



# THE CRYER!

u3a learn, laugh live

The voice of Dronfield and District u3a

Issue 124 March 2024

## EDITORIAL

Morning and welcome to issue 124 of the Dronfield u3a newsletter. March 1<sup>st</sup> was St David's Day when the Welsh celebrate their patron saint and their very rich culture. The 7<sup>th</sup> is 'Slam the Spam' Day. This is a recent arrival on the National Days scene sadly due to the rise in scams. It is followed by Red Nose Day on Friday the 15<sup>th</sup>. A day for making a difference whilst having fun. Two days later, on the Sunday, the Irish celebrate St Patrick's Day. It is interesting to note that St Patrick was actually born in Roman Britain to wealthy Roman parents. He was kidnapped by Irish raiders and spent six years as a shepherd slave before escaping back to Britain. Once back home he became a priest before returning to Ireland to spend the rest of his life converting the 'pagans' to Christianity. So we arrive at Sunday 31<sup>st</sup>, Easter Sunday and the end of this month when hopefully spring weather will have arrived! Read on and enjoy. (Jd) (Editor)

## POSTBOX TOPPERS

It all appears to have started in Texas in 2005 with a lady called Magda Sayeg. She was a self-taught knitter frustrated with an apparent inability to actually complete a project. The solution she came up with was to knit a simple 'cosy' for the doorknob of her Houston boutique. It looked good and it was a finished project. It also attracted favourable attention from passers-by. She formed a knitting group and before long knitted scarves and hats were adorning local statues. Their idea was to brighten up public spaces using colourful knitted or crocheted yarn instead of paint or chalk and so make street art 'a little more warm and fuzzy' (and easier to remove.)

The craze spread world wide inspiring groups and individuals to brighten up their own areas. It has developed many names such as yarn bombing, yarn storming, guerrilla knitting, urban knitting and graffiti knitting. In the style of 'graffiti artists' the bombers also often adopt nicknames such as 'Deadlyknitshade', Lady Loop'. 'Knitting Ninja' or 'Purple Purl'.

In this country it has developed into producing covers or 'Toppers' for post boxes. The Royal Mail first noticed Toppers appearing on their post boxes over the festive period



The Bees - Bolton Abbey estate

in 2012. It very quickly spread to other times of the year such as Easter and has further developed to celebrate public workers such as nurses and doctors during the pandemic or any locally inspired event or occasion.

Ramsey Hertzog supplied this picture from the post box on Dyches Lane, Coal Aston which is celebrating the coming of spring, which has yet to arrive. The post box by the Post Office often has a Topper on it as well.



The Royal Mail have no objection to the toppers as long as they do not obstruct the ability of the public to actually post letters. They are seen as 'a welcome addition to any post box'. As an accepted aspect of English society it is not surprising that in the 2022 Christmas edition of Coronation Street a topper by the 'Syston Knitting Banksy' was featured.



In March last year Daily Mail journalist Jan Moir branded all those who make toppers as 'Woolly Delinquents' a name the topper community have happily accepted. Perhaps we shall soon see a DDU3a 'Topper Group' being formed. Ed.

## 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 MARCH (10 - 12)

The speaker will be

Martin Rowley

Helipads for Hospitals



This is a change to the planned speaker.

Helipads for hospitals is a charity organisation that aims to improve medical outcomes for patients flown to hospital by increasing the number of Helipads around the UK. Founded by John Nowell, a former RAF helicopter pilot, the charity's vision is to provide safe landing areas for air ambulances. Martin will talk about the background and work of the charity.

### MEETING - 10th APRIL (10 - 12)

#### GROUPS FAIR & RENEWALS MEETING

There is no speaker at this meeting.



Drop in for a coffee and a chat and bring a friend too – someone who may be interested in joining the u3a. There will be opportunities to talk to members of the Committee, Group Coordinators and fellow u3a members.

## FROM THE COMMITTEE.

### Monthly Meetings

The Welcome Team would appreciate more volunteers to help members sign-in and give them their badges. A simple task, but it will speed up the process of getting folks into the hall. The team operates on a rota basis, so your turn shouldn't come round too often. If you can help please speak to Yvonne Brammall or email her at [welcome@dronfieldu3a.org.uk](mailto:welcome@dronfieldu3a.org.uk).



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### Advertising Outside Events

Please note that our Charity Policy (posted on the website) clearly prevents us, as a charity, from promoting or supporting other charities through u3a communication channels, ie. our Monthly Meetings, emails, newsletters, website and Facebook page.

