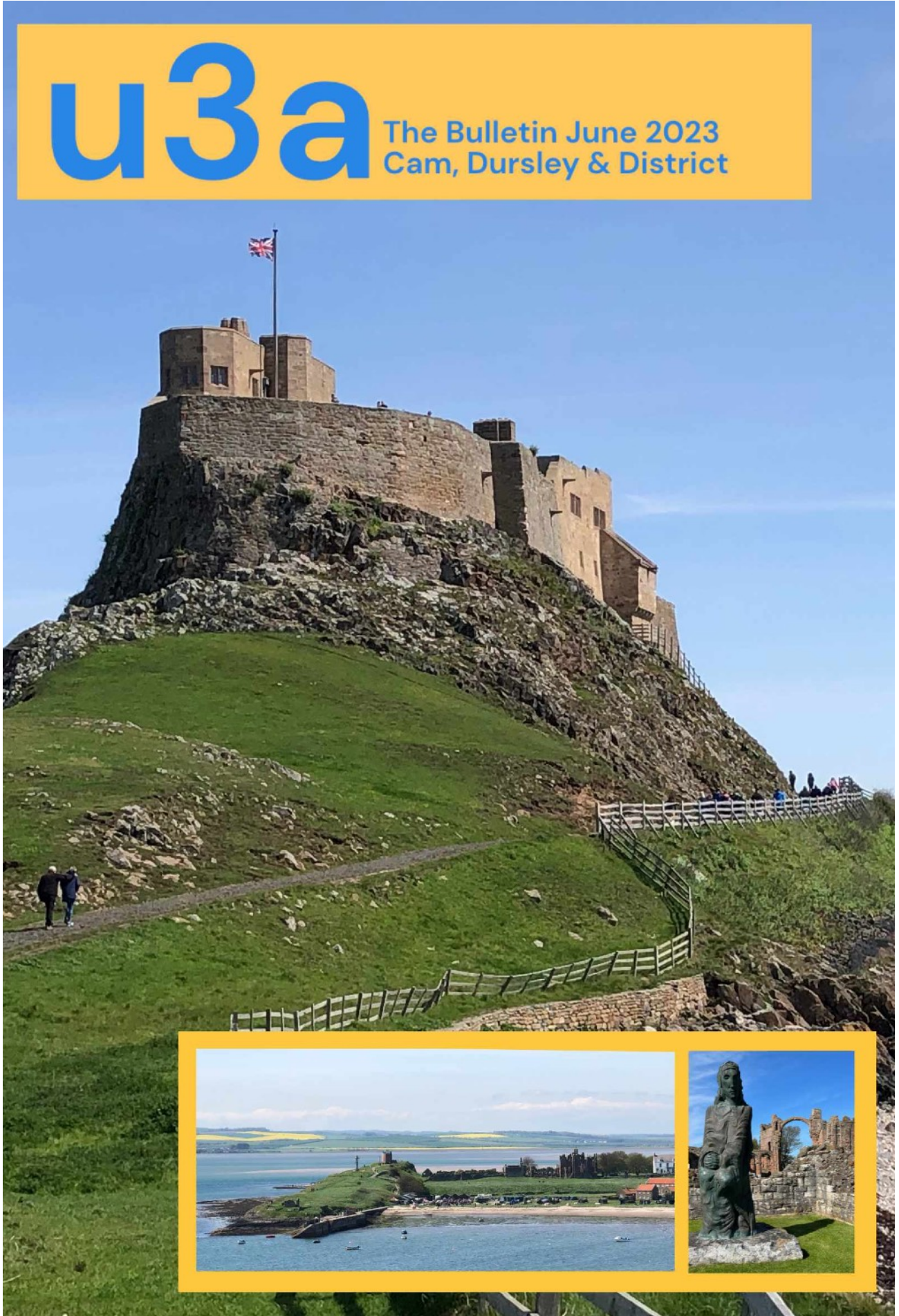


u3a

The Bulletin June 2023
Cam, Dursley & District



Branch News

The Annual General Meeting scheduled for Thursday 15th June could not constitutionally be completed and was adjourned. The constitution specifies that "there shall be a quorum when at least 10% of the number of members of the U3A, are present at any Annual/Special General Meeting". This figure, currently 64, was not reached. The adjourned AGM will be rescheduled. Members are urged to attend to avoid any further delays. As you will be aware, there are two candidates for the post of Chair, Alan Keith and Myrtle Moreton-Cox. This election needs to be resolved to ensure the smooth running of our u3a. The date and time, possibly linked to the next monthly meeting, will be circulated as soon as possible.

