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## Monthly meeting online, Tuesday 4 May 2021 at 2pm

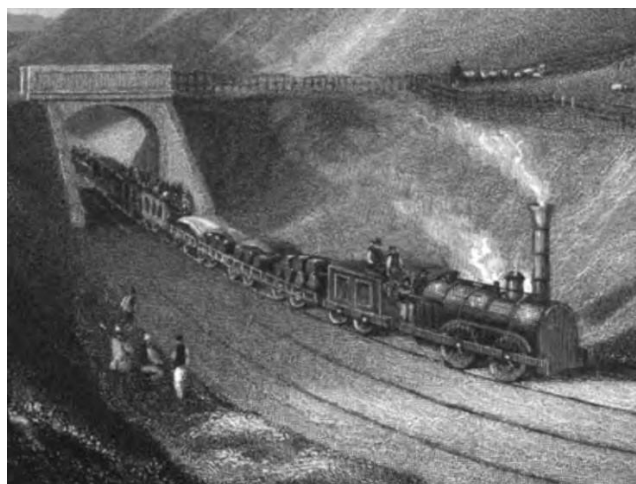
**Topic: Coming of the railway: Newcastle-Carlisle line**

**Speaker: Colin Argent**

The Newcastle and Carlisle Railway (N&CR) is a 60-mile line built in the 1830s, linking the city of Newcastle upon Tyne with Carlisle in Cumbria. The railway began operating mineral trains in 1834 between Blaydon and Hexham, and passengers were carried for the first time the following year. A branch line was built to reach lead mines around Alston, opening from Haltwhistle in 1852. The N&CR was absorbed by the larger [North Eastern Railway](#) in 1862. Today the [Tyne Valley Line](#) follows much of the former N&CR route between the two cities, but the Alston branch has closed.

For many years now, Colin Argent has maintained an unlimited subscription to the British Newspaper Archive

and uses it to explore changes in society across a wide spectrum of topics ranging from highwaymen through turnpike roads to hiring fairs from ~1750 to the present day. His talk 'The coming of the railway' fits this mould. It started out as an investigation of how the newspapers reported the advent of the railway and the major changes it introduced in personal travel, freight transport and social events, with particular focus on the Newcastle to Carlisle railway and other local rail companies in South Northumberland. Inevitably, serendipity played a role and extended the study to a compatriot of Beethoven, world championship rowers and the Physioramic Pyrotechnicon at the Newcastle Great Polytechnic Exhibition.



James Wilson Carmichael, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

# Tynedale Desert Island Discs

## April Desert Island Discs

We held our ninth Desert Island Discs Zoom on 20 April, when Charlotte Coxon treated us to an enjoyable afternoon, sharing her musical choices with glimpses of her socially active life.

Charlotte's choices were:

1. The Glasgow Phoenix Choir, 'All in the April Evening'
2. Elvis Presley, 'An American Trilogy'
3. The Hu, 'Shireg Shireg'
4. Neil Diamond, 'America'
5. Mozart, *Don Giovanni*, 'Il Mio Tesoro'
6. Elgar, *Pomp and Circumstance* 'March No. 1 in D'
7. Beethoven, *Piano Concerto No. 5 in E Flat Major Op 73 'Emperor'*, 2nd movement
8. The Regimental Band, Pipes and Drums of the Black Watch, 'March Off'

This was the last of our Desert Island Discs for this term. We plan to begin again in the autumn. If you are willing to volunteer to be a castaway, please get in touch with Wendy Dale at [tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com](mailto:tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com)

## Committee news

I am pleased to inform you that Barrie Mellars has now taken on the role of Vice Chair for the current year. He is already a very active committee member and is well known to many of you.

Unfortunately for us, we have to say goodbye to Jane Perona-Wright, who is leaving her home in Corbridge to move to Devon to be near family. She has been Group Liaison Secretary in the fifteen months Covid restrictions have been in place and the role has been quite different in these circumstances. We are grateful to her for her work in ensuring we have operated in a Covid-safe way and for her contributions at committee meetings. We wish her well in her new venture.

From June we will be operating without a group liaison secretary, as there are now two vacancies. This will increase the pressure on an already busy committee, and I want to encourage anybody who feels they could help by taking on this role to get in touch. In the June newsletter I will set out how the committee intend to manage the void. In the meantime, please email [tyneu3a@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3a@gmail.com) if you have any queries about group matters.

Wendy Dale

## Photographs needed

In preparation for our relaunch we are planning to produce advertising leaflets. But we need high quality photos to make these attractive and stimulating. We have many photos of u3a groups in action but these mostly show large groups of people (often in hard hats) staring at things. These images need to be cropped to make a clear focus of interest, but when cropped they tend to pixellate or become rather blurred.

