



THE CRYER!

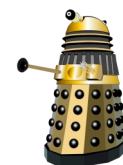
u3a learn,
laugh
live

The voice of Dronfield and District u3a

Issue 121 December 2023

EDITORIAL

Morning and welcome to issue 121 of the Dronfield u3a newsletter. December is crammed full of special National Days. December 1st is **National Christmas Lights** day when Christmas lights are switched on to mark the start of the festivities. The 4th is **National Sock Day** when we celebrate the two thousand years that have past since a cave man first wrapped his feet in goat hair to keep them warm. In many European Countries the 4th is also **List Day**, when the list of who has been naughty and who has been nice is drawn up. This is just the prelude to **Krampusnacht** on the 5th. On this night the Krampus delivers punishment to children who have been bad and traditionally gives them lumps of coal instead of presents. This is quickly followed by **St Nicholas Day** on the 6th when St Nicholas delivers presents to all the children who have been good. The 16th is **Stupid Toy** day which is the day to remember the strange toys from days past like Cabbage Patch dolls or Stretch Armstrong the doll that you could pull out of shape then sit and watch him slowly return to normal!. The 20th is **Games Day**. The day to drag your old board games out of the cupboard and dust them off. As a final fling before Christmas breaks on to the scene the 21st is **International Dalek Remembrance Day**. This day marks the first appearance of the Daleks on Dr Who in 1963. **'EXTERMINATE! EXTERMINATE!!'** Whoops! I mean Merry Christmas. Read on and enjoy. Jd (Editor)



GARDEN GROUPS VISIT

Our final Garden Visits Group outing of the year was to Welbeck Garden Centre, near Creswell. It was well attended with our biggest turn out of members to date. We arrived in several cars, and met up on arrival in the café. Fifteen folk arriving all at once in a small café surprised the staff but unflustered they organised tables for us making it possible for us to be near to each other.

As we entered the actual Garden Centre area, we were greeted by 'three singing reindeers' – Well at least they brought a smile to our faces and helped to get us into the Christmas spirit!



We split up to explore, and do a little Christmas shopping before all meeting up again to enjoy lunch at the larger restaurant. Afterwards there was time to visit the Harley Gallery on the site of the ducal estate of Welbeck Abbey, once owned by the 7th Duke of Portland - a prominent politician after WWII, or to stock up on local produce from the

Farm Shop.

Our November visit is traditionally to a Garden Centre rather than a garden, and we continue to be amazed at how different they all can be, both with their stock and in the way they prepare for their Christmas visitors.



Our main focus at other times is of course visits to actual gardens. In successive years we have visited a true variety within an approximate fifty-mile radius of Dronfield. For example, we have seen the Snowdrop gardens at Hopton Hall, near Carsington Water, and been to see the rhododendrons at Lea Garden. This year I am pleased to say that we were able to include new venues such as the York Garden at Adel which is a marvellous one acre garden recently shown on TV and the RHS garden at Bridgewater, Manchester.

Our next meeting will be on the third Tuesday in January at my home, to make plans for 2024. New members would be made very welcome. If you want to get involved, just get in touch using ramseyhertzog@hotmail.com and I'll send you all the details.

Ramsey Hertzog

MONTHLY MEETINGS



Don't forget that details of all the monthly meetings from now until next March are available on the [Members](#) page of the website on -

(<https://u3asites.org.uk/dronfield/pages/69472>).

MEETING 13th DECEMBER (10 - 12)



Our Christmas Party will be in the Civic Centre on Wednesday 13th December.

The event is number restricted so unfortunately only those who have already booked will be able to attend.



MEETING - 10th JANUARY (10 - 12)

The speaker will be
Philip Caine
[Barrow to Baghdad](#)



Philip has spent thirty years travelling and working in difference places around the world. Although the Speaker will be on Zoom, we are still unable to broadcast this to members at home due to ongoing technical difficulties. We apologise for any disappointment but will look forward to welcoming as many as can make it to come along in person.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Firstly, thank you so much to everyone who has given Paul and I such a warm welcome to Dronfield and DDU3a in particular. Thank you also for trusting me to take on the role of Chair,



Thank you also to previous Trustees who have worked so hard over the years and to our new Trustees who are stepping up to build on their good work. Thank you to each of you for supporting our

various activities, for sharing about u3a with friends and family and helping create a sense of belonging and friendship.

