

Talk at Update Meeting on 3 February 2023

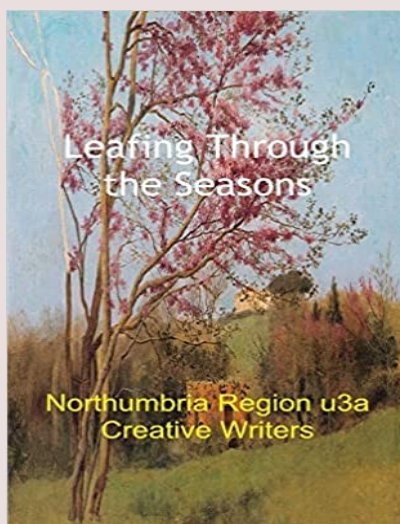
At the February Update meeting we were pleased to welcome Cecilia Coulson, Chair of Northumbria Region to talk to us. She and other members of the Northumbria Region committee (all volunteers) are visiting local u3as (we have 48 in our region with 9000 members) to say "hello" and to remind us that they are here to support all members. They are also encouraging u3as to talk to each other and get involved in their local networks. (SDu3a's Chair already attends the South Durham Chairs network on our behalf)

Sadly, due partly to the pandemic and partly because members are getting older and less able or willing to help run their u3a, several u3as in our region have fallen by the wayside over the last couple of years. Northumbria Region are currently running a pilot scheme with some of these u3as to help them recruit new members and hopefully start offering courses again.

Cecilia also told us that Northumbria Region have recently agreed a 3 year plan (2023-26) which includes offering study days and workshops to all members in our area. We will of course share information about these as it becomes available. There is a link to Region on SDu3a's website if you want to find out more. In addition there is information about the National u3a's new strategy plus lots of other interesting stuff on the national website (u3a.org.uk).



Cecilia Coulson Gaye Batiz



Pat Atkinson



*Sarah Telfer Pauline Bennett
Cecilia Coulson*

Cecilia is also a member of the Northumbria Creative Writing Group and she went on to tell us about the book this group has just published. It is called 'Leafing through the Seasons' and comprises short stories and poems. Four of our own SDu3a members, Sarah Telfer, Pat Atkinson, Anita Langham and Pauline Bennett, have contributed to the book; many congratulations to them. The book will be available from Amazon and Waterstones from later this month. The proceeds will be fed back into an initiative to have a day's creative writing workshop open to Northumbria Region u3a writers.

Tricia & Karin

Art Group

This is just to say that the art group at the guide hall near Redcar railway station is going well. We are discovering new ways of putting things on paper. Not only water colour, but acrylic inks, pastels, 'flower smashing', etc including collage, and we all contribute new ideas. We are having loads of fun, whether things turn out as the demonstrator hoped for or producing works of art. This week we will be tackling charcoal and chalk. We like getting messy!

If anybody wishes to join us, they would be welcome and be assured of learning different techniques. We meet the 2nd and the 4th Wednesday in the month at 10am until 12.

Coffee and biscuits at half time.

Marjorie Kirke



Art Class

The meeting before last we had a go at collage, so I cut out pictures of food in the shape of houses and glued them to the paper and added the sky and water.

Malcolm Lamond

A Delve into my Past

During the pandemic we all found ways of dealing with the isolation, the change in our everyday routines, and the distance from our family and friends. During that time, and with the help of my daughter-in-law, I began a long-shelved wish to find out more about my roots.

All four of my grandparents died before my birth, and I learned little of them from my parents. This didn't worry me in my youth but as I grew older, and with time on my hands during our enforced isolation, the lack of information about my forebears began to tweak my interest. I signed up to ancestry.com and my journey began.

I started with my father's family. It was through his mother, Christiana, that the line eventually led to an Isabella Fitzroy (1225/1276). My heart skipped a beat. Having read numerous historical novels I knew that illegitimate children of monarchs were often named 'Fitzroy'. Isabella proved the case, and was my first opening into what was a rabbit hole of information. She was the daughter of Richard Fitzroy, the illegitimate son of King John Lackland – he of the Magna Carta. My 24th great granddad.

By far the best part of discovering royalty in my ancestry was the ease with which I could then trace my direct line further into the past. Obviously, the history of kings and queens is well catalogued. Dates of birth and death, the causes of those deaths, marriages, scandals, and much more is readily available for the searcher. Also on my father's side of the tree was the Pilot on the Mayflower, a Mr John 'the Navigator' Clarke (1575/1623), who sailed the Pilgrim Fathers to America in 1620.

King John Lackland (1166-1216)



I then turned my attention to my mother's family. To my surprise the line from my maternal grandfather again led to King John, this time on the legitimate side of the blanket. From there the research was simple and clear, uncovering such great names as William the Conqueror, Empress Matilda, Henry I and Henry II, Edward I and Edward II, Alfred the Great, Ethelred the Unready, and many more. I got as far back as Rollo the Viking (845/930) as the last name I knew, and to the mid-7th century with names I did not recognise, before the trail went cold. I am still hoping to find out more.

I would urge anyone with an interest in tracing their ancestry to give it a go, and to keep persevering. I am convinced that most of us have that famous character or royal connection in our heritage if we look hard enough. Once that link is found the doors to further research, and our own personal history, swing open wide.

Deb Barwick