The Exec has agreed that in a similar way, we will not promote non-u3a events as, if we agreed to

publicise one event, we'd be obliged to publicise everyone's particular interest. Whilst this may seem harsh, please bear in mind you are still completely free to personally mention events to your u3a friends, it's just that we cannot be seen to promote it as DDU3a.

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### Dronfield & Coal Aston Galas

In previous years we have had a stall at Dronfield Gala in Cliffe Park, to increase awareness of our presence in the town and promote membership. This year, we'd like to have a presence at both Dronfield Gala on Sunday 30th June and at the Coal Aston Gala on Saturday 6th July.

This means we will be asking for a lot more volunteers to help. Please put the dates in your diaries as we'll be asking for volunteers to 'man' our stalls nearer the time.

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### Third Age Matters

We've previously confirmed that the Membership Fee for 2024/25 will remain the same as this last year, ie £15 per person.

If you receive the national u3a magazine, *Third Age Matters* (TAM) please note the price has increased slightly to £3.80 which will be added to your renewal fee.

If you do not currently receive TAM and would like to OR you currently receive it and want to cancel, you can either add/remove yourself using the Members Portal or contact Phine (our Membership Secretary) for help on 01246 900201 or email her at [membership@dronfieldu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@dronfieldu3a.org.uk)

Julis Harris (Chair)

## RIDDLE-ME-REE

1. Guess the next three letters in this series. GTNTL???

2. There is a boat filled with people but there is not a single person on board? How is this possible?

3. You're escaping a labyrinth and there are three exits. Exit A leads to an inferno. Exit B leads to an assassin. Exit C leads to a lion that hasn't eaten in 3 years. Would you go back the way you came or use one of the exits?

4. Two in a corner, one in a room, zero in a house but one in a shelter. What is it?

5. What letter comes next in the following sequence? D R M F S L T\_



## NATIONAL u3a LEARNING EVENTS

### Free Online Talks and Events in March

Sign up for free Zoom talks this month:

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Thursday 7th March 3.30pm:

**Artificial Intelligence News**

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Tuesday 19th March 10am:

**Using AI to Fight Climate Change**

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Wednesday 20th March 10am:

**John Snow and the hunt for the sources of Cholera in Victorian London**

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Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2pm:

**Suffering and hope in Tolstoy's Anna Karenina**

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Visit [www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events](http://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events) to register for these and future events



## GARDENING GROWERS GROUP

The Gardening Growers Group have a local speaker coming to give a talk Monday 22 April. The talk is entitled -

### Coping with Extremes in Your Garden.

Carl and Deirdre Leaman run Millthorpe Nursery, Millthorpe Lane, Holmesfield a pretty nursery designed and landscaped by the couple. They have a list of topics they use for their talks. On this occasion the Growers Group chose a talk that seemed very appropriate as the changing climate will have a big impact on the way we garden.

We are inviting u3Aa members to this talk. It will be held on Monday 22 April, 2pm to 4pm in the Fred Hopkinson Memorial Hall, Crow Lane Unstone S18 4AL

Admission is £2 and refreshments will be provided. Please contact Gill - [growers@dronfieldu3a.org.uk](mailto:growers@dronfieldu3a.org.uk) for further information.

*Gill Middleton (GG Coordinator)*

## TRIPS AND VISITS

Many thanks to all the members who have booked places on the trip to Beverley and Hull on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April. We now have 48 people on the list so there is just one place left to fill on the coach if anyone is interested. The cost is £14.00.



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### Trip to Chester



Places for our day trip to Chester on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May can be booked at the March U3A monthly meeting. The cost is £14.50 and our preferred method of payment is cheque (payable to Dronfield and District U3A). If you are paying by cash please try to have the correct money. The coach will depart from outside Dronfield Sports Centre at 9.00am.



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Can I also just mention that the amount we charge for each trip does include an amount to cover a tip for our coach driver, Chris Ellender. He is always so helpful on our day trips so we do give him something at the end of our trip to show our appreciation and therefore there is no need for any collection on the coach.

*Glenys Sharman (T&V Organiser)*

## CHESS FOR ALL



George Lee and I are interested in forming a DDU3a Chess Club. If you are interested in learning to play chess or are interested in revising your rusty chess skills in the first instance please get in touch with me, Jed Stone.

## FESTIVALS & CARNIVALS



At this month's meeting of the Geography Group Sheila and Steve Pyke are giving a presentation on some of the Festivals and Carnivals they have come across during their

travels around Europe over many years.

The meeting is open to all members of the DDU3a that are interested. It will be held in the Edward Lucas Hall (upstairs) in the Peel Centre on Tuesday 5th March at 10am. Please use the rear entrance if you wish to attend. The hall is reached by the staircase.



