

DECEMBER 2023

'Self-help educational and leisure activities organised for and by older people'

1. Notes from the Chair (*John Dollimore*)

MNDA Charity coffee morning

Thank you to all members who donated prizes for the Tombola and Raffle. We took £270. Thank you to all members who made the cakes and those that ate them. We took £249.15 and the u3a's total donation to MNDA was £647.15. This was augmented by MNDA who had total sales of £428.55. Thank you to all members who supported the day by attending the coffee morning and open day in the afternoon. Once again our u3a has come up trumps.

Chairman's Christmas Message

As I write this message, 137 members will sit down on December 1st together for Christmas lunch, masterminded for the last time by Jennifer Attwell and my wife, Vivienne. Our thanks go to both ladies for the enjoyable times we have had together over the last years and their teams of helpers, because they do not do it by themselves. Our lunches, but particularly our Christmas one, is an indication of how good we are at providing entertainment for each other. Of one member helping another. Of the comradeship of being a member of our u3a

Last Thursday at our committee meeting we reviewed our year. The social programme has been very well supported. Our groups have done well, and we are particularly pleased with The Life Long Learning headed by Alan Brown. We have had a diverse spread of speakers at our open meetings and in the main they are being supported again. Our hope is that the momentum is carried into 2024.

With the careful guidance of our Treasurer, Geoffrey Briggs, our finances are in robust order and again this year, when it comes to membership renewal in April all members as of the 31st of December '23 will be given a £5 discount, so that all members will pay £10 for the 2024-25 year.

Christmas is also a time when we think of our less well members. I do not propose to make a list of names, but they know they are in our thoughts. I will, however, mention our Membership Secretary, Jo Sinclair, whose wisdom, and humour we missed at our meeting last week and I am sure everyone joins me in wishing her well.

I would like to thank all members for the support I have received since I came back centre stage again. Both Vivienne and I have put a huge amount of effort in building our u3a into what it is today. It is very rewarding to see our efforts, together with John Hooper and Gilly Spencer's give so much pleasure to so many members.

To our Group Leaders, a big thank you for your hard work. You are and always will be the life blood of our u3a. To our Groups Co-ordinator, Stuart Crowther, whose job is to try and keep everybody happy, thank you for the job you do.

Behind the scenes, Howard Brown (our Secretary), and Georgette Vale (our Speaker Secretary), run their departments efficiently and we are lucky to have both. At the next AGM, Georgette has served 9 years on our committee and has to retire, although she will continue as Speaker Secretary.

As a u3a we try to abide by the rules and regulations of the Third Age Trust and John Peat, when he joined the Committee in March as Vice Chair, volunteered to undertake a revision of our policy documents and to introduce risk assessments for us all. This work was signed off last week and is now in the process of being put on the website. This work was demanded of us by TAT. It has been a mammoth task, and he was rightly congratulated last week for his efforts.

Our Sunday morning coffee mornings have not been well supported and one reason given to us is that by being once a month members forget them easily. As from Sunday January 7th, 2024, we will hold coffee mornings weekly from 10am to 12 noon in the Tiffey room. We will trial this for 3 months and if they become well supported we will continue with them for the rest of the year. If there is no improvement, then we tried and failed and will stop them altogether. There will be a coffee morning on Thursday 28th December

Finally, Vivienne and I wish all members a Happy Christmas and New Year

2. Editors Notes (John Peat)

Welcome to this end of year edition, where we take the opportunity to review 2023 and plans for 2024 through the Chairman's Christmas Message. As usual this edition also provides all the information you need for future events, and reports on recent trips and holidays.

In recent discussions I have held with people it became obvious that some members may not be aware that our Wymondham u3a website is up and running again. You can read all about this on Page 3.

Why do I raise it here? It is because it is another method of communicating to you all and carries additional information that will not fit in a Monthly Newsletter.

If you have any group or activity news that you think may be of interest to the greater membership, then please send the information to newsletter@wymondhamu3a.org.uk and I will see if I can fit it in.

