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Monthly Meeting.

Tuesday 3rd October at 2pm

in the Great Hall at Hexham Abbey

Topic: 'Coquetdale Squirrels' given by Ian Glendinning

Coquetdale Squirrel Group

We are a small local group of volunteers who are passionate about our red squirrels.

We work in Upper Coquetdale in Beautiful Northumberland helping to conserve our NATIVE RED SQUIRRELS. We are lucky to live in one of the few remaining parts of England where these enchanting creatures still exist.

The situation in Coquetdale is not great, red squirrels are still seen regularly in this part of the valley, but they are declining in number. Greys are now present and breeding throughout. Currently there are grey hotspots at Callaly, Trewhitt, Burradon and an increased population from Sharperton up to Alwinton. The Northumberland Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves at Holystone have a large Grey population which is not controlled at this time.

The two species, *Sciurus vulgaris* (red) and *Sciurus carolinensis* (grey) avoid each other. There is no interaction. The greys are heavier and eat more of the available food supply. They can have 4 litters a year, the reds have 1 occasionally 2, and the greys carry the Squirrel Pox Virus (SQPV), fatal to reds. The habitat is changing - reds are being pushed out into monoculture plantations of sitka spruce, where they scrape an existence on tiny seeds. This is insufficient for the greys who colonise the mixed woodland and push the reds out. In general once greys are established in deciduous woodland, the reds disappear. To prevent this, research by Rushton et al (2006) shows that 60% of the grey population need to be removed each year, constantly.

Tynedale u3a Membership Renewal

Membership Renewal was on September 1st.

More than 300 members have renewed – so **Thank You!**

For anyone who has yet to renew, please do it now before we come chasing you.

As the Sicilian Mafia would say, we know where you live!!

The easiest way to do this is through the membership page on the website -

<https://u3asites.org.uk/tynedale/page/56340>

There is an **online form**, which when completed and you push '**submit**' automatically comes over.

If there have been no changes to your contact details, such as address and phone number, you just simply fill in the basic information.

The basic renewal subscription is £14 per person.

If you wish to receive copies of the National U3A magazine, 'Third Age Matters', please add £3.60 (which just pays for the postage), to make it £17.60

For Bank Transfer -
Account: 60601209:

Pay to Tynedale u3a: Sort code: 20-40-09:

For renewals, the **reference is your membership number and surname**.
(The 'reference' makes it much easier for us to process your renewal.)

If sending a paper form and a cheque, please don't forget to make it out to

"Tynedale u3a"



Renew u3a Membership

-  *Let cat out*
-  *Find car keys*
-  *Take dog for walk*
-  *Look for phone in fridge*
-  *Renew u3a*

u3a Committee - Report by Wendy Dale, Chair

It was enormously satisfying to get a response to my latest request for a volunteer to take on the role of Assistant Treasurer. Ally Forster has taken it on and already been to her first committee meeting. It is so important to the future of the organisation that we keep the committee strong with a balance of new and experienced committee members.

At the AGM in March next year, I will be standing down and Barrie Mellars, our Vice Chair has indicated that he is willing to take on the role.

We will therefore have a **vacancy for a programme secretary**, and I want members to have the opportunity to consider taking on the role. Barrie would be more than happy to discuss what it might entail.

I have found that every time a role is taken by someone new, they bring new ideas and shape it to suit.

Constitution

Those of you who were present at the AGM in March this year will know we had a motion that stirred up some very strong feelings. In retrospect I feel we should have ensured that all members had the opportunity to vote by arranging for proxy votes as we had done during the covid lock down.

Reflecting on the AGM caused the committee to review the Constitution and in doing so we looked at the model constitution recommended by the Third Age Trust. We decided that while our current constitution is satisfactory it could be improved by adopting the model which appears more comprehensive by covering more areas of governance. It does address the area of proxy votes and there is a slight change to the length of time members can be on the committee. We are therefore proposing that we change our constitution at the AGM in March next year. We want to do this with the support of the membership and are therefore making it available to members well in advance of the AGM to allow those of you who have an interest or expertise in this field to look at it.

