



In Contact



Durham u3a

December 2023



Welcome to the last ***In Contact*** of 2023. With Christmas celebrations and meals to look forward to in the run-up to the real event – not to mention the snowy landscape that appeared overnight - things are starting to have a truly festive feel.

In the spirit of Christmas, this issue features a seasonal puzzle. In these pages, hidden in plain sight, are 20 words associated with the festive season. See how many you can spot by page 4 (where the words are revealed in a box).

Along with Chair's items and news, in this issue you'll find creative contributions from two u3a members.

Finally, any items from you, however brief, will get ***In Contact*** 2024 off to a flying start. No need for bells and whistles! Here's to a very happy Christmas and New Year for all.

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Chair's items



Dear Colleagues

All the committee members who stood were elected at the AGM, albeit for a short period until the merger takes place on 1st April 2024.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to the Christmas party at Merryoaks community centre on 7th December for a prompt 1.30 start. Also

to the Christmas Lunch at Brambles in the garden centre at Shincliffe.

As March 2024 will be our last meeting as Durham u3a, we have extended the time of the meeting to allow some celebratory social time.

For those whom we will not see at any of the Christmas celebrations, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all best wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Tina Naples

New members

A warm welcome to new members who joined recently. They are:

(October) Meg Corrigan
(November) Jim Crinson
Linda Kyd
Lynn McCarrick



Group Leaders' event

As a thank you for the work they do in supporting our u3a groups, all group leaders are invited to a get-together with their Dunelm counterparts at Bowburn Community Centre on 25 January, starting at 10.30 am. Group leaders should already have received a round-robin about the event. It will be a great opportunity to meet with and get to know each other before the merger in April. Lunch will be provided.

Group leaders, please let either Tina Naples or Paul Newby know if you are able to come to this meeting, and flag up any dietary requirements.

Magic music memories

It was good to see national coverage recently for the Music

Appreciation Group's 3D Memory Jukebox collaboration with New College. Tina's article, featured in the latest Third Age Matters, describes the positive impacts of this innovative project, especially the joy and pleasure it evoked for those taking part. Let's hope the bid to expand it is passed in 2024.



Group news

(i) Now that's what I call music...

And still with the Music Appreciation Society, November's special showing of Buster Keaton's **The General**, with piano accompaniment from George Hetherington, made for a highly pleasant and entertaining afternoon. The film is certainly no turkey. Almost 100 years since it was made, **The General** is still a witty and laugh-out-loud masterpiece, with some breathtaking stunts by the Great Stoneface himself. By far the best are his exploits with the moving train, whether stocking up on unwieldy planks of wood for the furnace, or careering perilously over the carriage tops. As for the music, George's talent in selecting the tunes to fit every rapid change in mood and scene was nothing short of phenomenal. A real treat, topped off with choc ice lollies and home-made cakes.



Masters at work: Buster rescues his sweetheart to George's stirring piano score. The audience themselves are rapt.

(ii) Poetry please

The Poetry Group still has space for new members. It meets on Monday afternoons at the Gala Café. No commitment needed – why not try it out? Each meeting has a particular topic, and you play a part in deciding the themes. The topic on 11 December is E E Cummings. You're welcome to turn up, or contact Ivy Hudson for further details (see back page).

(iii) Film Club, December



December's film is that seasonal classic, ***It's a wonderful life***, showing at the Gala Cinema on 15 December at 7.30. It's a real cracker. There's an option to begin the evening with a festive drink at the Champaign Bar at 6.30. If you're interested in joining the Film Club, contact Paul Newby to get on the circulation list (see back page).

(iv) Stroll on

The Strollers Group has had its last walk of the year, and will meet again in early 2024



with a new programme. Contact Ken Naples for details (see back page).

(v) No room at the inn

Two groups are at capacity and can't take new members at present. They are:

The Monday Crime Club (contact: Tina Naples). If crime is up your street, you can put your name on a waiting list.

Français Amical (contact: Mike Gibb).

Members' Corner

A strangely touching celebration of life and vitality below.

Gentle Aquafit, Durham City UK

"The floor shakes this morning" said my friend as forty Lycra clad swim-suited matrons bounced up and down. The pool was cold, "saving oil" one portly old man commented.

Only two men faced the wall of Lycra,
Grey hair and big tits marking the pools'
Gentle Aquafit. Gentle? - No way, brisk and
exhausting
as the not so young leader directed our steps.

Some of the old timers can't resist a chat.
"I'd like some of what she's on, I'm knackered,
Watch out for that splasher, you'll need to
duck,
Too many new ones, you can't get a place
sometimes."