*Steve Pyke*

## CAN YOU HELP?



We've been invited to have a table to promote our u3a, at the Dronfield2Gether event in the Sports Hall on

Thursday April 11th. If you could help by manning the stall for a while, or for further details please contact Phine Wright as below.

T: 01236 900301

E: [membership@dronfieldu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@dronfieldu3a.org.uk)

## MATHS FOR FUN

The Maths for Fun group are looking at 'Nothing' this month!

The Ancient Greeks didn't have the concept of zero as they only used numbers for counting things such as goats, sacks of wheat, weights and distances etc. The Romans also didn't have Zero in their complicated number system.

It wasn't until AD628 (a remarkably precise date) that an Indian scholar recognised Zero as a number and wrote rules for its use. In 1299 Zero was banned by the Church in Florence, along with other Arabic numerals, as it was believed that they encouraged fraud.

Most branches of modern mathematics wouldn't exist without Zero. Any number divided by Zero is Infinity - that's another very large topic!

No other number has so many synonyms: None, Nil, Zilch, Nought, Nothing, Nada, Oh in phone numbers, Love in tennis, Duck in cricket, Scratch. I'm sure there are others.

*Steve Pyke (group co-ordinator)*

## SLAM THE SPAM DAY

The first National 'Slam the Spam Day' was held in the USA in 2020 to inform and educate the general public about the various issues relating to scams. As the tactics used by the scammers are constantly changing it was decided to make it an annual event to ensure the general public has a regular anti-spam update.



It is estimated that 3.4 billion spam emails are sent everyday. To celebrate 'Slam the Spam' day experts recommend learning about and becoming aware of the various tactics scammers will use to try to steal money from the unwary and learning how to protect yourself from scams. Advice includes -

a) If you are in any doubt that a message may not be genuine, **stop** and **do not** respond. If the caller claims to be from your bank, ring your bank on a separate phone on a number you know to be genuine.

b) Be wary of any unexpected messages from family members, friends or work colleagues, which involve transferring money to them. It is always best to check with the person directly before you do anything.

c) never respond to an unexpected message from

an unknown source. Always avoid clicking on links and avoid opening any attachments contained in such messages.



d) Keep your anti-virus software up to date and always complete security and software updates when prompted. This can protect you from viruses contained in links and messages.

e) When making a purchase on line or inputting personal details on a website, always make sure its secure. Look for the padlock symbol in your browser, usually next to the web address and check that the web address starts with 'https' If you have any concerns about the site do not enter any information at all.



'Let's be careful out there'

*Scam Hound*

## BUXTON & DISTRICT u3a



Buxton u3a have made a group booking at the Opera House for Sunday 28th July at 7.30pm for a performance of 'The Pirates of Penzance' Tickets £30. Further details available on the festival's programme which can be downloaded from [www.gsfestivals.org](http://www.gsfestivals.org)

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



REFLECTIONS (Whitby Harbour)  
Gill Middleton

## JORDAN

This review is sad in view of what is happening in the Middle East at present because it sounds like a wonderful country to visit. Graham and Jennifer gave a brilliant presentation on the beautiful Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. (The name Hashemite comes from Hashem, great-grandson of Mohammed.) This semi-arid country often has less rain in a year than the UK has in a day. It was first inhabited 2.5 million years ago and currently has a population of 11.3 million, which is composed of basically 12 tribes, each headed by a sheikh. It has the largest intake of refugees in the Middle East. Jordan is pretty liberal and men and women are equal in law, until the woman marries. Polygamy is rare but a man can take up to 3 wives, each of whom must be treated equally. Any issues are dealt with by the tribe!

Our intrepid duo began their adventure in the Jordanian capital, Amman, which, like Sheffield and Rome, is built on seven hills. It has had many names, one of which was Philadelphia. The Amman Citadel is an archaeological site and primarily a museum. It is testament to the many cultures which have existed here as suggested by the presence of a mosque, a Byzantine church, Heracles temple, and a second century Roman amphitheatre. Amman's market, although it has a quite primitive appearance, has an amazing display of healthy produce such as fruits, veg, and nuts as well as sweets.

Their trip then took them north on a scenic, quiet route to Jerash, which also displayed much evidence of Hellenistic, Roman, Christian and Byzantine settlement. The excavated site has revealed one of Earth's best-preserved Roman cities, with a massive hippodrome and a stunning 90AD theatre with amazing acoustics.

They then travelled south of Amman to Mt Nebo, where Moses was granted a view of the Promised Land. From there, on a clear day, Jericho and Jerusalem may be seen. It is a holy place of pilgrimage for the 3 monotheistic religions. Then thence to Madaba, the site of a Greek Orthodox church, which contains a 600AD stunningly detailed mosaic map, comprised of two

million pieces!