3. Membership (Jo Sinclair)

We welcome the following new members:

Elizabeth Hawkes: Kevin and Sandra Dack; Michael Pope; Judith Sterling; Duncan Crawford; Susan Long; Janice Henderson.

There are five others that are partially through the enrolment process due to my absence, and earlier technology failure.

Julie Thornton ; Vanda Swain ; Robert Paddicombe; Glenda Sharman; Sally Malcolmson.

I would like to thank everyone for their patience whilst I am ill. Would those of you who have not been able to pay please do so ASAP. I will then send out the badges as soon as I am able.

4. Groups (Stuart Crowther)

I have had numerous requests for spaces on groups recently and I will try to arrange accommodation for as many as possible but please be patient.

4.1. New Groups

a) Last month I mentioned that there may be scope for new groups covering Clarinet and Guitar (learning and Jamming). So far, no takers, but these remain as possibilities.

b) Looking into the New Year, there is the prospect of a new Book Group which will meet in Little Melton although it will be the Spring before this is able to start.

c) It has also been suggested that we consider new groups covering:

i) Canasta on a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon,

ii) Opera/Ballet visits and Classical Music Appreciation.

iii) Margaret Ward would like to resurrect Mahjong, either during coffee mornings or at the Wednesday morning Card & Board Games session in the Tiffey Room.

If any of the above potential groups are of interest to you, please let me know.

4.2. The Science Matters Group, which meets at 2.00pm on the 3rd Thursday of each month in the Tiffey Room, has the following subjects coming up in the New Year:

January - Advanced Reactors – a talk by David Frith

February – Artificial Intelligence – an open forum

March – Selfish DNA – a talk by Martin Drummond

If you would like to attend, and are not a current member of the Science Matters group, please contact Angela Briggs on email: angiebriggs@protonmail.com

4.3. As a parting shot, we have two existing groups with substantial waiting lists – Pub Walks and Gardening. We would love to set up second groups for these and are looking for volunteers to group lead them. Existing Group Leaders will be more than happy to lend support in getting these up and running.

If you wish to discuss anything related to Groups and activities then please contact me by email at:

stuartgcrowther@aol.com

2. Editors Notes (continued)

Wymondham u3a Website

It has come to my attention that some members are not aware that we now have an up to date and operational website. During 2022 there was a national u3a website crash where many u3a branches using a common u3a format website lost a lot of information. Ours was severely affected as this included a lot of historical reporting and photographic evidence of events that had taken place over many years, and key policy documentation that was stored on the website. So for a period, our website was a bit of a mess with empty pages and lost links. The lost documentation has now been either re-created or updated to meet the requirements of the Third Age Trust and the Charity Commission. In parallel with this activity our website has been cleaned up with topical information, and with links to the updated Policy Documentation and recent activities. It is the intention that our website will now be regularly updated as and when necessary, and information may well appear on the website before publication in the Monthly Newsletter.

To have a look around, and familiarise yourselves with what is going on, go to

www.u3asites.org.uk/wymondham

OR GOOGLE

Wymondham u3a and click on "Welcome to Wymondham u3a"

LIFE LONG LEARNING

NOTICE BOARD

(Alan Browne)