In January the Exec will be focusing on our goals for the next 12 months. What would you like us to consider? Do you know of other u3as which offer exciting or novel ideas which we might embrace? Are there areas we might improve upon or are we doing ok??

We obviously need to work within the law, our Constitution, Charity Commission regulations and our many policies, but apart from that....we'd love to hear from you. Please email me -

at chair@dronfieldu3a.org.uk
or phone 01246 900201.

Finally, I appreciate not everyone celebrates Christmas and it can be a hard time for some, but we can all be intentional about being kind and fostering a spirit of goodwill to all men (and women). Have a blessed, peaceful and healthy Christmas everyone and we will look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Julia Harria (Chair)

NATIONAL U3A LEARNING EVENTS

Free Online Events In December.

Why not sign up for free online talks this month.

Tues 5th at 10am.

When Art and Literature meet at Christmastide.

Wed 6th at 2pm.

The Art of William Morris.

Wed 13th at 2pm.

Family History: Where all is not as it seems.

Fri 15th 10am.

Climate Change and the Oceans.

Visit

www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events

To register and for further events.

SOCIAL BRIDGE



For those who have not picked up a pack of cards for a while, and even those who have, the group is hoping to find one or two people who might want to refresh their knowledge and skills.

As always, the emphasis is on the social not the serious side of the game. Please contact Steve Bradbury on 01246 419490 for more information.

ON-LINE SAFETY



Modern technology can make life more interesting and easier in many ways. Unfortunately, it also comes with its own built in dangers. The risk of scams and fraud are becoming increasingly common.



You can protect yourself by knowing what to look out for and what to do if you suspect a scam. This article, and the ones that follow will in subsequent Cryers will hopefully help you avoid being caught out by a sophisticated scam.

The first thing to realise is – it can happen to you. Even if you are an experienced user of tech, in an unguarded moment you could fall prey to a very simple but sophisticated scam. Every year in the UK millions of people are caught out by scams and lose money. Read on and protect yourself.

Session 1

Phishing (fishing) scams were the most common type of scam in 2022. They occur when a scammer sends an email or text pretending to be from a trusted organisation or a delivery firm. They do this to get you to click through to a specially prepared web site where you'll be prompted to enter your personal details that they can easily access.



They may tell you to click on a link to or onto an attached file for further information. Doing so may harm your device as it will automatically download some unseen malware onto your device. **Don't click on any link or file if you are not sure of its origin and where it may take you.**

Some scam emails look genuine and appear to come from a safe source such as a bank. You can often tell if it's a scam by -

a – errors in spelling or grammar or an unusual style of writing.

b – it asks for personal information such as your username, password or bank details. A genuine organisation will never request this sort of information.

c – offers a threat such as a deal will expire, your parcel won't be delivered or your account will be closed.

The best defence is not to click on any link or file unless you know its source and always take your time to think before you act.

June Christopher (Safeguarding Officer)

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY



Linda Jarman laid the wreath on behalf of DDU3A at the Remembrance Parade.

The Wreath was made by the Garden Growers.

The Poppy

The Poppy is a simple flower
But on each November 11th

Its significance acts
as a powerful reminder
That each and every one of us
Should stop and remember.

Remember
the men and women
that gave up their lives
In an act of war.



Linda Jarman

U3a TREE SPARKLES

Once again, the merry band of Santa's Little helpers volunteered to erect a tree as part of the Dronfield Tree Festival. Long hours (actually 30 minutes) were spent debating where each bauble should be stuck, and how tightly the tinsel should be wrapped around a neck. The conclusion was stunning! A veritable shimmer of glistening lights and love greeted each visitor who could only stand in awe. What skilled craftsmen and geniuses had created such beauty? Step forward and take a bow, Malcolm Green, John Lumb and, chief fairy, Steve Bradbury.



