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Monthly Meeting, Tuesday 1st November 2022 at 2pm in the Great Hall, Hexham Abbey - and on Zoom

Topic: The Brasilia of the North?

Speaker: Tony Flynn

Tony Flynn is Chair of Newcastle City Guides. In 2020 he wrote a City Walk with the title of 'The Brasilia of the North' to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of T Dan Smith becoming the Leader of Newcastle City Council in 1960 and the start of the 1960s 'regeneration'. The walk has subsequently been made into a book which is the basis of today's talk.

Tony had more than a ringside seat to watch Newcastle's regeneration; he was an active participant.

From 1980 to 2004 he was a city councillor, and in his early years on the Council was Dan Smith's neighbour and councillor. He had many discussions with Dan about city centre regeneration and therefore had a personal insight into his vision.

Tony was Deputy Leader of the Council under Sir Jeremy Beecham for five years and succeeded him as Leader of Council for ten years, from 1994 to 2004.

As Leader of Council, Tony participated in three key decision-making bodies involved in the city's renewal.

Firstly, he was a member of the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation that revitalised the Quayside. Secondly, he was the Chair of the Grainger Town Partnership that rejuvenated the Georgian Town Centre. Finally, he was a founding member of the Newcastle Gateshead Initiative that led the 2008 European Capital Culture bid.

Therefore, Tony was uniquely placed to narrate the history of the urban regeneration of Newcastle.

Tony says, 'Radical change is inherently divisive, so I will leave it up to you to decide whether Newcastle's sixties Development Plan was successfully implemented.'

Tea and coffee will be served after the meeting.

Groups liaison news

Open Day

Many thanks to all the groups who put on a display and made the open day such a success. Sadly, I missed it, as I was still hobbling around under the influence of a bout of sciatica.

The expressions of interest logged on the forms for each group totalled about 230 and we are still working through them to sort out the best way to accommodate new members into the groups. Many groups have been able to take in everyone who expressed an interest but, for practical reasons, this was not possible for all groups. We are now organising exploratory launch meetings for a series of new groups. This takes time but should be finished in November.

To the best of my knowledge, everyone that expressed an interest in one of our groups has been contacted by the group convenor or myself. If you have not been contacted, please let me know and I apologise now for any oversight.

New groups to look out for

The following groups have been/are being formed as a result of the open day. All the usual information will be entered on the Tynedale u3a website as the final details are confirmed.

Italian: We now have an Intermediate and a Beginner Italian Group. Sarah is convenor for both.

Family History: The regular Monday group continues, and a second Thursday group has now been formed as well. Val is the contact for both groups at the moment.

Tai Chi: Colin is the convenor for the original group and Eddie has taken on the job of organising the new group. Contact details on the website.

French Discussion Group: Arrangements are in hand for one, possibly two more French Discussion Groups. More information should be available during November.

Art Appreciation: A third Art Appreciation group is now in the process of being formed. More information to follow.

Possible new groups still to be explored include Geology, Topical Discussion, Wine Appreciation, Environment and Craft. Watch this space!

New group suggestions

Here are some of the recent suggestions. As usual, if the topic appeals send me an email or ring me, and I will set up a launch meeting when I have three or four expressions of interest.

Comedy Group: Yes, I do know the one that goes 'why do we need a comedy group when our existing committee does it so well?'

Beer/Ale: We have an established wine group, and possibly a second one who intend to use discussions of grape variety, location, etc as an excuse to get tipsy one afternoon a month. Beer drinkers are missing out, but have equal excuses in the form of discussions on hop types, hop combinations, malt varieties, fermentation methods etc. with the same end in view.

Projects with the Grandchildren: By this I mean proper projects with bangs, projectiles, and the sort of thing their parents would disapprove of. One of our new members is an expert in this field and has a number of books and publications to his name. We have a little more work to do on this one but watch this space. I guarantee it will appeal to the 'big kid' in all of you and will ensure your place in family folklore.