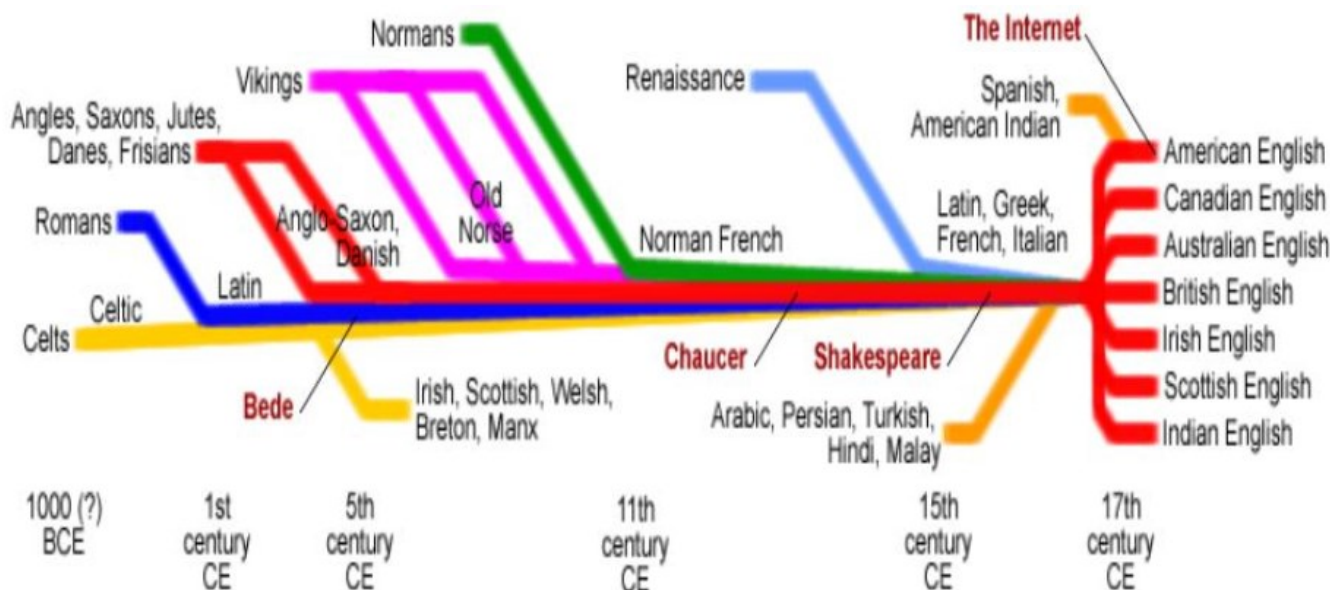


We have had a successful Autumn programme with a total of 102 members attending four courses, all of which have been well received. Coming up in January are:

Giant Molecules: The Stuff of Life: the early beginnings of polymers and the problems such natural materials posed.

Without giant molecules, or polymers, modern life would be very different and much less comfortable. Signal transmission, dialysis, catheters, tyres, carbon fibre, nylon are just some of the uses. We will explore the early beginnings of polymers and the problems such natural materials posed. The rapid growth of the science via the personalities involved will be outlined. The course comprises 6 x 2-hour sessions Mondays, 8th January to 12th February and will be held in North Wymondham Community Centre.

The Development of the English Language: a journey from the Anglo Saxons to the modern era, from the spoken word to the internet. The course comprises 4 x 2-hour sessions on Mondays, 19th February to 11th March and will be held in North Wymondham Community Centre.



To register your interest in attending these courses, please email courses@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

NOTICE BOARD: DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 7th Dec

At 2.00 p.m.



Wymondham Central Hall Monthly Talks

Sentiments of Christmas

Jim Stebbings



Acknowledging, respecting and marking the true meaning of Christmas, this is an eclectic collection of aspects of the traditional Christmas season conveyed through music, stories, humour, sentiments, images and maybe vocal participation!

Just the thing to get you into the Christmas spirit.

Free for members - £2 for non-members

For more information about Wymondham u3a
www.u3asites.org.uk/Wymondham

MONTHLY TALK (JANUARY)

The History of Spoken English

Charlie Haylock

Charlie shows how the seeds of spoken English was first sown, and how each invading force affected the English language with the different sounds they brought.



2024 HOLIDAYS

NORTHUMBERLAND March 2024

Sunday 24th March to Friday 29th

HOLLAND May 2024

Sunday 5th May to Thursday 9th

PORTSMOUTH June 2024

Monday 17th June to Thursday 20th

THE LAKE DISTRICT September 2024

Monday 16th September to Friday 20th

COFFEE MORNINGS

Thursdays

December

Thursday Dec 7th & 28th 09.00- 12.00

Thursday Dec 14th & 21st 09.00 - 11.00



January

Thursday Jan. 4th, 11th, and 18th 09.00-12.00

Thursday Jan. 25th 09.00-11.00

Sundays

December : Sunday 10th December 10.00-12.30

January: January 7th onwards **Every Sunday**
in the Tiffey Room 10.00—12.00

COACH TRIPS



REMAINING 2023 COACH TRIPS

Thursday 14th December, **Thursford Christmas Spectacular**, £61

2024 COACH TRIPS

Sunday 17 th March	Thriplow	£25
Friday 26 th April	Neatishead	£25
Monday 20 th May	Burghley House	£35
Friday 28 th June	River Deben	£35
Friday 26 th July	Audley End House	£35
Friday 30 th August	Norfolk Broads	£45
Friday 27 th September	Melford Hall	£25
Friday 25 th October	RAF Duxford	£40
Friday 29 th November	Springfields	£15