GARDENING GROWERS

The Gardening Growers Group met recently for their annual Christmas wreath making. When we arrived at the hall we discovered that it had not been opened up for our meeting. With no hesitation one of our members offered the use of her home so rather than stand around waiting in the cold we gratefully went there.



Apart from being armed with wet oasis rings, we also had buckets and bags full of various types of foliage. There was prickly holly and red berries. And Euonymus in emerald-n-gold, silver queen, and just plain green Japonica. Anemone seed heads as well as pine or conifer coned branches. There was Sarcococca in bud, Symphoricarpos or snowberry full of white berries, ivy with clusters of green berries and even rose hips.

The table was full of prunings' from member's gardens and those of their neighbours. Everyone was busy with secateurs or florist scissors filling the previously soaked oasis rings. In no time the wreaths were made and everything cleared away and tidy.



Some of the resulting Christmas wreaths have been made to hang on doors. Others have been made up as a table arrangement with a candle to stand in the centre, or trimmed with ribbons, baubles or glitter as an individual preference. All are ready for Christmas.

Gill Middleton

RIDDLE-ME-REE

1) I am an odd number. Take away a letter and I become even! What number am I?

2) A girl meets a lion and a unicorn in a forest. The lion said, "I lie on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday but not on the other days". The unicorn said, "I lie on Thursday, Friday and Saturday but not the rest of the time". "Yesterday I was lying," said the Lion. "So was I!", exclaimed the unicorn. What day of the week was it?



HISTORY GROUP

The History Group enjoy researching and looking for the facts behind historic events. This month a number of them had delved into the facts behind the 'Witch Trials' of the sixteenth century.



The Halloween witch we see every October is a medieval creation born out of superstition, lack of knowledge and difficult times. They did not really exist but for over a hundred years the fear of witches brought misery to many places across Europe and other parts of the world.

Recently the witch has come to symbolise the long grim history of misogyny and with it the need to recognise the wrong done to many women who were accused of witchcraft. Women who were opinionated, wealthy, owned land, or had red hair. They had a black cat for a pet, a mole on their face or were tall. They sang, they danced or had the misfortune to live next to a family whose pig had died. Many were midwives or healers. If you were a woman, in the sixteen hundreds, there was no possible defence against an accusation of being a witch. It was not witches who were burned in the 1600's. It was women.

The modern historical outlook is try to understand the problems and prejudices that caused the witch hunts and acknowledge that injustices were committed. In Scotland there are plans for a national memorial for those wrongly accused of witchcraft.

On this occasion the meeting began with a brief study of the period of the witch trials with reference to the Victorian 'Yorkshire Witch' Mary Bateman, who was more of a serial killer than a witch. There followed a brief talk on the reasons why we stopped burning witches. These were economical as well as a realisation that witches didn't actually exist. Finally a short talk on 'Wicca', the ancient Celtic belief in the natural world. The meeting was completed with a picture based quiz on witches from literature, TV, books and films and a small display of witches made by members of the group.



Witches by Pat Hill

QUOTE OF THE MONTH?

"Witches were a bit like cats. They didn't much like one another's company, but they did like to know where all the other cats were."

Terry Pratchett - "A Hat Full of Sky".

CHATEAU D'ARCHAMBAULT PART DEUX

Our return to Noyers in Central Eastern France was certainly reflective of the change in the seasons. Gone were the 35°C temperatures and blue skies and we were met with cool autumnal temperatures and heavy downpours. What didn't change was the warm welcome we received from the French people and in particular the welcome from Marie Do and Nick Bozeat the owners of the chateau. Our hosts, despite our protests, continued to treat us like lords and ladies or was it a way to make us put on weight (Madame's cooking is superb) and work harder to lose the extra pounds?



The timing of our visit coincided with Saturday 11 November and Nick and I attended the Armistice Day celebrations which will go down as a very special day. The outdoor event was lead by local school children accompanied by the mayoress, Nathalie Labosse, members of the police, pompiers (fire fighters) and local people, with the children laying a floral display and singing Le Marseillaise. It was very much like our event in Dronfield with words being spoken to remember those who had given their lives but with two differences.

