

In this issue

- ◆ Monthly meeting
- ◆ Desert Island Discs 2021
- ◆ Group liaison update
- ◆ Group news and activities
- ◆ Challenges
- ◆ A happy place
- ◆ Membership renewal
- ◆ Committee and membership
- ◆ New members
- ◆ Dates for your diary

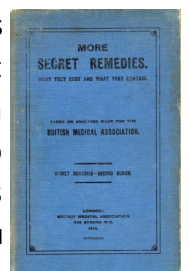


Monthly meeting, Tuesday 7 December 2021 at 2pm in the Great Hall, Hexham Abbey - and on Zoom

Topic: Whatever happened to the electric corset?

Speaker: Colin Argent

As Christmas approaches, this is a topical question. It is the question on the lips of all those men who are yet to find that perfect gift for their partner. But this talk is not about Christmas gifts. The question in the title may also arouse expectations of a 40-minute frisson on ladies' underwear. But this talk is not about undergarments. It is about what is best described as quackery and patent medicine and the appalling remedies inflicted on an unsuspecting population from the 17th century to 1950s Britain. Many of our Christmas traditions date from the Victorian era so be prepared to laugh, and maybe cry a little, at some of the less than festive remedies available to our ancestors. During the last year and a half of Covid, the words 'thank you NHS' have appeared in windows and on hoardings throughout the UK. Some of the remedies exposed in this talk add a whole new dimension to that phrase and will leave you all relieved that we only carry on the Victorian Christmas traditions and not the Victorian remedies.



The second book commissioned by the BMA to expose quack remedies for what they really were

Colin Argent spent his employed years working on research and development for the oil and gas industry. After a ridiculously early first retirement, he formed a technical consultancy company with three colleagues. This period saw his global activities develop a distinctly unhealthy affinity for countries that sensible people do not visit. After his second - or maybe it was his third - retirement, he joined Tynedale u3a and is now never to be found without one or two active projects to investigate something new and different. One such project focused on quackery and secret remedies of the 18th and 19th centuries. Cue the electric corset...

There will be no pre-meeting registration online or by phone on this occasion.

Tynedale Desert Island Discs

My castaway on the second Desert Island Discs of the second series was Jenny Harrington. The following were her eight choices of music:

1. Elgar, Intro and allegro for strings, *Serenade for Strings*
2. Beethoven, *Symphony No 7*, final movement
3. Purcell, Dido's Lament from *Dido and Aeneas*
4. Rimsky Korsakov, *Scheherazade 1*, The Sea and Sinbad's Ship
5. The Scaffold, Lily the Pink
6. Mozart, *Piano Concerto No 20*, 2nd movement
7. Bizet, *Carmen*, The Toreador Song
8. Mendelssohn, *Fingal's Cave* Overture



This month's Desert Island Discs



The December Desert Island Discs will be rather different to the usual format. I will be presenting a varied selection of eight Christmas songs/carols/music, which I hope everyone will enjoy. So please join me on Zoom at 2pm on Tuesday 21 December.

Mike Worthington

Group liaison news

Existing groups

Gentle Exercise

This group has not restarted. The Age UK instructor who ran this group before the Covid lockdown now runs a similar session at the TORCH Centre on a Tuesday morning at 10am at a cost of £3 per session. Some spaces are available in these sessions, but a space can only be reserved by contacting Anne Robinson (0771 309 0945) at Age UK. Please DO NOT turn up at the sessions without first contacting Anne.

We do have an option offered by AGE UK to provide a qualified instructor but this would be at a cost. If you are interested in starting a dedicated u3a Gentle Exercise Group session, please let me know.

Group Liaison Secretary

New group suggestions

A number of members have suggested topics for new groups but to date we do not have enough people interested in these topics to propose a group start-up meeting. If you have an interest in any of these topics, let me know (Group Liaison Secretary) and I will get back to you when/if enough members declare an interest.

Military History WW1

Industrial Archaeology

Beginners Mah Jong

Informal café discussions

Military History WW2

Wild Flowers

Basic German

Current Tynedale u3a groups

Languages
Fluent French Conversation
French -Easy Going French
French Intermediate
German Language
Italian
Italian for Beginners
Latin Learners
Latin Lovers
Spanish
Spanish For Improvers
The Scots Gaelic Group
Welsh Language

Arts and Music
Art Appreciation 1
Art Appreciation 2
Jazz Appreciation
Music Appreciation
Play Reading
Poetry
Watercolours

Science & Environment
Bird Watching
Environmental Group
Geology
Landscape
Science
Space Exploration
Wildlife

Books
Book Group 1
Book Group 3
Book Group 4
Book Group-The Detectives

History
Family History
Hadrian's Wall
History
Railway Studies

Exercise & Outdoor
Blue Remembered Hills
Garden Visits
Gentle Exercise
Out & About
Tai Chi
Walking A
Yoga

Creative
Create And Craft
Creative Crafts
Photography

Games
Mah-Jong 1
Scrabble
Bridge Play

Discussion
Topical Discussion
Wine Appreciation

Groups to be reformed
Singing For Fun
Sunday Lunch
Yoga

If you have an interest in any of these groups, look at our website and contact the convenor. If you do not have internet access, phone Colin on 01661 842284 to discuss it.