Group News

Here's a message from Pam Davis. She writes "A very big thank you to everyone who has supported me in my role as Groups Coordinator over the years. Of course, a very special thank you goes to all the Group Leaders, who work so hard to make their group activities interesting, fun and safe for all their group members. Without their enormous input u3a would not exist. Thank you again.



It has been a pleasure to watch our u3a grow and develop into an important and valued part of our local community. Although I will be leaving the role and the Committee, I will still be leading my own groups and will continue to be an active member. I'm sure my successor Elinor will come with new ideas and fresh enthusiasm and I wish her well as she takes our groups into the next exciting phase.

My very best wishes go to the new committee who will be leading our u3a in the coming year.

Pam

Group Reports

Travel Group – The Kingdom of Northumbria – Brian Gornall

This five day coach holiday was organised by Myrtle Moreton-Cox with the help of Airedale Tours. Based in the Holiday Inn, just outside Newcastle on Tyne, the itinerary took in the major historical sights of the Northumbria coast. Castles, a cathedral, a tidal causeway and sacred ruins combined to reveal centuries of history. The early impact of Christianity was

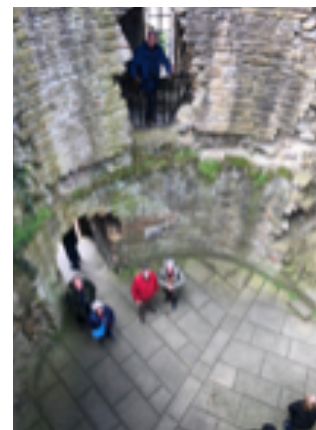
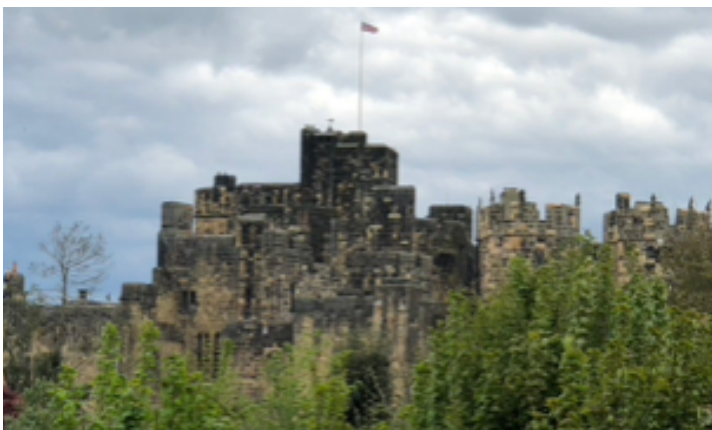
commemorated in the ruins of the priory on Holy Island. Cuthbert, Lindisfarne's greatest saint died in 687. Two hundred years later, after Viking raids the remains of St Cuthbert, and the Lindisfarne Gospels, were saved by the monks and after another 100 years he was reburied in what is now Durham Cathedral.



Bamburgh Castle, or Bebbanburg, the seat of the Kings of the North, as it was then known, figures next in the historical timeline, the wooden fortress of Anglo-Saxon times being the centre piece of Bernard Cornwell's series of books, and subsequent TV series, about his warrior ancestor Uthred.



More about Bamburgh in its later incarnations to follow, as we now visit Alnwick Castle, and move into Shakespeare's Age of Kings. Alnwick was the home of Harry (Hotspur) Percy, heir to the dukedom of Northumberland, and challenger to the reign of Henry IV. Despite Hotspur's fall at the Battle of Shrewsbury, and many setbacks for the family over the years, the Percys still hold the title, and today's castle. Inside, their Canalettos and a Turner on the walls compete with cases of the family china. We rounded off the Wars of the Roses at Barnard Castle, the ruins of which still have traces of the emblem of Richard of Gloucester, Richard III.



Back to Bamburgh as we jump forward to the Industrial Revolution. Victorian entrepreneur William Armstrong restored the ruins of the Norman castle and his inventions and subsequent engineering businesses are commemorated in a museum. The castle's contemporary function as a family home is subsidised not only by opening to visitors but also as a venue both for corporate hospitality and weddings.



A special mention here to our KB coach driver Roger, who skilfully took us up the steep and narrow cliff side road to manoeuvre into an exceedingly tight turning space.

Next on the time line, a return to Holy Island and Lindisfarne Castle, refurbished from 1901 in Arts and Crafts style by Sir Edwin Lutyens for publisher Edward Hudson. The castle and the island are the cover pictures. Inside, the National Trust have "dressed" the rooms in the style of an Edwardian house party, peppered with acerbic quotes from Lytton Strachey. "After that, the only thing to do was to get altogether drunk" sums up his view of the place.