What we need are good close-up pictures of the faces/upper bodies of seniors taking part in interesting activities. These could be playing cards or mah jong, walking dogs, doing tai chi or yoga, painting pictures etc. Please try to take such photos whenever you can and send the results to [tyneu3anews@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3anews@gmail.com).

Many thanks

Kevin Stephens

## Group news and activities

### Birdwatching group

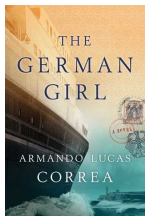
This month has seen the first swallows arrive, accompanied by several flocks of sand martins that lost no time in refurbishing their nests. We can now hear the sweet song of willow warblers and the jaunty phrases of blackcaps, and these warm spring days have brought out the blackthorn blossom and dandelions to provide for butterflies and bumble bees. The easing of travel restrictions has encouraged some of us to venture out more widely, and an osprey has been seen at Kielder, and a marsh harrier at Druridge Bay. We look forward to more arrivals in the next few weeks.



Blackthorn blossom - Image by Richard Bentley

Richard Bentley

### Book group 1



Book Group 1 is thriving nicely using Zoom. But not all members like Zoom and some are not willing to use it. So we would welcome new members who don't mind Zoom and enjoy a variety of fascinating reading. The book for our meeting on 26 May is *The German Girl* by Armando Lucas Correa. Get cracking!

Kevin Stephens

### Environment group

April has been an interesting month for the Environment group.

Some of us accepted the opportunity to join the Prudhoe Eco group for a Zoom meeting. They had a speaker from Greenpeace who focused on activities to address climate change in Northumberland. The messages for those who wanted to know what they could do were familiar: reduce use of plastic, use peat free compost, don't use pesticides in the garden etc. The new one for me was the advice to declutter emails as the storage uses energy. I have started!

We were able to meet for the first time this year taking advantage of the dry weather and easing of restrictions. We enjoyed being able to catch up face to face. Our topic for discussion was sea pollution, which was not so cheering as the scale of the problem is overwhelming. The discussion covered the problem of plastics, chemical waste and noise pollution. We concluded our meeting on a more positive note with updates on local initiatives. We hope to be able to meet in larger numbers in May, so new members will be welcome if the weather remains dry.



Wendy Dale

### Slow Ways talk, Monday 17 May at 2pm

The [Slow Ways](#) project aims to create a network of walking routes that connects across Great Britain once lockdown is lifted. Dan Raven-Ellison and Rob Bushby from Slow Ways are hosting two webinars for u3a members interested in hearing more about this project, followed by a Q&A session. [Book your place here.](#)

## Group liaison update

Here we are, almost in May and with the gradual release of lockdown now under way, there is room for optimism. For us, our friends and families, and our u3a groups too.

Most of our groups have thrived, mainly resorting to technology to keep in touch. Those who haven't been able to meet remotely have maintained contact and supported one another. We are a strong community and will continue to grow.

Sadly, during lockdown a small number of groups have folded. I hope that we can restart and develop these groups, as well as starting new ones on different topics. We are keen to develop the following:

Bridge  
Fluent spoken German  
Wine tasting  
Long walking  
Theology  
Film

If there is a topic or group that you would like to start, please let us know and we will put it to our members and try to make it happen. This is an exciting time for our u3a and our groups, so let's get started!

Jane Perona-Wright, Group Liaison Secretary

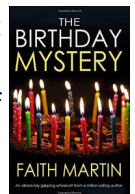
## From our members

### Crime fiction and food

Crime fiction is the most popular genre of books and it fulfils a lot of needs for many of us. Certain detectives stand out, and a key part of their characterisation is their relationship with food.

One of my favourite detectives is Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski, but sadly she is not a big foodie. She is a very evolved person who knows what she needs and is great on interpersonal relationships, including being both a mentee and a mentor. But she does not seem interested in food, which could be due to her being American.

In Britain, Faith Martin has written several series of books. The Jenny Starling collection is about a travelling chef who goes to different places to cook for various people. In each story the question arises, will the first corpse be found before or after the meal? There are always lots of dysfunctional relationships surrounding her, but Jenny does her prepping and cooking whilst solving who dun it.



I went to Venice many years ago and found it crowded and very expensive, but the city is also home to one of my favourite policemen, Donna Leon's Guido Brunetti. Guido's wife is a brilliant cook, so he has wonderful lunches, and dinner often ends with fresh peaches and other delights. The books should not be read at night though, as previously unknown hunger pangs will surface.

Whilst not a part of the u3a Detective Book Club selections, we must not forget James Bond, who brought sophisticated eating to a down-at-heel England in the 1950s and early 60s. As a teenager, I didn't initially realise the impact James Bond had had, so it was great to hear the [BBC Radio 4's Food Programme on this](#).

We are what we eat and what we read too.

