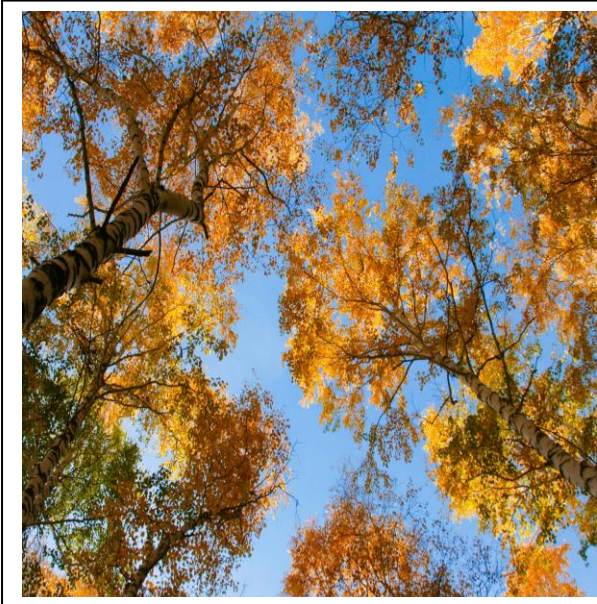


In Contact

Durham u3a, October 2023



New members

Hello to those who've joined Durham u3a over the summer:

July: Gillian and Ken Maggs, Michael Davenport, Thomas Moralee, Valerie Tolladay and Alan Yearling

August: Joan Dodds, Judith Gates, Carolyn Hough, Austin Morley, Robert Lebar and Jaqueline Conlon

September: Pauline Johnson

A warm welcome to you all!

Welcome to October and another Durham u3a

newsletter. I hope you've been enjoying the Indian summer that was only our due, after this year's July and August washout. Let's hope for some traditional autumnal weather now, though – bright and crisp and sparkly. The russets and golds of autumn in Durham just can't be beat.

Meanwhile, here's the latest for you.

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Committee update

Merger – full steam ahead

If you have read your emails then you will know by now that Dunelm have had a positive vote in favour of the merger. We will be full steam ahead ready for next April.

AGM and committee vacancies

You should also have received your documents for the November AGM. There will be a couple of vacancies on the Committee so now is the time to have a go. It will be just for a short while since we will be electing a new Committee in April for the new u3a. A chance to try it out.

October monthly meeting

The October meeting will be a talk called ***The Banks of the River Tyne*** by Freda Thompson. Do try and come along. It should be very interesting.

Christmas meeting

For the Christmas meeting on 7 December we are having some difficulty in finding outside entertainment. Still searching and will update you with plans next month.

u3a Committee

The golden road to Samarkand



At September's monthly meeting, with Kath and Harry as our guides, we were transported to the fabulous setting of the Silk Road, as we followed their travels through far-off Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. A stunning slide show, with narration and musical soundtrack to match, took us from Ashgabat's surreal ocean of marble monuments via the holy city of Bukhara and the ancient oasis city of Khiva to magnificent, legendary Samarkand. The gorgeous Islamic architecture, the history through the millennia, the peoples and the cultures in those little-known lands - everything was brought to life (not to mention our guides' nail-biting wait for the visa courier on the morning of departure, which no doubt added a bit more spice to the adventure). It was a superbly researched and fascinating insight into

ancient and modern worlds that we know so little about, much appreciated by the audience.

Members' Corner

Two very different items this month contributed by u3a members, plus an addendum to James Gilman's rattling good yarn from the last issue.

Our first offers an unusual glimpse of the world from a special source who couldn't be closer to power.

Enter the great and the good

You have seen my picture all your life. I am older than you. I wish I could retire to a quiet place in the country. I am photographed much more often now than when I was made. During my long life, you cannot imagine all that I have seen.

On my two sides there are two different worlds. One is private and the other is public. That is why you have seen my photograph so frequently. I get annoyed when photographers come in droves, just to see those who come near me. They are a noisy rabble.

