



# UP2DATE



MAGAZINE JUNE 2023

This is our first magazine for eight months, as I was unable to produce one in February, and as a result is a combination of articles and photographs I have been sent to cover the period starting with the holiday to the Yorkshire Dales last September.

I am now collecting material for the next edition which will be out in October and which I need to be preparing in early September, so please send your contributions as soon as you can.

We managed, during the prolonged period of lock down, between us to produce enough material for a magazine every month, but since our lives have got back to normal, the flow of items has somewhat dried up and without your contributions, I cannot produce a magazine. The last edition even had a blank back page because I had nothing to fill it.

So please keep the articles coming. These can include photos and descriptions of trips and holidays you have experienced, both with the u3a and on your own. Maybe you have had a once in a lifetime experience as Janet did in the last edition with her description of a short voyage on a tall ship or taken up, on retirement, occasional ventures into the world of film. (See later). Are you a poet? A keen gardener with a new project? Have you seen an exhibition or play at the theatre which you could tell us about? Maybe you are a keen photographer and have a friend happy to describe the experience to produce a combined piece. If you are unable to produce illustrations for your article, don't worry I can usually find something suitable. So please dig deep and send me your material, I enjoy producing this magazine, have done it for nine years **BUT** I cannot do it without your contributions.

The contact details for me are to be found later in this edition.

## TRAVEL TRIP TO YORKSHIRE



In September 2022, several members of the Travel Group enjoyed a three-day trip to Yorkshire.

After a pleasant drive through the beautiful Yorkshire Dales our first stop was in the pretty town of Hawes with its old stone cottages. There was time to have lunch, investigate a variety of shops and even visit the ice cream parlour before travelling to Leyburn and the Wensleydale Railway.



Before boarding the train, some members visited a gin tasting venue. On the train we travelled through more beautiful countryside where we saw a large number of pheasants and in the distance Middleham castle, home of Richard Neville the

sixteenth Earl of Warwick, where King Richard 111, was brought up.

At the restored Victorian station at Leeming Bar the coach was waiting to take us on to our hotel in Huby.



Day two was spent in Whitby where, Dave, our coach driver dropped us off on the headland so that we could explore the ruined Whitby Abbey founded by Abbess Hilda and the little church of St Mary the Virgin before the coach picked us up to take us to the centre of Whitby, although a few members did brave the walk down the 199 steps from the Abbey into town.



There was plenty to see in Whitby including the cobbled streets of the old town and the Captain Cook Museum.

On our journey home we saw the white horse cut into the hillside at Kilburn before stopping at the market town of Thirsk, the home of the James Herriot Museum made famous by the popular TV series “All Creatures Great and Small”. There was also the five-hundred-year-old church, still used today, with its beautiful interior and stained-glass windows.

Thank you to Judith Curry and Ann Daniels for organising the holiday. We were sorry that Judith was ill and could not come with us, but Kay Jones stepped in to help Ann. We are already looking forward to our next trip!!

Judith Higgins Article

Photos Vivian Bath

The holiday was a result of talks between Judith Curry and Christine from McCarthy’s and brilliantly put together to satisfy both the most active and those who for whatever reason found that their personal millage was much reduced. We all had plenty to do and could all enjoy the holiday at our own pace.

## TWO AMBLERS OUTINGS



In September 2022 the Amblers had a walk from Woodbank to Pear Mill where they had lunch.

The Amblers Christmas Event at the Wycliffe Hotel .



Photographs sent by Anita Woodward and Rodger Moss



## **WELCOME TO ALL THE NEW MEMBERS**

As you will appreciate, because I was unable to produce the magazine for February, the list of new members is long. We extend the hand of friendship to all of them, look forward to getting to know them and hope they enjoy being members of Stockport u3a.