Vinyl Appreciation: I assume this refers to pre-digital music rather than floor coverings. Many argue the quality of sound reproduction has deteriorated in this digital age.

MOTO: Members on their own. I guess Sunday lunches comes into this category but the scope is far broader than just that. Incidentally, I do not yet have sufficient interest in Sunday Lunches to restart that group. Maybe the broader scope of MOTO will provide a better forum.

More suggestions are always welcome.

Colin, Group Fixer

Group news and activities

Geology group

Trip to Bute 2022

Our 'Away Weekend' this year was to the Isle of Bute in the Firth of Clyde. Fourteen of us travelled in shared cars to the Bute ferry at Wemyss Bay on Sunday 18 September - about a three-hour drive from Hexham. Having all managed to find the terminal at the appointed time, we had some lunch before driving our cars onto the ferry for the scheduled 35-minute crossing. We were able to start our Geology studies along the promenade at Rothesay.



Colin had given us a brief overview of Bute in one of our indoor sessions earlier in the year. So, we knew to expect rocks in the northern part of the island to be of Cambrian age, formed about 600 million years ago. The Highland Boundary Fault marks the join between these and much younger rocks (old red sandstone) laid down a mere 400 million years ago, when Britain was well south of the equator.

Further south are carboniferous age lavas and volcanic activity there created numerous dykes and sills. The rocks had been further shaped by erosion of up to 5km of material, glaciation and changing sea levels which had formed raised beaches and sea stacks.



Our resident Geology expert and guide, Steve, guided us around the island for two full days, looking at an impressive range of features which he had carefully located on a previous recce. His detailed notes made sure that we didn't get lost, parked our cars safely, and kept to a busy schedule. His guide to driving on the narrow roads on Bute included the following useful advice:

- * *If you see a vehicle coming towards you do not stop at the next passing place to allow the vehicle to pass, instead drive forward and meet them head on at a point where it is impossible to pass.*
- * *Never reverse. Toot your horn and gesticulate angrily at the other driver until they do so.*
- * *Never thank any driver (with a smile and friendly wave) who has stopped for you. Suckers.*
- * *Passing places are convenient points to park. The mayhem this causes is not your problem.*



We learned new words and phrases which may be useful to drop into conversations (when we can remember them!):

Tertiary (Palaeogene) igneous dykes, Vent Agglomerates, Serpentinite, Fault Breccia and Dalradian Schists as well as an unusual geological 'haystack' comprising cemented conglomerates.

We were blessed with fine weather and enjoyed each other's company and the natural beauty and sea life of the island. Our hotel looked after us well, with good food served in our own dining room and bar.

We had an enjoyable few days away and now we must think about where next.



Environment group

At our latest meeting we reviewed our experiences at the Open Day. We had tried to interact with visitors to our stand by running two simple surveys. One was to find out which of three of the problems facing us - the economy, the possibility of another pandemic, or global warming - was causing the most concern; the other was a questionnaire to assess how today's senior citizens foresee the future prospects of their grandchildren in respect of life expectancy, living standards, involvement in a war, climate control and protection of the environment.

The results showed an overwhelming majority (almost 3 to 1) were most worried by global warming. There was a clear bias towards the belief that the climate and environment would deteriorate, but in spite of that living standards and life expectancy would improve. There was a small bias towards a risk of war.

Next month we will be considering the book *Silent Spring*, written by Rachel Carson sixty years ago, and the repercussions following its publication.