I have to be circumspect about the parties on my so-called "inside". I pretend I do not hear anything. I wish I could write my story; it would be a best seller and I would be rich.

The weather on my outside causes me to shrink in summer or swell in winter. My friends along the street have the same problem. Long ago I was painted black. This makes me really uncomfortable on hot days.

I get tickled daily by the lady who polishes my brass parts. I am proud of

the way they glisten. Every day there is an infernal policeman who stands silently by my side. Why can't we have a great chat? The public say that he is protecting me because I am number 10.

Paul Kingston

And now from a door with a difference to a dog with a difference...

Wheeler

In 2002 I volunteered to be a puppy-walker for Guide Dogs and I walked 13 puppies, 11 bitches and 2 dogs, before I had to stop in 2019, as I waited for a knee replacement. I was also involved in fundraising activities, so it was a foregone conclusion that Guide Dogs would be my charity, when I was President of Durham Inner Wheel in 2012-2013.

Thanks to our fundraising efforts and supported by our local Guide Dog Branch, the club was able to make a £5000 donation. At this level of sponsorship, the sponsor is able to meet the puppy that had been given our chosen name, Wheeler. He came to visit the club as a young puppy, a beautiful, ginger, male Golden Retriever. At the end of puppy walking, Wheeler did not become a Guide Dog, as he had been chosen for the very important role of stud dog. Guide Dogs use their best animals to breed the next generation of Guide Dogs.

Each Guide Dog partnership for its lifetime costs £58,000. The club's £5000 sponsorship has paid dividends in that Wheeler has been so successful. He sired 25 litters before his retirement, which has resulted in

75 Guide Dog partnerships, 11 'buddy' dogs, 2 more on class training with new owners and the last puppies still with walkers. Worth his weight in gold!

In my second term as President, of course, I supported Guide Dogs again.

Elaine Leake

Addendum

As a postscript to James's account last month of his father's encounter with an armed communist soldier, the communist flag and soldier's cap he captured can be seen on request in Durham's Oriental Museum.

Quiz of the Month



Now for a gentle quiz on a topical theme. Answers upside down below.

- 1 Who wrote the book "Quartet in Autumn"?
- 2 In US politics, what's an October surprise?
- 3 What competition was won by a salad vegetable on 20 October 2022?

4 In 1582, why was Catholic Europe's October cut short by 10 days?

5 Why is 3 October a special day for Germans?

6 What honour was bestowed on French novelist Annie Ernaux in October 2022?

7 What plucky red-headed heroine remarked: "I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers!"?

8 Which character from Shakespeare speaks of "the childing autumn"?

9 What Oscar-winning film, based on a book of the same name, features a rogue submarine and a race against time?

10 He nailed them on 31 October, 1517 (allegedly). Who and what?

11 Which synth pop duo produced an October Symphony?

12 And which 17th century priest composed a famous autumn violin concerto?

13 He went for an October walk on his "thirtieth year to heaven". Who?

14 This ruler, currently trending on TV, expired in October, 54 AD, after finding his wife's mushroom dish decidedly not to his taste.

15 To what European languages do these words for October belong?

- Hydref
- outubro
- listopad

16 What classic crime novel begins with these lines?

"It was about eleven o'clock in the morning, mid October, with the sun not

shining and a look of hard wet rain in the clearness of the foothills."

Stories, news, photos, literary efforts and suggestions for the next issue are very welcome. Please provide by 23 October latest to lauramw100@gmail.com.