It wasn't all history, contemporary sights included "the Angel of the North" and the restored Alnwick Castle Gardens, complete with fountains, a maze and poison garden.



All together a satisfying and enjoyable break.

Historic Places –*Sally Beynon*

On the 5th May the U3A Historic Places group visited Witley Court, Great Witley Court Church and Leigh Court barn.

Witley Court was originally a medieval manor house and later altered into a Jacobean mansion. During Queen Victoria's reign it was one of the great country houses of England where extravagant parties and royal entertainments were held. William Ward became the 1st Earl of Dudley in the 1850s. He hired the architect Samuel Daukes to remodel the house. The Georgian interiors were decorated in the ornate Louis XV style; and an ornate formal garden designed by William Andrews Nesfield, was created which included grand formal parterres and the Perseus and Andromeda fountain. Lord Dudley hosted many lavish house parties with guests such as the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII).

Witley became one of the country's most spectacular ruins after a devastating fire in September 1937. A strong wind caused it to spread quickly from the roof of the servants' quarters down into the reception rooms on the main floor. Although the west side was unaffected, much of the house was a smouldering shell by the next day. Sir Herbert Smith, the owner, decided to sell the estate and Witley was never lived in again.

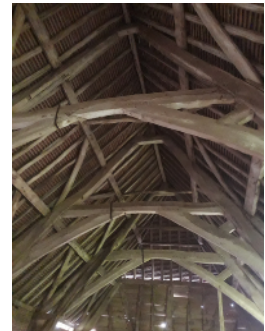
English Heritage restored the Victorian south and east parterres and the Perseus and Andromeda fountain at the centre of the south parterre.



The fountain is switched on every hour and the spectacular water flow consists of: a central fountain three times higher and four fountains the same height as the statue of the horse and knight; several smaller fountains a third of the height of the statue; and small waterfalls all over the statue from overflowing 'dishes' of water filled by the fountains. The wilderness was redesigned in 2002 as part of the Contemporary Heritage Garden scheme. To reach the house we walked through: shrubberies with flowering rhododendrons; areas of bluebells, primroses, cowslips and narcissus; woodland; and over a bridge at the end of the lake. From the house there are spectacular view from both the front and rear. There are also good views of the house from across the lake.

The original parish church was built in the thirteenth century and restored between 1965 and 1994.

On the way home we visited Leigh Court Barn, the largest medieval timber-framed cruck barn in Britain. It is 150ft long with eighteen cruck blades, each made from a single oak tree, and was built for Pershore Abbey in the early 14th century to store and mill grain and store other produce from the abbey farms. The original roof would have been tiles, shingles or thatch and the walls made of woven wattle.



[Science and Engineering – Visit to Air Salvage International by Myron Burak](#)

Myron was keen to go on the visit to Cotswold Airport as he once had a microlight based there for a few years around the mid nineties, after the airfield was sold and ceased to be RAF Kemble. He writes "A few years later airliners started appearing over in the North East part of the airfield. We found out they were being broken up. Since that time, I've always been curious as to exactly what they do there.

The visit started with a very thorough briefing from Mark Gregory, the founder and Managing Director of the company. His talk, given in one of the hangars that the company operate from, not only contained a detailed history of the company's history and what it does, but also a lot of facts and figures about the airline industry with regard to such things as numbers of passengers and environmental issues. Mark is quite a flamboyant person and his talk was interesting and informative, funny in places and controversial in others. It is clear that he is proud of his business and likes to show people round.



We moved to the outside to see a couple of airliners in the first stages of disassembly. The first thing to come off are the engines, which are overhauled and returned to service. A new engine costs in the region of £35 million. A second hand one is worth about £3 to £5 million, a great incentive to bring them back to service.

The next most valuable part is the Auxiliary Power Unit. After that, some 400 parts are removed from the old aircraft. Things like instruments, avionics and communications equipment. Cabin seating as well if it is modern and in good condition. We were shown some specific operations that were being done at the time.

By now the only real value left is in the landing gear. The old aeroplane is wheeled over to a large outdoor site. We travelled to this in a couple of vehicles. Here the aircraft is mounted on concrete blocks, wooden sleepers and large metal stands, then the undercarriage is removed. There is now nothing left of any great value and the once majestic aeroplane is unceremoniously broken up with a large machine with a kind of set of jaws on the end of a boom. The scrap material is loaded into skips and taken off site for processing and recycling.

At stages in the visit, Mark gathered us round to explain what was going on. Otherwise, we were free to wander around, looking at the aircraft and talking to the staff. It was all very relaxed. Mark was always on hand to

answer any questions we may have. We then returned to the reception area for a bit of a debrief and said our good byes.