We want to hear from members who are not happy about adopting a new constitution or would want to see some amendments to the model. If we can resolve matters before the AGM, it will be helpful to all of us. The proposed new constitution can be found on our website by clicking on this link -

<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/t/tynedale/docs/tynedaleu3arevisedconstitution2024.pdf>

or a hard copy can be requested from Wendy Dale, tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com or telephone 01434 606215.

Tynedale u3a RNLI Contribution

David Hastings, Hon Sec of RNLI Durham Branch, who gave the interesting and moving talk on the RNLI at the Monthly Meeting in May has written to us to say -

'Thank you so much for inviting me to talk about the RNLI at the Tynedale u3a meeting on Tuesday 2 May 2023, for the very warm reception and the very generous donations totalling £264.72 (from your u3a and individual member contributions) which are greatly appreciated.

A lifeboat is launched once an hour throughout the year and a lifeguard assists at an incident every half an hour. Last year was one of our busiest years on record and the demand for our services is growing.

As you know, the RNLI is independent of Government and relies on voluntary funding - that was the way the institution was set up in 1824 and that is the way it will continue for the foreseeable future.

So every rescue is ONLY possible because of the generosity of the general public and groups like yours at Tynedale u3a, who so kindly support the RNLI'



A Member's Memory



Anecdote from Eric Bramfitt about a walking holiday to Bulgaria



I enjoyed the walking groups because they brought you in contact with lots of other people and conversations took place during the walks ... and got feedback of what was going on in the other groups and obviously formed friendships as well. ... the Bulgarian holiday, it was organised initially by Guy and Margret Jacot, and I'll pay tribute to Margret Jacot's redoubtable nature ... well she has many good points, but this was her to a tee.

We found ourselves in Charles de Gaulle airport, ... and we were faced with an 8 hour delay, as there had been extra security checks ... and this left us with no time to get this particular plane and it took a long time to organise this replacement. ... The delays through security were considerable ... so as a result of that we got to Sophia at midnight and we were in a mini-van with a trailer on the back and we were handed cold chicken legs and an apple and something and got to the hotel ... with sheep scuttling past the doors at night and so on.

Margret Jacot was back home, she was the ... leader of the second contingent of people that were following us the next week on. And these people were perhaps not as fit as we were. So Margret thinking this through ... contacted the airport authorities and had everyone without question categorised as aged and disabled. And one observed that when the flight came in from Newcastle there were about 10 wheelchairs lined up on the tarmac and this allowed a fast passage with security being a consideration, through the airport ... And as we were coming out of Sophia on the way back, here was the incoming contingent spot on time at lunchtime!

September Monthly Meeting Video Recording

Sincere apologies to members who wished to view the 'Tynedale Through Maps' talk by Paul Nash, but due to a technical problem the sound was not recorded. The fault has now been rectified and you will be able to enjoy future videos.



A Journey Down Misogyny Lane - contribution by Mike Foster

I've just finished a book by a favourite author Frances Brody about her 1920s private detective Kate Shackleton. Lots of insights into the social history of the time and how Kate has to suffer being called 'A good egg' by her male cousin, an undeserved term as she's not been boiled for 4 minutes or accompanied by soldiers.

Reverting to Radio 4 after finishing this book, I was able to enjoy new to me revelations about the 'challenges faced by would-be women doctors. Although the inspiring Elizabeth Garret Anderson found a loophole in Victorian laws enabling her to qualify, the male establishment immediately closed that. This led to the Edinburgh 7, a group of women who terrified the sensitive male egos by qualifying despite protests and demonstrations. Such prejudice continues alas with a surfeit of turboteestosterone surgeons and a virtual male monopoly of male cardiologists. The programme is available at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000cc7p>

Chuckle Time....

An exercise for people who are out of shape:

Begin with a five-pound potato bag in each hand.

Extend your arms straight out from your sides, hold them there for a full minute, and then relax.

After a few weeks, move up to ten-pound potato bags.

Then try 50-pound potato bags, and eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-pound potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute.

Once you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag.



For Your Diary....

**Quiz Night, Tuesday 10th October at 7:00pm at Hexham Golf Club.
Cost £12.50, includes (a substantial) supper**

A evening for everyone to have fun whether you are a quizzier or just enjoy a good night out. Come on your own, with friends, or maybe with your Tynedale u3a Group; teams will be created on the evening. Fun and laughter guaranteed.