Val Aspin

Jill Barber

Christine Barrowclough

Jean Birks

Nonie Bowen

Lynn Burston

Bernard Clarke

Norma Clarke

Eddie Clift

Josephine Critchley

Sheila Cross

Hilary Dick

Shirley Doyle

Marion Driver

Chris Fontaine

Geatie Haworth

Ria Higham

Roy Hodkinson

Anne Hopley

Lesley Inglesfield

Margaret James

Eileen Kinsey

Mary Laing

Sheela Masrani

Mary Moloney

Peter Monagh

Mike Offord

Monica Pickles

Patricia Preston

Sue Rowarth

Christine Siddeley

Sue Skinner

Jennifer Targhi

Nicholas TARRIER

Wendy Taylor

Janet Wiggins

Geoff Woodward

Linda Worsencroft

Graham Wright

Margaret Wright



## THE UPS AND DOWNS OF A FILM EXTRA

I have been working as a film extra for over five years. When I retired after forty years as a doctor's receptionist I thought "Gosh what do I do now – I know!! I'll be a film star". Never achieved stardom but over the years I have met some interesting people and

attended some fascinating happenings. I was once Peter Davidson's sister and Alison Steadman's sister-in-law. Both lovely people, but I digress – On 9<sup>th</sup> October 2022 I had a call from "Extra People", a casting agency, to play a part as a football fan at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester. I was informed prior to the day by the agency staff re: costume, times and instructions including a Covid test. The costume was to be a "City" fan, so I knocked several neighbours' doors until I found a City fan with a scarf. This was reluctantly lent by a fourteen year old boy.



My call was for 6.30, so living in Stockport it did not take me long to arrive at 6am. How's that for dedication, arriving at such an early hour but I knew I was to have an exciting day. The Etihad car park was filled with white vans for the cast, producers, directors and important officials. I wandered through the vans to the Covid test base – "Negative" - so I was tagged and let through into the Stadium.

I was in the most wonderful building. I have been to Stockport County's ground but this stadium was just outstandingly beautiful, if that's the right word. It was clean, bright, modern, huge – everything you could ask for in celebrating a world renown football team. I was directed with many others to the breakfast station. A bit haphazard with the crowds but eventually I received my porridge and fruit. People everywhere dressed as City fans, nurses, event photographers, ambulance crews, stewards etc. It the personnel that go into a big football match. The Agency staff working so hard, checking on clothing, hair and makeup. They helped me enormously being very kind and considerate when I got totally lost. Eventually we were all held on one floor, breakfast over and three hundred people all milling about needed some organisation – but all the staff were very capable and patient.

An announcement came later -everyone had to give in their mobile phones. Again, very organised. Each phone was given a number and a card was given to each person which had to be shown on entry to filming. I saw some people who did not want to comply with the rules but soon realised – no phone given in – no filming entrance- so they relented.

At 9am we were all shepherded into the executive stand but not sitting in the executive seats at first. Lovely crowds, interesting people, very funny and those near me got on famously. I was sat next to a 24 year old Jamaican lad who as the day went on looked after me and we became good friends for the day. He recalled that when he arrived he had bright red dyed hair standing two inches above his head – crown style. Very well cut but the make up department soon dyed it black. No red haired United fan in the City stadium! He said “When I get home my mum won’t recognise me”. He had had red hair – dyed – for years it seemed.

We sat in the terraces on and off, in different place each time, changing seats eight times so I was always with a new set of interesting people but always with my new “comfort blanket” friend. One seat we sat in was over the players’ tunnel, with heated seats (not for us) and loads of room and probably costing the earth to buy as a season ticket, so we were very privileged. It was to take all day swapping and changing but as was explained the three hundred people will be digitalised to fill the whole stadium when the film is shown later this year (2023). I met people from Sierra Leone, Spain, France, Nigeria, etc – such a collection of different cultures and stories – and oh- a chap from Bury , equally as interesting. Sitting in one place near the pitch for this Apple TV film called “Ted Lasso” I was so lucky that the “Ted Lasso” actors were very close to me but the bonus



was when Pep Guardiola, City’s manager, appeared. Everyone cheered and I realised why the phones had been confiscated. Face book, Twitter etc would have given the secret away and fans would have probably come to the ground. He was due to act in a cameo role as himself, this he did

excellently and I was to be yards away from him where I was sitting. So many people were organised. Lighting, sound, make up girls, producers, directors, runners- so many people doing their jobs and so very interesting to be there in the middle of it all.