Answers:
1 Barbara Pym
2 A last-minute event threatening to influence US November elections
3 An iceberg lettuce outlasted the premiership of Liz Truss, who resigned on that day
4 Pope Gregory ordered a switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, wiping out 5 – 14 October
5 It's German Unity Day, celebrating reunification in 1990
6 She was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature
7 Anne of Green Gables
8 Titania (Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 2, Sc. 1)
9 The Hunt for Red October
10 Martin Luther is said to have nailed his 95 Theses, protesting against the RC practice of selling indulgences, to the door of the church in Wittenberg, triggering the Protestant Reformation
11 Pet Shop Boys, 1990
12 Antonio Vivaldi
13 Dylan Thomas, Poem in October
14 Emperor Claudius
15 Hydref – Welsh; outubro – Portuguese; listopad – Croatian (the same word in Polish means November)
16 "The Big Sleep" by Raymond Chandler

October Calendar

| Group | Meetings | Contact |
|--|--|--|
| Monthly u3a meeting (2 nd Thurs in month) | 12 Oct , 1.30 for 2pm: The Banks of the River Tyne, with Freda Thompson, Bowburn Community Centre | If you need a lift, contact Maureen Craik: 0191 371 9521 or mcraik-40@hotmail.co.uk |
| Book Group (1 st Monday of month) | 2 Oct , 10 am: Where the Crawdads Sing, by Delia Owens | Lynn Bilsborough via u3a contacts page Contact Lyn for venue |
| Circle Dancing (1 st Thurs of month) | 5 Oct , 2 pm Sacriston Methodist Church | Linda Murdie via u3a contacts page £2 for room hire; refreshments incl |
| Film Club (Odeon/Gala) | Films advised by Paul as and when | Paul Newby 07814 518100 |
| French: Beginners (fortnightly, 3.30 pm) | Botanic Gardens | Maria Wood (from end Oct) Wildswimmer1@gmail.com |
| French: Café français (Mondays) | Every Monday , 10 am Gala café | Mike Gibb via u3a contacts page |
| French: Français amical (Weds) | Every Wednesday , 2pm Gala café | Mike Gibb via u3a contacts page |
| French (Thurs, except 2 nd in month) | 5, 19, 26 Oct , 9.45 am | Elizabeth Morgan 0191 384 6874 Contact Elizabeth for venue |
| German (every 3 weeks) | | George Schlesinger 0191 384 9056 Contact George for details |
| History 1 (1 st Tuesday in month) | 3 Oct 2pm, Sacriston Methodist Church The blue plaques of Durham | Kim Jennings via u3a contacts page. All welcome. £2 charge for room hire. Tea and biscuits/cake included |
| History Too (monthly) | 23 Oct 10 am, Sacriston Methodist Church Effects of WW1 on womenfolk | David Willock via u3a contacts page All welcome. £2 charge for room hire. Tea and biscuits included |
| Monday Crime Club (monthly) | 16 Oct , 10 am, Lanchester Garden Centre: Heart full of Headstones by Ian Rankin | Tina Naples Room for new members |
| Music Appreciation (Saturdays, monthly) | 28 Oct 2pm, Carrville Church Noreen's Numbers | Stephen Brand |
| Poetry (2 nd Monday in month) | 9 Oct , 2 pm, Gala cafe Robert Browning | Ivy Hudson 0191 384 4317 |
| Pub Lunch (monthly) | | Sylvia Buxton 0191 373 1644 for details |
| Quiz (Mondays, monthly) | Sacriston Methodist Church | Contact via u3a contacts page |
| Scrabble | | Maureen Craik 0191 371 9521 for details |
| Shakespeare (every other Thursday) | 10.15 am Gala café | Sue Childs via u3a contacts page |
| Spanish (every other Tuesday) | 10 and 24 Oct , 2pm, Gala café | Mick O'Sullivan via u3a contacts page |
| Strollers (Weds monthly) | 4 Oct , 10.30 am Gentle stroll round Derwent Reservoir | Ken Naples 07711 979098 |
| Swimming (Fridays) | | Ken Naples 07711 979098 for details |
| Topical Discussion (1 st Tues in month) | 3 Oct , 10 am, Beefeater, Broomside Park | Janis Goodson via u3a contacts page |