No rest for the wicked. Our pair then headed further south on the King's Highway which is mentioned in the Bible. It is a 160

mile scenic route from Amman to Petra connecting Mesopotamia to Africa. They visited Kerak, a crusader castle, that is situated high above the surrounding valleys. From there, they ventured to the "Rose City" of Petra, so-called because the local rock is sandstone. The area has been settled by the Nabateans since 7000 BC. They have been in Petra since the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and were primarily hydraulic engineers who controlled the water supply. Most of the famous rock-cut buildings in the area are tombs. This includes the iconic Treasury, a mausoleum and crypt for an important person. The Nabatean amphitheatre displays contrasting styles of architecture. First carved into the rock by the Nabateans it was enlarged by the Romans when they arrived in 106 CE. Jennifer & Graham also enjoyed a meal with a family who were partaking of a banquet which would normally be enjoyed at the end of Ramadan.

Bedouins territory now beckoned. Wadi Rum which has often been used in film sets, was accessible by two not-very-comfortable options, a dodgy truck or camel. It was worth it, especially when they tucked into zarb, a traditional dish cooked underground in foil for a day barbecue style with rice, flatbread, amazing salads, and accompanied with hummus. They then journeyed to the southernmost point of their trip, Aqaba, on the Red Sea. The area is highly westernised and could be anywhere though they still enjoyed themselves.

They returned north along a different route, along the border with Israel, where they encountered the lowest spot on Earth, the Dead Sea, which it will actually will be if they continue to divert its waters to serve the processing plants nearby. They did the two "must-dos" when in the area. They covered themselves in the mineral-rich mud and floated in the sea. It was not an especially



enjoyable experience for either of them but each to their own. It had to be done. They also saw the column of salt-rock in the vicinity of the Dead Sea which is fondly known as Lot's Wife.

They then moved on beyond the river Jordan, which is a tiny river, finally completing their incredible travels at Bethany which is nine Km north of the Dead Sea. Here they visited the location of Jesus's baptism. They still perform baptisms there today.

We were all enthralled by their presentation and, despite current events, quite a few of us are inspired to visit the area. Thank you Graham and Jennifer...fabulous.

*Jan Bradley*

## GARDEN VISITS GROUP

'And time remembered is grief forgotten,  
And frosts are slain and flowers forgotten,  
And in green underwood and cover,  
Blossom by blossom and Spring begins.'

(Algernon Swinburne 1837-1909)

At last Spring is now well and truly upon us. Last year when our members visited Hopton Hall for the Snowdrops Trail we learnt that the entire property



had just been sold but we were so pleased that the new owners, Chris and Andi Harvey, were willing to continue opening their garden to the public during the Snowdrop season.

So it was that a dozen members visited the location earlier this month. You will be aware that although there has been a lot of rain, the temperature has been abnormally warm, but we were lucky to benefit from the warmth without any of the predicted rain. Thus, our usual 'coffee and cake' was able to be taken outside.

Once refreshed we set off on the circular walk starting with a mass of Snowdrops to the side of the path. As we progressed, we saw different varieties and although some were slightly past their usual crisp bright flowers, they nevertheless presented an array of blossoms. It was interesting to notice the variations in flowers



with some growing up to about a foot in height. We were fortunate that the sun continued to shine as we walked the trail, which was made easy by the thoughtfulness of the owners having laid a thick layer of wood chipping to soak up the water in what would have been very muddy areas. Many varieties of hellebores were also in flower, with various shades of pink, purple and white adding an extra interest amid the snowdrops and then on we went to the bedding area with its neatly clipped hedges, where masses of roses will bloom later in the year. Then down to the round lake we enjoyed a little tranquillity watching the two graceful swans gliding along or dipping in the water.

Since no one had any wish to end the outing, we drove on a short way to Carsington Water for our



lunch and were able to sit in their excellent restaurant overlooking the water and watching the many wild birds that

make it home. The day was ended with a brief bit of retail therapy and then a lovely drive home through the Derbyshire countryside. It is hoped that if the garden at the hall opens for the roses, we might put in an extra visit in the Summer.

*Ramsey Hertzog*

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK



"It's not that I am so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer."

Albert Einstein

## RIDDLE-ME-REE ANSWERS

1. The letters are ITS. They are the first letters from the last three words in the question.
2. They are all married.
3. Take exit C. After three years with no food the lion will be dead.
4. The letter 'r'.
5. D - each letter represents one note in the diatonic musical scale:  
Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, Do