Margaret Bentley



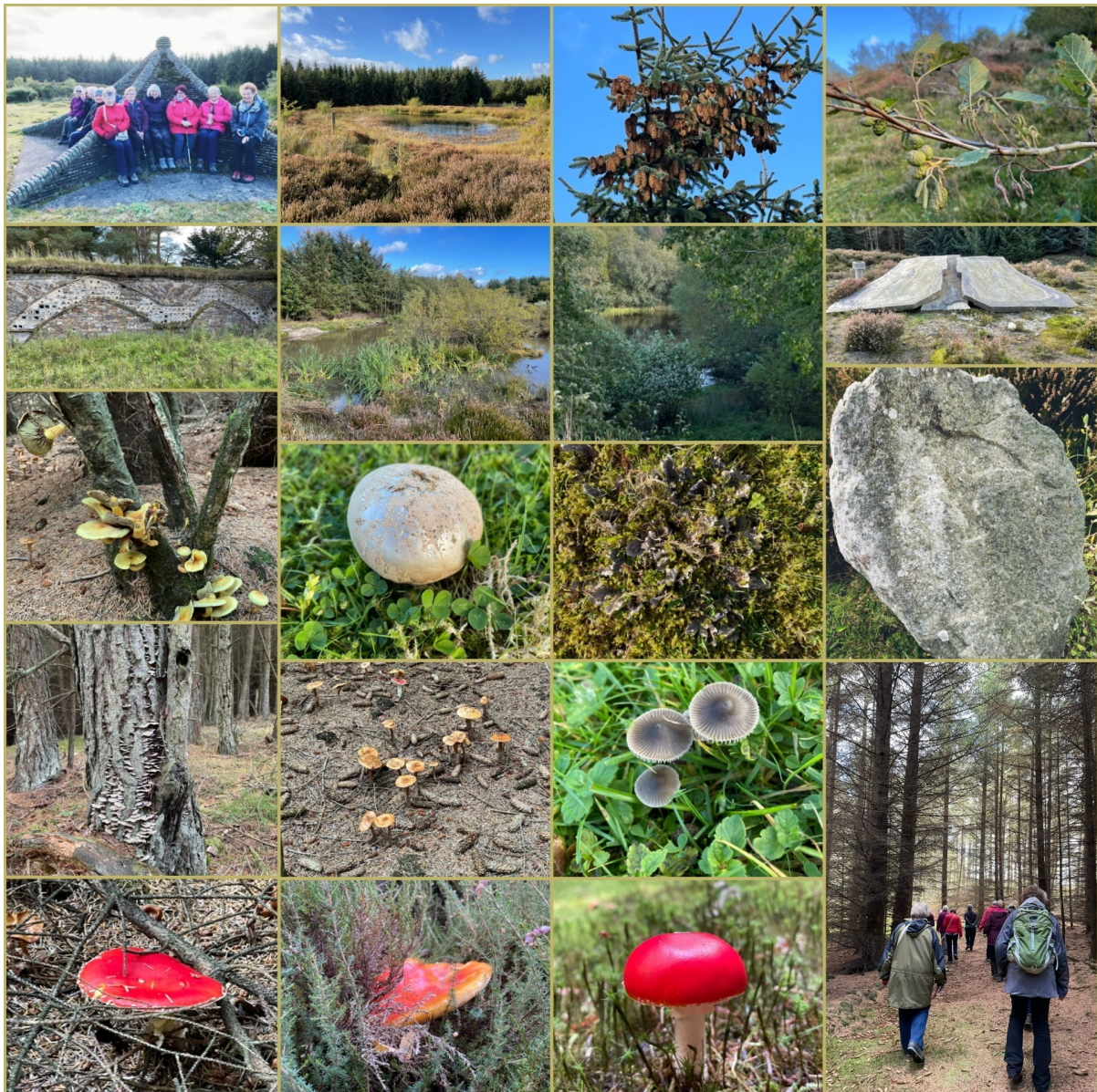
Wildlife group

A beautiful sunny day saw eleven of us at Ladycross Quarry on the edge of Slaley forest. We were met by Pat and Joan who gave us a potted history of the quarry, which has been worked for hundreds of years, with all stone being extracted by hand, without explosives. Three quarters of the site was developed into a nature reserve in 1972. Over time the pools and ponds created attracted a wide variety of wildlife: insects such as dragonflies, butterflies and moths, and many birds. There is also a large nesting wall built for sand martins that is more popular with the bats.