You need to register with Margaret Earl, see bottom of page for her contact information



If you wish to take part, please be quick as the event is not far away!!

The cost is £12.50, to be paid in advance.

For **Bank Transfer** the details are -

Sort Code: 20-40-09 **Account Number:** 606012090 **Reference:** Quiz

**Great Tapestry of Scotland & Jedburgh
Monday 16th October. Cost £32.50**

We have a few places for our outing, by coach, to see the Great Tapestry of Scotland exhibition in Galashiels. This fabulous exhibition is one of the world's largest community arts projects, hand stitched by 1,000 people, women and men, from across Scotland. The tapestry tells the story of Scotland's history, heritage and culture – from the country's land formation millions of years BC right to 2013 when the last panel was complete. It is made up of 160 linen panels and 300 miles of wool – enough to stretch the entire length of Scotland. You won't be disappointed.



**Backstage at the The Glasshouse (formerly the SAGE)
Friday 7th October**

You may have enjoyed concerts and events at The Glasshouse but have you seen the organisation, rooms, work areas and a myriad of activities behind? It is impressive. Sign up for an interesting talk and guided tour of the backstage areas, followed by tea / coffee and cake.



**Blenheim Palace Flower Show
21 - 23 June 2024. Cost £289**

B & B plus dinner Single room supplement £70.
Hotel - the 4 star Courtyard Marriott at Oxford South.

Set in the surroundings of one of England's finest stately homes, a show full of beautiful plants and garden designs shown at their best to captivate and inspire you. Along with merchandise that you didn't realise you must have for you and your home and garden from the show and Blenheim Palace shop.



For information, or to register for events please contact
Margaret Earl at - tu3aevents@yahoo.com
or by telephone at 01434 689123

For Your Diary....

Suez Waste Recycling and Recovery Site - Billingham visit 29th November morning.

Many members have taken advantage of the visits to the recycling plant at West Sleekburn and will have learned that much of our domestic waste is transferred to a plant in Teesside and not sent to landfill. We have been invited to visit this site and I know a few people were interested.

I have provisionally booked a visit for the morning of the 29th November. They only want groups of 12, so if there is a lot of interest, I may need to organise more than one tour.



Can you please let me know if you would like to go on the trip and if you can make the 29th November. I will try and organise car sharing.

Email tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com or telephone 01434 606215

What Does the Future Look Like for the Oil & Gas and Energy Sector – The Energy Transition

Ian Phillips of Energy Transition Advisory Limited, Aberdeen, UK

October 31st at 2.00pm
in the Great Hall at Hexham Abbey



His presentation will consider the future of the oil and gas industry from two perspectives, and will close with an assessment of the impact of these competing forces on the oil and gas industry, the developed world, and humanity.

If you are going to attend and haven't already registered, please contact Wendy Dale, tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com or telephone 01434 606215.

Suggestions for Visits or Events

If you have any ideas for visits or events that you think would be of interest to members, we would love to hear from you.

Please email or telephone Margaret Earl, Events Secretary, at - tu3aevents@yahoo.com
or by telephone at - 01434 689123

Digital Inclusion and Older People

Age UK recently published a briefing paper entitled 'Facts and Figures' about digital inclusion and older people. It makes for interesting reading and Barrie Mellars has managed to distill it into the report below - we hope you find it both reassuring and of use.

Age UK Sept 2023 states "Digital technology is playing an increasing role in our lives and for many people, it is essential to the way in which they socialise, work, shop, manage their finances, access services and get entertainment. However, not everyone is online while others only use the internet in limited ways. Although many older people fully embrace the digital world, digital exclusion increases with age"

Many u3a members will undoubtedly fall into the latter category either through uncertainty with the technology or fear of the possible consequences of making a mistake. It may reassure you that you are not alone.

In 2022 2.7 million people in the UK over the age of 65 did not use the internet, that is around 1 in 5 of many of us. Even those who do admit to internet use (65-75yrs 86% and >75yrs 66%) have used the internet only sporadically. This has led to increasing isolation to many spheres which are increasingly mainly or even only available online.

These include:

- Email
- Online shopping (often much cheaper than the High Street)
- Banking
- Social media
- Streaming
- Gaming

EMAIL:

With the postal services becoming more and more expensive and unreliable, email has become the de facto method of personal communication in the UK. Indeed many organisations do not readily publish their postal address insisting on customers using email or the accessing the internet through a web browser. Without access to email many of our members are finding themselves more and more unable to communicate with the outside world, especially if they live alone.