Any members wishing to go on the above trips should see John Dollimore, or the Travel Desk, on Thursday mornings

A £10 deposit secures your seat on the coach.

All balances should be paid in the month before travel.

If you cancel, refunds are at the discretion of the Committee.

NOTICE BOARD: DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SPEAKERS FOR 2024

- 4th Jan 2024 Charlie Haylock:
The History of Spoken English
- 1st Feb 2024 John Osborne:
Circled in the Radio Times:
- 7th Mar 2024 AGM
- 4th Apr 2024 Julia Burton:
The Pantanal
- 2 May 2024 Nicholas Chapman CBE:
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- 6th Jun 2024 Mike Bowen:
Did you jive in 55?
- 4th Jul 2024 Lois Willoughby-Easter:
Women in Policing the 1970s
- 1st Aug 2024 Tanya Harrington:
Self Portraiture
- 5th Sep 2024 Coop:
Tax, Care and Toyboys
- 3rd Oct 2024 Alan Bloom:
A Thinker and Doer: Jamie Blake (Bressingham)
- 7th Nov 2024 TBC
- 5th Dec 2024 Janet Dann:
Christmas Words

COFFEE MORNINGS 2024



Thursdays: Wymondham Central Hall 09.00 - ?
(Depending on Blood Donor Requirements)

Sundays:
Every Sunday for a Three Month Trial
January 7th onwards
In the Tiffey Room 10.00—12.00

SOCIAL EVENTS 2024

Spring Lunch

Friday 17th May 2024

Wymondham Central Hall

12.30 for 1pm

£15

Chairman's Garden Party

Saturday 20th July 2024

Shackles Farm, Westcarr Rd,

Attleborough NR17 1AN

11.30am, for 12noon

£20

Christmas Lunch

Friday 13th December 2024

Wymondham Central Hall

12.30 for 1pm

£15

6. Activity Reports

6.1. November Talk - Winter is Coming – Wildlife in a Seasonal World.

(Georgette Vale)

Andrew Clarke is an ecologist who has spent much of his working life in the polar regions.

The seasons are due to the fact that the earth is tilted as it rotates, but that does change over time which is why we get ice ages. Astronomer Milutin Milankovic first discovered this in the early part of the last century, but no one really believed him until long after his death. (Yes, temperature changes have always happened, but the current global warming crisis is still entirely down to human beings having messed up).

We looked at winter/summer temperature differences which are mainly a northern hemisphere thing, the differences being not so marked in the south. Less land and more sea.

We were always taught animals were either warm blooded or cold blooded – but the terms have now changed to Endotherm (heat from within) and Ectotherm (heat from outside) because obviously it isn't just the blood.

We all know that there are three main ways that animals survive winter: they migrate, or stay put and remain active or stay put and hibernate.

Incredibly it was not until the 1800's we had any notion that migration existed. People thought that swallows hid underwater all winter (I do not know where the Africans thought they went in summer). Aristotle thought that redstarts turned into robins in winter. We might laugh at him now, but species do change appearance and the truth is far more incredible. Recently a bar-tailed godwit was radio tracked and found to have flown from Alaska to Tasmania in 11 days. Suddenly Aristotle's idea isn't so silly! Migration is all about finding enough food at the right time. It is a dangerous process, so it has to be worth the risk. Clutch sizes are bigger in higher latitudes.

Those animals who chose to stay put have to have a high metabolism. The black capped chickadee can maintain a body temperature of plus 40 degrees when the outside temperature is minus 40 degrees, that is a differential of 80 degrees Celsius. Small birds in winter are unlikely to survive a cold night if they have not found enough food in the day, so fill up the bird feeders in the afternoon.