We as fans had to cheer, clap, moan, be disgusted with the play – all facets of a big match. It was announced that those born between July and September could swear and use bad language. Thank goodness I was born in December. The majority of the people were obviously football fans – I tried but lacked gusto I reckon.



The sun shone on us all but as 4pm approached the chills set in. We all had to dress as though it was a Spring day in April but even the cheering and jumping up and down did not keep most of us warm. I saw a girl who had a cute little hot water bottle. I asked where she had got the hot water from – back came the reply – from the coffee machine. She had filled the hot water bottle with hot coffee.

As the day came to an end at about 7.00 I still had not received my phone back and the queue was lengthy. I asked one of the Agency staff if I could possibly use his phone to get in touch with family. My grandson living with me had not heard from me for over fourteen hours and I thought “He’ll think I’m dead “. The chap kindly lent me his phone and all was well.

I titled this article “The Ups and Downs of a Film Extra” but really it was mostly “Ups”. Filming is so interesting, to watch the progress in one day. The people I met were all so friendly, funny and always looked after me in their way. The Agency staff go beyond their duties. Always on their toes, looking to help, advise and and keep everyone happy.

My day was just great. At 82 years old, who has opportunities like this at my time of life. I am so lucky.

Barabara Marriot. (Photos from internet, apologies for the wrong colour of scarf.)



## **HISTORY GROUP VISIT TO MACCLESFIELD SILK MUSEUM AND PARADISE MILL**



On a lovely bright but cold April morning the History Group met in Macclesfield. We were headed for a guided tour of Paradise Mill and the Silk Museum.

Macclesfield's history with silk goes back to Tudor times when button making using silk thread was a cottage industry. As button making began to decline, Macclesfield firms started to move into the preparation of the silk itself. This process is called "throwing", involving putting a twist on the thread to make it stronger. Charles Roe built the first throwing mill in Macclesfield in 1743 and he was followed by many other manufacturers in the town who also moved into the silk industry and by the 1870s there were around seventy mills in the town. In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Macclesfield was weaving broadsheet silk fabric, and the silk industry remained an important part of the town's economy until the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

On arrival at the Silk Museum, we were met by Katherine who had organised the day, our two guides and those who manned the coffee shop, as we were also given excellent refreshments between visits to the Mill and to the Museum.

The group was divided into two and our expert and enthusiastic guide took us through the whole process required for the production of silk fabric from the cocoon to the finished article. In Paradise Mill he explained that there had been a mill on this site since 1824 with a larger mill built in 1862, which then became known as Paradise Mill. The mill has Europe's largest known collection of Jacquard silk hand looms still in their original setting. We were shown how this fascinating contraption worked, how the looms were threaded and how the Jacquard mechanism worked. For, when this was fitted to a hand loom it could simplify the manufacture of textiles with complex patterns (e.g., brocade and damask). The mechanism uses a system of punch cards, prepared by a card maker after a designer had produced the pattern for the fabric on squared paper. The card maker translated each pattern, row by row, onto punch cards.



Once completed, the cards were laced together then fitted onto the Jacquard which in turn is fitted on top of the loom. The cards now controlled which warp threads were raised to allow the weft to pass under them. This system was patented in France in 1804 and by the 1820s had found its way into Britain and revolutionised the production of patterned silk cloth, making it more affordable to the newly emerging middle classes. It is thought that this technology actually laid the foundation for our own digital age. The silk thread themselves were beautiful, bright and colourful.