Our walk took us down the quarry road passing a tree new to me, a buckthorn alder. Once in among the trees we were faced with a plethora of fungi ranging in colour from creamy white to dark slimy brown, through the brilliant colours of yellow, orange and scarlet. Sizes were as big as side plates or as small as 2p coins. Many had gills but some had pores looking a bit sponge-like underneath. There was even a bracket fungus. We were all fairly confident in our recognition of a fly agaric and a puff ball. The quantity and variety was spectacular.

Out in the open we enjoyed the impressive art works of the sculpture trail: Nature's Calendar, the Raptor Viewpoint, the odd stone table and the Angel's/Butterfly' Wings. There were few plants in flower but several mosses and lichens. It was a very enjoyable afternoon and some of us are very enthusiastic about signing up for a fungal foray at Ladycross Quarry next autumn.

Lil Young



Images by Carole Soulsby

Events

Visit to SUEZ recycling plant

Four years ago we had a speaker on waste management in Northumberland and he invited members on a tour of the SUEZ recycling plant in West Sleekburn. There were two groups that went and they found it informative, giving them new insights into recycling.

The Environment Group are planning another visit as ten members have expressed an interest. A date or dates have not been fixed yet. If you would be interested in joining us on the tour, please let me know by 12 November.

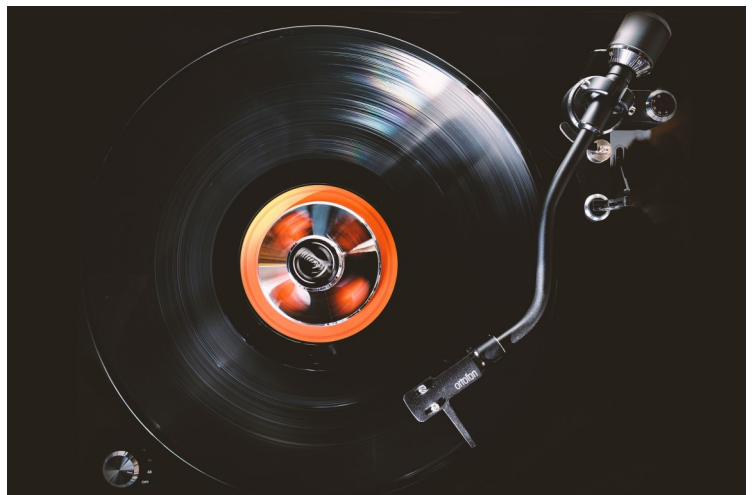
Wendy Dale

tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com

Desert Island Discs 2022-2023

The first programme in the third series of Desert Island Discs went out on 18 October, when my castaway was our Group Fixer, Colin Argent, who talked informatively and humorously about his life. The following were his eight choices of music:

1. Deep River Blues. Tommy Emmanuel with Jason Isbell
2. Three Score and Ten. The Watersons
3. An Old French Tune by George Brassens. Pomplamoose featuring John Schroeder
4. The Entertainer. Richard Smith
5. Maple Leaf Rag. Tuba Skinny
6. Lady Midnight. Leonard Cohen
7. Anonymous. Vamuvamba
8. The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face. Roberta Flack



The next Desert Island Discs will be on 15 November, when my castaway will be David Roberts.

Mike Worthington

Movement-wide learning opportunities

We wanted to let you know about the national learning opportunities that are available.

There is a new Learning Leaflet that you can download [here](#). It gives details of just a few of the latest opportunities on offer as well as [upcoming events](#): talks from celebrity guests on exploring world faiths; Tai Chi; Yoga; cooking workshops and much more.

You will also find [Interest Groups Online](#), which offers members the chance to engage in a wider range of subjects in small, interactive settings. There is also a section in which members share their [experiences of this online community](#) across geographical boundaries.

There is a range of opportunities to get involved in, with your local group or individually.

From our members

Changing perceptions on men and women

At the risk of sending some men into a swoon, I'd like to share a few perceptions on our roles gleaned from the delights of BBC Radio.