Coronation Winos – May 2023

In honour of the coronation, we thought it a good idea to combine Wotton and Dursley Wine Appreciation Groups – a bit like entente cordiale but more of a friendly agreement between two groups rather than countries. Accordingly a mini bus was hired to bring the Dursleyites over the hill to Wotton, with strict instructions to the driver not to arrive too soon for collection.....



Jacky had decorated her garden and house with flags and other royal regalia so the scene was well and truly set. Most of us turned up wearing something in red, white and/or blue, and the other suggestion was that we bought wines from the Commonwealth. Here I must be honest and say I have no idea if this was carried out – the writing on the label is

so small (!!)

but a very popular choice was the Shiraz or Merlot selection from the Chapter & Verse collection from Aldi, and a couple of trusted wines that seemed to incorporate Chile into the Commonwealth.

We each bought some food to the feast and after the photo opportunity sat down to enjoy a delightful meal fit for a king, with not a soggy coronation chicken sandwich in sight. The meal was rounded off with cheesecake and banoffee slices, followed by cheese and biscuits.

The minibus finally arrived to take our visitors home, with the promise to reciprocate the evening sometime soon. All that remained was the washing up to do, and then the reward of finishing off the wine. Thanks Jacky, it was a very good party.

Short Walks – Ann & Rachel

Seven of us walking in May
Queen Anne's Lace along the way
Canal and river side by side
A wildlife oasis viewed from a hide
The next walk in June – will it be hot?
Don't get excited probably not!



Art Club – Rita Dee

Our group has now been meeting for ten sessions, concentrating mainly on the basics of watercolour painting, including which materials are most suitable, colour mixing and how to represent texture. The most recent session included an introduction to perspective and a couple of members were brave enough to venture into the Chantry garden to paint. People started with a wide range of previous knowledge and all continue to grow in confidence as the weeks go by. Members either choose their own subject matter and choice of medium or follow my suggestions, so it is fairly relaxed. We will be taking a break for July and August so by September there may be room for a few more from the waiting list to join.



Garden Visits –*Brian and Jean Gornall*

Wortley House, just outside Wotton-under-Edge, dates from the 16th century and was altered to its present form in 1705. The house became the home of the current owners, Simon and Jessica Dickinson in 1985. Since then, they have created a diverse garden of over 20 acres. It includes a walled garden, bleached lime avenues, nut walk, potager, ponds, Italian garden, shrubberies and wild flower meadows.



Follies, urns and statues have been strategically placed throughout to enhance extraordinary vistas, and the garden filled with plants, arbours, roses and herbaceous borders. The surrounding countryside is incorporated into the garden with views up the steep valley to the wooded edge of the escarpment. The Cotswold Way descends past the edge of the garden, which is also crossed by a public footpath.

We visited in early May, some spring flowers still in evidence, including beautiful double white tulips, cowslips and white honesty. Jessica Dickinson guided us through the various phases of development, leading us past a large monument to some beloved dachshunds and out on to the



path up to their millennium project, a thatched hut with a stunning view over the estate. The substantial construction is the venue for summertime family suppers and while most of the approaching meadow is given over to wildflowers, a clear track gave vehicular access to deliver food and drink from the house.

Our visit to these impressive, extensive and obviously very expensive gardens and grounds ended with tea and cakes on the sunny kitchen terrace.

Coming Up

This is my last edition as your Bulletin Editor and committee member. Hope you enjoyed my efforts. The Bulletin goes on, with Mike Hadley back at the helm. He will be in touch with you all as soon as possible with more details of how to send him your copy. We hope that the existing email address mag.u3a@gmail.com will continue as the main method of contact. Technical meeting set up to sort this out!

Thanks to all my regular reporters and photographers for your contributions. Don't worry if you've already sent in items for the next edition. I'll make sure they're forwarded to Mike. The newsletter is the best way for groups to share news and encourage new members.

There's lots going on in the next month or so. Full details of all forthcoming events as well as email links to group leaders or committee members, are available on our website

u3asites.org.uk/cam-dursley/home

where you will also find links to read or download previous editions of the Bulletin

NEXT EDITION - COPY DEADLINE TO BE ANNOUNCED

Contributions for future editions should be sent as Word documents or in the body of an email to mag.u3a@gmail.com. Please keep contributions as short as possible, target around 500 words. One or two photos per item welcome. Please compress jpg files to low or medium quality.

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS MAY BE EDITED FOR PUBLICATION.

GOOD LUCK EVERYONE- BRIAN GORNALL (RETIRING EDITOR)