Now for the museum itself. This is housed in a building which was opened as the Macclesfield School of Art in 1877 to train designers for the silk trade. The museum hosts a collection of silk artwork, silk weaving machines and silk historical artifacts. Again, we were led by an extremely knowledgeable guide who took us to events that took place during the Second World War. For it was in Macclesfield that silk was produced to make parachutes, particularly for Spitfire crews as silk is strong but also very fine and easily folded into smaller parachute containers than the new man-made fibres which were used for parachutes for bomber crews. Silk

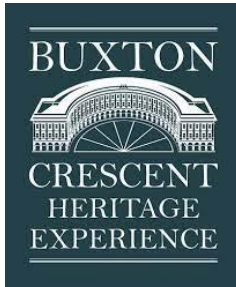


was also used to print “escape and evade” maps for soldiers in the event they were captured. Silk is durable and was easily folded and hidden in clothing. A number of the group went to see the pattern books with the guide. The Museum holds a vast collection of pattern books showing the various designs for block printing on silk and other textiles. A dozen or so of these books were laid out for us to see, showing geometrics patterns, flowers, birds, horses, the Hunt, dogs and cats and many others. All these were block printed where the pattern is made by cutting away areas of wood and/or adding metal pins to produce the design in relief, often using five or more blocks to create just one design.

We were left to tour the museum at our own pace, and I enjoyed seeing Marianne Brocklehurst’s Egyptian collection. Marianne, with her companion Mary Booth, travelled extensively in Egypt between 1873 and 1891 and brought back (smuggled??) a large collection of artefacts which are now housed in the silk museum. The stairway holds a beautiful collection of Charles Tunnicliffe’s work. Tunnicliffe was Britain’s foremost 20<sup>th</sup> century wild life artist. Born in Langley, Maccelsfield, he studied at Macclesfield College of Art before moving to London. He was an illustrator (he illustrated “Tarka the Otter”) and painted water colours of Macclesfield.



Isabella Collinson. Article and Organiser Photos Anita Woodward and Internet



Our March Amble was to the Buxton Experience, thirty two signed up to go so there was a little jeopardy until we all managed to board the bus. The 199 is a very popular route for hikers as well so one hopes it isn't one of their days but fortunately it wasn't full !!

We arrived at the Pump Rooms for our pre-booked tea, coffee and biscuits and after a great deal of re-organisation they managed to seat and serve us all.



In the Experience, which is in the ground floor of the very beautiful Crescent Hotel, we were guided round by three very knowledgeable volunteers. It is well worth a visit, telling the story of the heyday of Buxton and the development of the spa waters.

An added bonus was that the Assembly Rooms were open on that day and you could almost hear the swish of the dancer's skirts.





The Pavillion Tea Rooms had kindly agreed to open for us with a reduced menu and I think fifteen or so of us finished our day with delicious lunch there , overlooking the gardens and drinking the complimentary bottles of water we had filled at the Pump Rooms to take home. Although as always the organiser is glad when it is all over, I think everyone enjoyed the day in the glorious sunshine, something even the best organiser can't guarantee.

Kay Jones: Article and Organiser    Photos Anita Woodward and internet

## CORONATION PARTY



Everybody singing "God save the King".

On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May, instead of our usual main meeting at Hazel Grove Methodist, ninety members attended a Coronation party at Stockport Sunday School. Those attending were asked to dress in red, white and blue and to wear a crown. Some members chose to make their own crowns and these were judged during the afternoon with a prize for the best "King" and "Queen". Ron and Beryl Emerson had produced one of their quizzes which really stretched our knowledge of past royalty and the present royal family. No excuses for not joining in as we were all presented with a commemorative pen. We all had an afternoon tea with soft drinks, unless you brought your own, so no-one was missing to do the brewing up. We were entertained by Roger Browne on the keyboard and had a lovely afternoon, taking part and catching up with friends.

A big thank you to everyone who organised the occasion.



Ron Emerson was crowned “King” and Sheila Brownhill “Queen” for the beautiful crowns they made and both received a commemorative mug.



“ Whoops” Joan Davies nearly having a mishap with a stand full of cakes. That would have been a shame!!!.

Photos Vivian Bath

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this magazine, as usual the variety of articles makes it a pleasure to put the magazine together.

Deadline for the next issue is 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 to the below addresses.

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