ONLINE SHOPPING:

All the major and most of the minor shops now offer and indeed often prefer customers to use the internet to shop. The likes of Amazon and EBay also offer a huge range of goods at prices that the high street cannot match.

BANKING:

Banks now positively discriminate against cash/cheques by making organisations pay to bank customers money.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Internet programs called Apps such as Facebook provide a dynamic way of discovering much of what is happening locally as well as enabling forms of instant messaging.

STREAMING:

This is the term given to services used for TV, smart meters, voice-activated Smart devices such as Alexa.

GAMING:

May seem an odd one for our age group but around 1 in 5 of us use the internet for gaming several times a week. I suspect probably more for playing card games and word puzzles than the more violent games beloved of the younger generation. However, research has shown that mental exercise such as these play a real role in keeping mental abilities sharp.

Digital Inclusion and Older People continued

SO WHY ARE A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER NOT USING THESE SERVICES?

Barriers to use include:

1. Lack of digital skills – 59% of 65-74 and 79% of >75
2. Cost
3. No internet access because of - No equipment or no internet connection
4. Lack of trust or even fear of the internet
5. Health reasons

1. The first can be addressed by attending sessions that are run locally by organisations such as your local library or Age UK. The first thing to learn is that anyone of almost any ability can become proficient with the technology with help.

2. Cost is always a factor in any discussion of technology, but much of the equipment can be bought second hand in excellent condition (the techno-freaks must have the latest technology!).

3. Internet access. All the major and many minor media companies such as BT, Sky, Virgin etc offer low cost packages which will cover the vast majority of most users needs.

4. But of these the one that is most often heard is number 4.

There have been so many stories in the media about internet scams and people being conned by unscrupulous criminals that it is not surprising that it is a major barrier to internet usage. During my working life as a forensic scientist I came across many cases of internet fraud, but almost all could have been easily avoided with just a little thought. There is no doubt that the conmen are very slick and plausible and are often also very ingenious in their methods of parting you from your hard earned cash.

Here some simple ways to avoid being scammed:

IF IT SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE IT PROBABLY IS!

- * Double check the identity – if contact is by phone, if in doubt hang up and ring the organisation they purport to represent preferably by using another phone.
- * Never give out personal information
- * Do not trust clickable links on an email or website unless you are sure they are genuine (are the messages misspelled, is the English correct, have they addressed you by name and not just by your email address, is this an organisation you usually deal with, does the email contain your membership number)
- * DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES TRANSFER MONEY WITHOUT CHECKING. A recent popular scam involved bogus police officers calling or emailing asking for help in catching a fraudster by you transferring money into a 'safe' account to enable them to trace the criminals. The police will NEVER ask you to do this.

Stop – taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

Challenge – could it be fake? It's OK to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

Protect – contact someone you trust, such as a friend or family member and contact the company directly.



INTEREST GROUPS

Well, that is another Summer out of the way!

Question is – what are you going to do through the Autumn and Winter? Maybe it is time to re-activate an old interest or even invest time in a new one.

While you are thinking about that, why not consult the interest group list on the Tynedale u3a web site?

Maybe you have already done that but the groups on offer were not quite what you are looking for. Hopefully that triggered a light bulb moment along the lines of ‘why don’t we start a new group that I am interested in?’ There are so many fascinating subjects out there to go at. How about archaeology? Or maybe how civilisations arise, prosper and fail? Or, for the more active have you ever tried playing rugby on pogo sticks? The list of subjects is as broad as your imagination.

Go on, drop me an email and we will investigate whether any more of our 500 members share your fetish – excuse me, I of course meant your interest.

Colin – Group Fixer groupfixertynedale@btinternet.com

Environment Group

The group were delighted to have a presentation from Matt Bacon, a Senior Project Officer from Vattenfall a Swedish energy company who have a base in Hexham.

They are the builders of the Ray Wind Farm near Otterburn. Before working for Vattenfall he had worked for the government and provided a recent history of power generation in the UK and the increasing contribution made by the continued development of wind farms.