Prudhoe u3a

We have a reciprocal arrangement with Prudhoe u3a whereby members of Tynedale can attend group session run by Prudhoe and vice versa. If we do not have a group to suit you that is currently running in Tynedale, why not check the Prudhoe u3a website. For example, one of their members has proposed a Russian Language Group and you will not be surprised to learn that they are looking for more potential members of this group.

Group news and activities

Tai Chi Group



Tai Chi Chuan (Taijiquan) has become very popular outside of China in the last 100 years or so. Most people in the west regard Tai Chi as a health exercise. Taijiquan originated as a self-defence or fighting system with many components, health being only one. There are five main styles or schools of Tai Chi practised worldwide. These are Chen, Yang, Wu, Hao and Sun styles. We practise Yang style Tai Chi, one of the most popular styles.

In the Thursday morning group, we focus mainly on the health benefits derived from practising Tai Chi.

A normal session comprises warming up exercises followed by Qigong (Chi Kung) exercises to develop good posture, correct breathing and relaxation. Qigong (meaning energy exercises) is itself a discipline as old as Tai Chi and widely practised in its own right. After completing these, we start learning Tai Chi.

A beginner is introduced to the 24-step Yang Style 'compact' form. A form is a series of 24 postures linked together and performed as a complete flowing movement. The Yang style 'compact' form consists of 24 postures, and the ultimate aim is to be able to perform Tai Chi in a relaxed but dynamic manner and still maintain good posture and relaxation.

The main benefits are improved breathing, balance and posture. A number of scientific researches have shown that this art, centuries old, has a variety of health benefits.

To practise Tai Chi you will need good coordination and body control. The main requirements are being willing to learn, watching and listening.

Our group meets on Thursday mornings from 10:00 to 11:00 at the Torch Centre (opposite the hospital).

If you would like to try Tai Chi, contact Susan Turnbull on 01434 607264. Demand for places is high, so we may have to put your name on a waiting list.

Eddy Carrington



Blue Remembered Hills Group



Come along on the evening of 8 December when we re-launch the group. We gather to explore past experiences in hill walking and climbing, with illustrated talks on walks and climbs from the UK and abroad. We will get to know each other again and plan a really attractive programme for next year. All welcome - if you've not been to the group before, come along for a taster.

John Dark

Environment Group

Our group met following the COP 26 talks. We concluded that its impact depended very much on where in the world you lived, and that the history of making significant changes to environmental management suggests that there is a lag time of up to twenty years.

We also discussed the relationship between the degradation of the environment and the threefold growth in the human population since the second World War. Population growth involves so many factors such as fertility, infant mortality, length of life, levels of education and cultural pressures. Are there too many of us for our own good?

These are challenges for the future; our more immediate challenge is how to celebrate and enjoy an environment friendly Christmas.

Richard Bentley



Redwings have been arriving here from Scandinavia in the last few weeks

Possible new groups

Challenging Conversations Group

If you're interested in stirring up the grey matter in the New Year and sharing thoughts on the issues that lie behind the headline news, then this might be a group to try. Topics for discussion could extend across social, cultural, economic, environmental and other factors. Here are some examples: 'What does it mean to be English?'; 'What should be the different government priorities for the different ages?', 'Confirmation bias', and 'Your choices'. Mike has facilitated similar groups before and we will all ensure a safe stimulating space for our explorations.

For further information, please mail Mike Foster at mikef@wowu.co.uk.

Tynedale u3a Musicians Group

Musicians wanted (string, woodwind and brass) to join a small ensemble that meets fortnightly on Monday mornings. Please contact Paula Cowley (01434 603131). We play a range of classical and popular pieces, purely for enjoyment, at a not-too-difficult standard.



Challenges

Flash fiction — a writing challenge for all members



Flash fiction is a fictional work of extreme brevity that still offers character and plot development.

We would like members to have a go at writing a short story in 200 words. If you have a quiet time over Christmas and feel a need to exercise the brain, please have a go.

We would like completed stories to be sent to me by email to tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com, or hard copy to 21 Hencotes Hexham NE46 2EQ by the 4 February 2022. The stories we receive will be anonymised and sent to a judging panel at Prudhoe u3a. You are not restricted to one entry.

The best will be read out at the AGM and they will feature in future newsletters. We are hoping this will be as successful at the Limerick competition a few years ago.