Hibernation is never as simple as it seems, Only one bird hibernates, the common poorwill (a type of nightjar). The grey tree frog does actually freeze, but cleverly it is only the lymph and blood fluids that freeze, not the cells, and scientists are very interested in studying this carefully. Scientists also discovered that the kind of supercooling antifreeze that some insects have, makes our ice cream smooth without ice crystals. Mostly hibernation is for mammals. The arctic ground squirrel hibernates for 7 months. It has recently been confirmed that there are cycles and different levels of hibernation and the animals do wake up occasionally.

We know so much and yet so little about how migration and hibernation actually work, and we have not even got on the subject of plants yet. That was a very interesting, well-presented talk.

6.2. Discovering Norwich Group

Norwich Anglican Cathedral

23rd November 2023. (Di Gibbins)

Norwich Anglican Cathedral was our venue, and we had booked two experienced guides. We split into two groups for a formal tour that also provided the unusual history and quirks of the building.

The original building, (1096) the majority of which has survived to this day was founded by Herbert De Losinga the first Bishop. It took 50 years to build and was designed for his 60 monks as a monastery. It survived many kings and queens with Catholic and Protestant religions.

The photograph shows examples of the magnificent Gothic and Romanesque architecture and stained-glass windows



One of the most delightful relics was a five panelled screen, (shown below) found in St Saviours Chapel, which had survived from the 1400, by being turned upside down and turned into a tabletop for centuries, the lack of light explaining the beautiful colours remaining today.

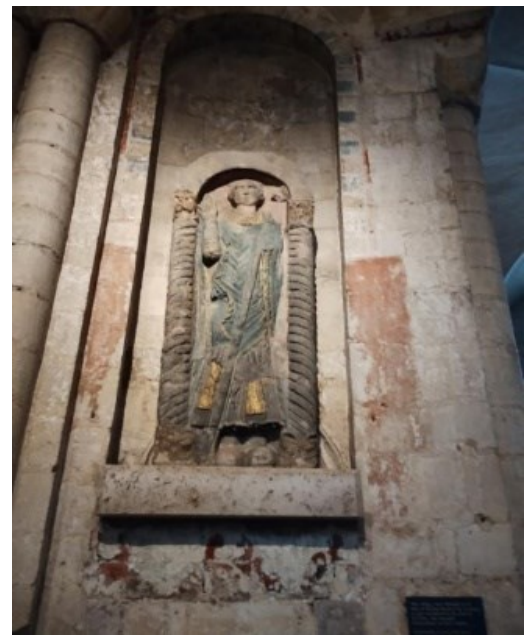


Where the Choir sits now used to be the Monks prayer seats, as they spent many hours having to stand. Under the seats are carved comfort leans. Each seat is under an intricately carved wooden canopy, most of which are nodules of acorns or flower buds, but two are different. One has cat's faces and the other has human faces.



We were told about and shown history that without an experienced tour guide we may well have missed. Examples being:

- a) The columns at the main entrance that do not match in height, and there are two arches, the original and another added at a later date, leaving an unfilled gap between.
- b) historical medieval graffiti, a ship, animals, people, initials,
- c) The visit of Queen Elizabeth 1st in 1578
- d) the design similarities with Peterborough Cathedral, and Wymondham Abbey which used the same building stone,
- e) ceiling bosses on the joints, and most being of the same Bishop
- f) examples of the use of a Rebus to convey messages as most people could not read or write.
- g) An ancient Stone Carved effigy of St Felix, one of the first Christian missionaries to East Anglia during the 11th Century.



These were just some of the facts told and shown to us by our tour guides. It was very interesting and Informative tour, but we need to recognise that we only saw a small part of the history of this magnificent building.