At 11.00am the church bells were rung twice (a Noyers tradition to wake you up if you missed the first peel of bells) and afterwards all those attending, including me, were invited to the Town Hall for cakes and a glass of wine, very civilised.

WINE

To continue with the entente cordial I have to return to our gastronomic delights and in particular wine, cheese and dinner guests. Being in the middle of Chablis vineyards we experienced an outstanding wine every evening and our vehicle was laden down on return supplied by the local wine merchant Bardet et Fils.

We also made an afternoon visit, (it was raining) to Les Caves Bailly Lapierre where they have in store some 8 million bottles stored underground. You can drive in and sample the wine for free. Sadly only one bottle for 5 and I was driving but we still helped the French export industry with some Charmont de Bourgogne and Isigny to bring home.

CHEESE

Try Epoisses if you can find it in Waitrose and/or Sainsburys it's a soft creamy cheese and mild, unlike the cheese whose name escapes me, which was served hot, drizzled over new potatoes and had a warning of being super stinky but our noses were not that receptive.

DINNER GUESTS

We had the great pleasure of meeting at dinner some local people who were truly entertaining and welcomed us into their world; don't know if they have gotten over our sense of humour which at times was a little ribald but they gave just as good.

Jennifer Bue (sociologist and wall lover), Jenni Chandler (from her 12th century house), Rita Florin (a Paddington Bear fan and maker of superb fish soup. We tried it) Catherin Leski (dancer and yoga teacher, we didn't that) and finally Daniel Tarrare (a famous actor from 'A Winters Tale', 'Celine', and a long running French film series 'Une Famille Formidable' 1992-2018.) I never found out if it was the equivalent of East Enders.



I'll end this section here but there are a number of stories to relate another day like almost ending up in jail for not paying a restaurant bill; certain members of the group playing "keepy uppy with a football" at the end of a gruelling days work; using Camembert boxes as kindling for a fire and leaving clothing so we could load the car up with maximum bottles.

I'm sorry if this has become a travel log but I really can recommend the area and the wines, they really do taste better when you buy them locally or is it the price and volume? And what about the dry stone walling which we went to complete; well we managed 69 metres and it must be good quality as we will probably be invited back next year for other walling experiences.

We even managed to do extra work preparing ground for a Japanese garden using a mini-digger that had been hired in to help.

Overleaf are a few pictures on to prove the team of Nicci Fowler, Tony Brown, Nick Tilly, Tom Lewis, Matty Greenan and I did actually get around to do a bit of walling.

Mike Baker

WALLING PICTURES FROM FRANCE



GEOGRAPHY GROUP

THE ISLE OF MAN

Despite it being wet for 3 days out of 7 and rather cold, Sheila & Steve still thought this island between the mainland UK & Ireland to be beautiful and they enjoyed their stay in a converted barn in the centre of Manx.

This island is a self-governing dependency of the British crown, and not in the EU. It has the oldest parliament on Earth (the Tynwald), which is legacy of the Vikings in 979AD. Women got the vote in 1881 (ahead of the UK then) and citizens can vote from age 16. They can also pass their driving test at 16. Plus, most roads have no speed limit (should we be scared?) However public transport is good and cars are discouraged. The Tynwald are keen on incentives to attract families to move there.

To an island about the same size as Ibiza (c. 33 x 13 miles), with a population of 84K (about half of which are newcomers), and whose ambience appears to hark back to gentler times. The food is apparently rather uninspiring. The most popular seems to be an all-day breakfast. "Queenies" are the new national dish, "juicy delicious scallops with bacon and garlic". Our travellers also encountered a 24-hour pizza vending machine!

Most people associate 3 things with the Isle of Man: 1) TT races, which has occurred for about 2 weeks every May/June since 1907 and attracts around 46K spectators 2) tailless cats 3) the Triskelion - the 3 legged cross, which has been around since 1310. No-one has any idea of its origin.

Famous people from here include Norman Wisdom (oh, come on, you are old enough to remember him), George Formby (ditto), Bee Gees, and the cyclist Mark Cavendish.