Pride and Prejudice is so established that it is the subject of many parodies. But in early October we had a refreshing insight into women as economic objects rather than sexual ones. Rachel Parris in [Austensibly Feminist](#) prompts us that such was the lot of women in days of yore that marriage was forced on a woman not just for her own financial security but that of her sisters and mother.

Across the gender divide, heroes have been reassessed. As we know, 'false truths' were around long before Donald Trump and others began polluting the Twittersphere. So, it was great to hear Natalie Hayne's new book *Stone Blind*, [serialised on BBC Sounds](#). We are introduced not to a woman monster but a monstered woman, Medusa.

The book though is more about masculinity. At one time, real men went off killing ferocious beasts to prove their masculinity, so killing Medusa would have rated Perseus pretty highly on the macho male ratings. Her head, though, was not a trophy he could put up on his wall!

The myth has given us some excellent jokes, but as a male role model Perseus was useless, a real wimp. The goddess Athena was constantly nudging him and rescuing him. Being put on a pedestal and called a hero is not good for anyone.

So, some very enjoyable listening that kept the grey cells cogitating. A couple of us are hoping to get a Discussion Group off the ground in November to explore topics like modern gender roles, deference, and other themes that are shaping our lives. For more information or to send me any good jokes, please email Mike Foster at mikef@wowu.co.uk.

Subscription renewal reminder

The clock is ticking!

While more than 300 members have renewed their membership, there remain a stubborn hundred or so who still are behind. From the end of October, we will mark you as lapsed, so you will no longer get the newsletter and other information. Attending groups or meetings without a subscription renewal is unfair to the other members who have paid their subscription. We keep your information, so simply completing the form and sending the money puts you back in the Current Member category.

The easiest way to renew is using the online form. [Click here to access it](#), or you can look on the membership page of the Tynedale u3a website.

This year the form is even easier - if you've not changed address or any of your contact details, you can simply indicate that, put in your name, tell us how you are paying and whether we can claim Gift Aid, and just press 'Submit'.

REMINDER: the annual subscription is unchanged at £14.00, but for those taking the Third Age Matters (TAM) magazine, it has gone up to £17.35, just to pay the increased postage. Again, the easiest way is to pay online; pay to **Tynedale u3a**: sort code **20-40-09**: account **60601209**: reference is **your membership number and surname**. (The 'reference' is very useful for us to process the renewal for the correct person!)

If paying by cheque, remember to make it payable to '**Tynedale u3a**'. It can be posted with any paper forms, sent separately, to the Membership Secretary at West Oakwood House, Hexham NE46 4LB, or handed in at one of the monthly meetings.

Alternatively, the renewal form can be printed off from the website (again there is a link), completed and posted. For those receiving the newsletter by post, a form was included in the August edition.

If you have a Standing Order for the subscription including TAM, **PLEASE** can you ensure that the increase to £17.35 has been done - this saves us chasing you for 25p! Thank you.

John Dark, Membership Secretary

Your committee

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Membership

We currently have 464 members, including 10 associate members.



Tynedale u3a is a registered charity (number 515733).



A very warm welcome to new members Lesley Finnegan, Marilyn Penman, Janet Parker, David Young, Paul Wharrier, Michael Jackson, Finola Contento, Ian Wells, Paul McNamara, Philippa Buswell, Jane Farrell, Timothy Chatham, Geraldine Chatham, Ann Atkinson, Michael Bewick, Monika Mansfield, Alan Stephenson, Barbara Sanderson, Rosaleen Doonan, Liz Newsome, Christine Stevens, Mary Pescod, Ed Turnbull, Joan Doreen Short, Sheila Ann Walke, Pat Caris and Peter David Allen.

Dates for your diary

Monthly meeting - 6 December 2022 at 2pm

Chris Pollock, Plant poisons

Desert Island Discs - 15 December 2022 at 2pm

Castaway: David Roberts



Next issue of the newsletter

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

We welcome contributions from groups and individual members.

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor, Alicia Cresswell, by 24 November. Email address: tyneu3aeditor@gmail.com.

Thank you