He reminded us of ‘the dash for gas’ and showed us how the burning of coal, which has double the carbon footprint of gas, has been almost completely phased out as the means to generate electricity in the UK, and it is now the turn of renewables and perhaps nuclear to phase out natural gas which is still the dominant fuel for power stations. The UK was able to export natural gas in the 90’s but now imports it.

Energy companies do not just generate electricity, they also contribute significantly to the local economy including restoration

of the environment such as peat bogs and the provision of local services. A recent survey has shown that 75% of people have a favourable attitude towards wind turbines.

We also learned that building a wind farm is very expensive, and negotiating the price at which electricity is sold is very complicated, too complicated for me to understand! But the result is that the break-even point when a profit can be taken may be as long as 25 years, not much shorter than the life of the turbines which may be 30-35 years.

This technology continues to advance, turbines are getting taller, battery storage is being built and the UK is one of the windiest places in Europe, so we can expect to see more wind farms in the future.

Richard



Group News



The group meets on the third Thursday of the month at Core Music in Hexham.

It's a very relaxed and convivial group of jazz enthusiasts and those who want to learn more about jazz.

The programme is decided by the members and we have explored the different kinds of jazz, instruments, artists, eras, favourite pieces and albums.

If you are interested in joining, please do contact our group convenor, Geoff Sole on geoff_sole@yahoo.co.uk or any member of the group.

History Group

Another wonderful trip event with many u3a members to Skipton.



A sunny day and a lovely market town with a castle and a very popular market.

There are many interesting buildings that denote its importance as a wealthy mill town with an excellent trading route via the Leeds Liverpool canal. These days the mills have become high end apartments and the canal a pretty leisure and tourist attraction.

We took a short Canal cruise passing wonderfully painted barges, low stone bridges and Canada geese resting on the grassy banks. All in all well worth the couple of hours journey.

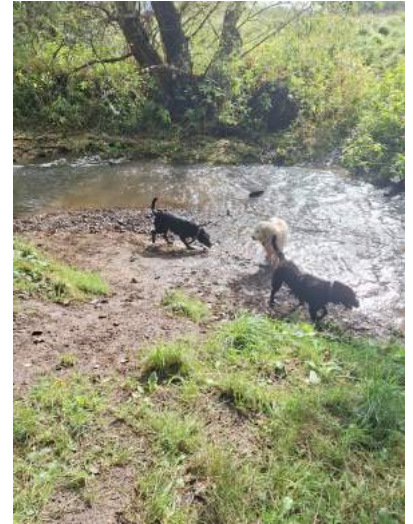


Group News

Dog Walking Group

A delightful walk along the river at Corbridge through lovely woodland. Surprisingly unmuddy given the recent torrential rain. The dogs had a wonderful time and the owners quite enjoyed themselves as well.

Topped off with a relaxing hot beverage and snacks sitting outside.



Hadrian's Wall Group

Visit to North Cumbrian Coastal Defences in the Bowness on Solway area. Although Hadrian's Wall ends at Bowness on Solway, the Northern Coastal Defences continues for a further 25 miles with turf and wooden milefortlets.

The group had the opportunity to visit the sites of Beckfoot and Kirkbride Roman Forts and the sites of milecastles 5 and 9.

Of course, such an outing would have been incomplete without a lovely lunch at the Stag Inn at Crosby



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Membership

511 Members

10 Associates

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A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Pat Maginn
Virginia Caygill
Violet Robson
Barry Robson
Bridget Robinson
Keith Hamilton
Monica Hamilton
Ernest Holden
John Rooke

Phil Getliffe
Elizabeth Foster
Kathleen Adair
Catherine Dee
John Dee
Susan Marris
Dorothy Smith
James Devereux

Next issue of the newsletter

We very much welcome written contributions and photos from groups **and** individual members.

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor,
Tim O'Brien at tyneu3anleditor@gmail.com

Thank you and look forward to hearing from you.....

DEADLINE for NEXT NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 26th

Forthcoming Monthly Meetings Topics and Speakers

7 November 2023

'Rocks' given by Ian Jackson

5 December 2023

'Observations on Being a Child' given by Colin Argent

We do hope you have enjoyed this edition of the Newsletter

Please join us on the **Tynedale u3a Facebook** page to keep up to date with information on events, interesting comments from members and engaging photos.