There are several attractive features. Everywhere appears clean and neat, very little litter, parking is nearly all free, and there is low unemployment and crime, with no obvious poverty. Their health service has a reciprocal arrangement with our NHS. For transport-lovers, there is the biggest gathering of Victorian trams on



Earth, and a steam train that runs from Douglas (capital since 1869, population c.26K) to pretty Port Erin. However, the transport system is under threat financially. Cycling is challenging and hiking is popular. No caravans are allowed. The environment is important to the Manx.

There are shedloads of museums and restored beautiful buildings, also beautiful flowerbeds. But the beaches are not brilliant and there are no amusement arcades. All art displays must be by Manx artists and/or depict the Isle.

The more famous attractions include - the Laxey Wheel. This is a wheel 72 feet in diameter, which was built in 1854 to power the mines by water. The mines closed in 1929, but the wheel has been restored and is currently still operational.

The village of Peel is a small town on the West coast, and hosts a great History museum, especially relating to the island's Manx Norse legacy; plus "yarn bombing"- ie. covering lots of features (eg. Post boxes) in crochet work. Niarbyl: meaning "the tail" in Manx for the way it extends into the Irish Sea, is a rocky promontory on the southwest coast, best known for its pretty harbour, spectacular sea views and good for dolphin & whale-spotting. From there, you can see the Sound and Calf of Man; where 2 seas collide and so is a haunt for seals.

Whilst the Isle of Man was the most notorious smuggling island in the UK in the 18th century, its major problem now is keeping young people on the island. So there are efforts to keep homes in the family, to dissuade them from departing. It does sound rather more attractive to the more senior amongst us. Thank you Sheila and Steve, for sharing your holiday memories with us...we were all enthralled.

Jan Bradbury

STROLLERS

At the Groups Fair back in April, a number of members expressed interest in forming a Strollers Group and in due course a group was formed within the Walking Group. Any members interested in joining the Strollers Group could do so by first joining the Walking Group, led by Martin Horn. Doug Emery kindly led a few 'taster' walks and it very

quickly became clear that we had a viable group. Since those early days, we have strolled around local country parks, villages, woodlands and other trails,

each led by a group member. Walks are scheduled on varying days and are all at an easy strolling pace over two to three miles - around an hour or so in length. We always meet at 10am in Dronfield to set off for our starting point and lifts are offered to anyone without

transport. Our two most recent walks were around Bubnall and Baslow villages and a beautiful circular stroll at Calver Mill. As one of our members put it: "The three most important aspects of the Strollers Group, in order of importance, are:-

"Company, coffee and exercise!"

If anyone would like to join the Strollers Group or join us for a 'taster stroll', you can do so by first contacting Martin Horn at walking@dronfieldu3a.org.uk.

Graham Archer



Reward at the end of the walk

GAMES GEEKS



There are thousands of board games available and hundreds more are added every year. From traditional games such as Ludo and Chess to the more modern Ticket to Ride there are games available to be played. If you are interested in board games please get in touch. If there is enough interest we may be able to start a board games group early in the New Year. You know where to find me. Jd (Editor)

CHRISTMAS IN ROME

It was Christmas in Rome and Caesar was holding his annual Christmas meeting for the senators. Mince pies were on offer. Probably the ones from Waitrose, with brandy sauce but they were on hold until after the formalities were concluded.

Brutus was the last to speak and noticed that Caesar was already holding a plate full of pies. As Brutus finished his speech the mob descended on the table and by the time he got there it was empty!

Brutus immediately gave the signal for the conspirators to draw their daggers and do the deed. As Caesar lay dying he gazed into the wide eyes of Brutus. As Brutus sank the blade into his heart he uttered the famous words "Et tu Brute" to which Brutus replied, "You had at least FOUR!"

Season's Greetings
Graham Clewley

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Abbey Dale Industrial Hamlet by *Angela Heyna*

DID YOU KNOW?

Archaeologists think that the wheel is a thousand years older than the first laid out road.

RIDDLE-ME-REE ANSWERS

- 1) I am the number 7.
- 2) The day Thursday. It is the only day when the lion tells the truth and the unicorn lies.