"I won't be here Friday, have a hip transplant.
Jen has just had hers yesterday- she's well.
Where did you go on holiday recently?
New York, to see the family again".

And so the forty-five minutes passes
enjoyably,
Seniors staying fit for as long as they can,
Fending off the wheel chairs, sticks, and
Valium
Here life does not end at sixty.

Ivy Hudson

And as a finale, a beautiful photo from John Liddle. These droplets are more exquisite than any baubles.



John Liddle

Durham u3a Committee

Here's the list of committee members following November's AGM.

Tina Naples	Chair
Paul Newby	Vice-Chair
Theresa Mulkerrin	Treasurer
Maureen Bennett	Secretary
Maureen Craik	Membership Secretary
Noreen Freeman	
David Willock	
Laura Woods	

Hidden words

Below are the 20 festive words, in the order in which they appear in the text. Some are very obvious; others less so!

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ox2. Bells3. Magi4. Robin5. Comet (the reindeer)6. Crib7. Ass8. Santa9. Turkey10. Star11. Stocking12. Tinsel13. Elves14. Candy15. Ivy16. Cracker17. Present18. Tree19. Angel20. Bauble |
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All contributions are gratefully accepted, including reports, reviews, poems, stories and photos of people and places of interest. The January issue will come out a few days into the New Year. Please provide any material by 2 January to Laura Woods at lauramw100@gmail.com . Thanks.

December Calendar (plus a bit of January)



Group	Meetings	Contact
Monthly U3A meeting Every 2 nd Thursday, 1.30 pm	7 Dec: Christmas entertainment Merryoaks Community Centre	If you need a lift, contact Maureen Craik: 0191 371 8521/mcraik-40@hotmail.co.uk
Book Group Every 1 st Monday, 10 am	4 Dec: Small Island (Andrea Levy) 8 Jan: Tba	Venue may vary Lynn Bilsborough via u3a contacts page
Circle Dancing Every 1 st Thursday, 2 pm	4 Jan Sacriston Methodist Church	Linda Murdie via u3a contacts page £2 for room hire; refreshments
Film Club As arranged	15 Dec: It's a wonderful life Champaign bar, 6.30 for Gala, 7.30	Paul Newby 07814 518100
French: Français amical Wednesdays, 2 pm	Gala café	Mike Gibb via U3A contacts page Group full
French Thursdays, 9.45 am	No meetings on 2 nd Thursday	Elizabeth Morgan 0191 384 6874 Group full
German Every 3 weeks		George Schlesinger 0191 384 9056 Contact George for details
History 1 Every 1 st Tuesday, 2 pm	5 Dec: Christmas traditions Sacriston Methodist Church	Kim Jennings via u3a contacts page. All welcome. £2 room hire; refreshments
History Too Every 4 th Monday, 10 am	No meeting in December Future topic ideas welcome	David Willock via u3a contacts page. All welcome. £2 room hire; refreshments
Monday Crime Club Every 3 rd Monday, 10.30 am	18 Dec: As the Crow Flies (D. Boyd) 15 Jan: Avarice (Pete Brassett)	Tina Naples Group full: waiting list to be set up
Music Appreciation Every 4 th Saturday, 2 pm	No meeting in December Carrville Methodist Church	Stephen Brand via u3a contacts page
Poetry Every 2 nd Monday, 2 pm	11 Dec: e e cummings Gala café	Ivy Hudson, 0191 384 4317 New members welcome!
Pub Lunch Monthly, as arranged	12 Dec New College Durham	Sylvia Buxton 0191 373 1644 for details
Quiz Mondays, 2 pm	Sacriston Methodist Church	Contact via u3a contacts page
Scrabble Every 3 rd Wednesday, 2 pm		Maureen Craik 0191 371 9521 for details
Shakespeare Alternate Thursdays, 10.15 am	14 Dec: Favourite quotes 11 Jan : Tba Bowburn Community Centre	Members select extracts/poems Sue Childs via u3a contacts page
Spanish Alternate Tuesdays, 2pm	Gala café	Mick O'Sullivan via u3a contacts page
Strollers Alternate Wednesdays, 10.30	No more outings this year 2024 programme tba	Ken Naples 07711 979098
Topical Discussion Every 1 st Tuesday, 10 am	Beefeater, Broomside Park	Janis Goodson via u3a contacts page

Note: The Swimming Group is no longer part of u3a, but continues to meet on Friday afternoons at Freeman's Quay. Contact John Liddle for details.