The Detective Book Club meets online or in person every third Monday. More details from Cathy via [tyneu3a@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3a@gmail.com).

Mike Foster

## Volcanoes

Steve Rozario is a longstanding member of the Geology group. He has also been the group's convenor until recently. Steve often shares news items of interest to group members. Some of these items may be of interest to a wider audience, so Steve is kindly sharing them via the newsletter.

### Iceland volcanic eruption (posted 8 April)

You may have noticed a couple of weeks ago a [BBC news item about a new fissure eruption in Iceland](#). It has disappeared from the main news reports now but is still erupting – in fact [another fissure has now opened up nearby](#) and the area has been evacuated. (This site is in Icelandic but Google will translate it into English).

There is also a live YouTube feed [here](#) – if you look at the night time pictures they are pretty spectacular.



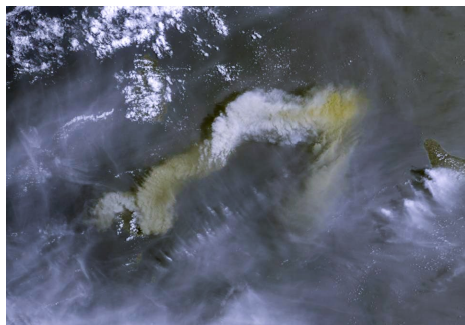
Photo by [Ása Steinerdóttir](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Any opportunity to see rock formation live is always interesting. Try to imagine interpreting the geology here millions of years later, after more lava has erupted and solidified and new erosion surfaces have formed. We often think of lava flows as being large and flat, but you can see the shape of this one is a lot more complicated.

Below this fissure eruption there will be an active igneous dyke.

### La Soufriere volcanic eruption (posted 11 April)

You may have noticed that [another volcano is making the news this week](#), La Soufriere on the Caribbean island of St Vincent.



Attribution: Contains modified Copernicus Sentinel data

Unlike the Iceland fissure eruption, this one has the potential to be a much more serious event. The reason for this is the type of volcanism involved. There are two main classes of volcanic activity (though this is a very broad generalisation). The Iceland eruption is at a diverging plate boundary, where the tectonic plates are separating and this produces a type of magma called tholeiitic, which generally erupts relatively quietly. The La Soufriere eruption is from a volcano formed over a convergent plate boundary (i.e. over a subduction zone), in this case the Lesser Antilles Volcanic arc. The magma produced at subduction zones is called calc-alkaline. This magma, formed by partial melting of the wet subducting plate, contains a lot of water and other volatiles, which can be released explosively as the magma rises up through the crust. These types of volcano can produce the most cataclysmic and deadly eruptions, particularly those that create what are called pyroclastic flows.

Most of the deadliest volcanic explosions in history have been produced by pyroclastic flows from this type of volcano – Pompeii in AD 79 (13,000 estimated fatalities), Mount Tambora in 1815 (>71,000), Krakatoa in 1883 (>36,000), Mount Pelee in 1902 (30,000). Less deadly, more recent examples include Mount St Helens in 1980 and Mount Pinatubo in 1991. Pyroclastic flows are recorded in the rock record as rocks called ignimbrites.

It is pleasing to see that the authorities are reacting promptly with mass evacuations. Of course, the volcano may not erupt explosively; it might just quieten down after a few days or weeks of ash eruptions. If it does erupt explosively, the amounts of ash put into the upper atmosphere can be huge. These can create a 'volcanic winter' which may last a year or two and will affect global temperatures and crop yields. The Mount Tambora eruption in 1815 was followed by the 'Year without a Summer' in 1816, which resulted in widespread food shortages and rioting. I'm sure we could all do without that after a pandemic year.

Steve Rozario

## Your committee

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Vacant\*

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\*For groups queries, please email  
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## Membership

We currently have 425 members,  
including 9 associate members.

Tynedale u3a is a registered charity  
(number 515733).

# Welcome

A warm welcome to Heather Farquharson, who has recently  
joined our u3a.



## Monthly meetings June-November 2021

- 1 June at 2pm, via Zoom: Paul Robbins, Great British Eccentrics
- 6 July at 2pm, via Zoom: Geoff Hughes, Take me up the Tyne:  
Explore the river from source to mouth and discover the  
fascinating events and legends along the journey.
- 7 September at 2pm: Space Group, Hitchhiker's Guide to the  
Solar System
- 5 October at 2pm: Margret Jacot, Central Asia, where the  
desert meet the mountains
- 2 November at 2pm: Iain Moffat, The Somme 1st July 1916 -  
The Story of the Tyneside Scottish and Tyneside Irish

## Next issue of the newsletter

The next issue of the newsletter will be published in June.

We welcome contributions from groups and individual  
members.

**Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor, Alicia  
Cresswell, at [tyneu3aeditor@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3aeditor@gmail.com) by 20 May.**