Wendy Dale

Marble run extravaganza

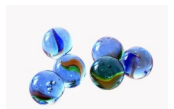
After the trebuchet challenge there was a temptation to opt for a follow-on project that was both loud and dangerous, but a degree of common sense has prevailed. Instead, we propose a marble run extravaganza. Anyone interested is invited to make their own marble run creation with the intention of linking the finished masterworks together. The specification for this venture is as follows:

The marble runs can be mounted on a baseboard, backboard or be free standing. Construction materials can be wood, cardboard or anything else that comes to hand.

There will be a requirement to link the separate creations together, and for this they will be placed on a flat surface, for example a table top, so vertical measurements are referenced to this surface.

The inlet run for the link to a unit should be 2.5 cm above the flat surface to the bottom of the free running marble. The outlet run for the link from a unit should be 3.0 cm above the flat surface to the bottom of the free running marble.

The marble run can be any size and shape but must include a vertical lift of 30 cm above the inlet to that lift. This can be manual, motorised, linked to a hamster wheel, or any other power source available. Sometimes even grandchildren have their uses!



Marbles can be any material but must be 16mm OD. Marbles must enter the outlet run with enough energy to run a minimum of 20 cm to ensure they can traverse the linkage between creations.

Yes, I know it is daft, but that is whole idea. If you want to participate, do let me, Colin Argent, know.

u3a helps to make Hexham a happy place

According to the 2021 Happy at Home Index, Hexham is the happiest place in Britain. This is the second time Hexham has claimed the top spot, just two years after being named Britain's happiest place for the first time.

The Happy at Home survey asks people how they feel about the place where they live. Participants answer questions about 10 categories, including community spirit, access to nature and green spaces, and cultural activities. Hexham scored highly in all of these measures, but participants particularly valued a strong sense of community and the friendliness of the local people, both of which foster a sense of belonging.

An article in *The Times* ('Location lowdown, Hexham Northumberland', 26 November 2021) mentions the u3a as an example of the 'countless clubs and activities' that make Hexham such a good place to live. As *The Times* puts it, 'It's not so grim up north then...' Definitely not, when our town and the surrounding area have so much to offer, including Tynedale u3a!



Membership renewal reminder

Membership subscriptions for 2021-2022 were due for renewal in September 2021. As a membership organisation, we retain your contact details to keep in touch with you by email and newsletter about Tynedale u3a activities and groups. Unfortunately, once your membership lapses and you don't pay your membership subscription fee, we have to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations and remove your details from our contact system. We will be removing those people who haven't rejoined at the end of December this year. If you would like to continue as a member, please renew your subscription as soon as possible. The renewal form is available [here](#).

Membership renewal payment options

Here are the details for **online payment**:

Name: Tynedale u3a

Sort Code: 20-40-09

Account Number: 60601209

Reference: Please put your **membership number** and **surname** in the reference field on the payment screen.

Or you can pay **by cheque**, payable to Tynedale u3a. Please send your payment to the Membership Secretary, John Dark, West Oakwood House, Hexham NE46 4LB.

Amount: £14, or £17.10 including the TAT Newsletter

Your committee

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Treasurer

David Pattinson - 01661 842903

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Membership Secretary

John Dark - 602584

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Barrie Mellars - 07831255520

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Events Secretary

Vacant

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Kevin Stephens - 01661 843347

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Newsletter Editor

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Membership

We currently have 446 members, including nine associate members.



Tynedale u3a is a registered charity (number 515733).



A very warm welcome to John Dryden, Joan Grant, Josephine Warren, Janet Jackson, Jenny Cessford, Geoffrey Litt, Susan Nicholson, Helen Robinson, Aileen Duncan, Alison Fisher, Peter Fisher, Yvonne Piper, Stephen Allen and Nikki Petty, who have recently joined our u3a.

Dates for your diary

Desert Island Discs Tuesday 21 December at 2pm

A selection of Christmas music

Monthly meetings - January to July 2022

4 January at 2pm: Chris Pollock, Why I'd rather wear GM cotton underpants than live next door to an organic dairy farm

1 February at 2pm: John Richards, Flora of Northumberland

1 March at 2pm: AGM

5 April at 2pm: Frances Smiles, Northumberland Wildlife Trust

3 May at 2pm: Chris Tipple, Tales out of school life in rural Northumberland schools in the 19th century

7 June at 2pm: Jenny Elliott, Tyne Rivers Trust

5 July at 2pm: Professor Mike Bentley, Living, working and doing scientific research in Antarctica

Next issue of the newsletter

The next issue of the newsletter will be published in January 2022.

We welcome contributions from groups and individual members.

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor, Alicia Cresswell, by 16 December. Email address: tyneu3aeditor@gmail.com.