6.3. SCOTLAND HOLIDAY

Day One: Wednesday November 8th travelling

The coach departed Wymondham in the dark at 06.58 and at 08.20 we actually started heading north towards Ferrybridge Services for a driver change and a break. Departure was at 11.15 continuing up the A1 and at 12.15 we started across the roof of the country across the A66, reaching the M6 at 13.15 and heading north to our second stop at Moffat Woolen Mill, just off the A74(M) at 14.15 for a 45-minute break. The final leg was straight to Kingussie, (pronounced King- oosie), arriving at 18.15 for our four-night stay at the Duke of Gordon Hotel.



Day Two: Thursday November 9th: Ben Nevis and a local distillery.

Departure was at 09.00 and travelled across on the A86 arriving at the Ben Nevis centre at 10.30.

This route passed Loch Laggan where Monarch of the Glen was filmed, with Ardverikie House acting the part of Glenbogle House. The Loch was also used for the car chase in No Time to Die.

The RAF also used for the training runs held before 617 Squadron's successful night-time raid on hydroelectric dams in Germany's Ruhr Valley industrial heartland on the night of May 16, 1943.

The Ben Nevis centre opened in December 1989. Ben Nevis is 1345 meters high, and The Gondola system transports visitors from 100m to 650m up the mountain and takes approximately 15 minutes each way. There is a 1.6 KM walk to a viewpoint that offers fantastic views of the towering buttresses of the North face of Ben Nevis, well worth a short 30min walk. A new hydroelectric scheme has now powered the Nevis Range base station and Gondola since December 2016.

At 14.30 the party left for the Ben Nevis Distillery. Ben Nevis Distillery has been crafting Scottish whisky at the foot of Britain's highest mountain using the pure water since 1825. The group were given a guided tour, followed by some whisky tasting. The group left at 16.00 arriving back at the hotel around 17.30.

Day Three: Friday November 10th: Rail Trip to Kyle of Lochalsh

The coach left the hotel at 09.02 and within the eleven miles to Aviemore had passed through sunshine, rain, sleet, and snow, and it was raining when we arrived in Inverness to catch our 10.56 train to Kyle. The Kyle Line is one of the world's most scenic railway journeys. Running fifty-seven miles (92 km) coast to coast from Inverness, it passes magnificent lochs, mountains, moorland, and shore before reaching the harbour village of Kyle of Lochalsh. It was from here that the ferry ran across to Skye before the Sky Bridge across Loch Alsh was opened in 1995. This was the best day for seeing animals and bird life in the wild with sightings of Deer, Highland cattle, Herons, and Egrets. We did cross the Skye bridge but quickly turned back as the weather was not favorable for the potential viewpoints. We departed the isle of Skye around 14.00 and headed along the A87 to Fort Augustus through Glen Shiel, one of Scotland's most spectacular mountain passes.



A murky and wet view of the Skye Bridge



Fort Augustus is situated on the most southern tip of Loch Ness on the impressive 60 mile long Caledonian Canal, half-way between Inverness and Fort William. It was constructed in the early nineteenth century by Scottish engineer Thomas Telford and connects the Scottish east coast to Inverness with the west coast at Corpach near Fort William.

There are five locks at Fort Augustus to raise and lower the boats from Loch Ness to the Caledonian Canal.

Day Four: Saturday November 11th: Aviemore and the Rothiemurchus Estate

This was a relaxing later start to travel the eleven miles up to Aviemore for a look around the famous “resort”. It is a town in the Spey Valley of Highland Scotland and is the main base for skiing and other outdoor activities in Cairngorms National Park. It's the largest of a straggle of villages including Rothiemurchus and Coylumbridge. During our time in Aviemore we explored the main street, shops and facilities, making sure that we had sourced food and drink as there would be no time when we visited the Rothiemurchus Estate at 13.00.

On the edge of Aviemore is the Rothiemurchus Highland Estate stretching from the River Spey to the high mountain plateau, within the Cairngorms National Park. It has been under the stewardship of the Grant family since the 16th Century and has a wealth of history before this. This visit to the estate was a first for Wymondham u3a so we did not really know what to expect. We were met by a tour guide who boarded the coach and we set off. Our two-hour tour took us along narrow roads through the estate initially to the highest point for a look around and a talk by the guide. We then moved on to the deer park where the deer quickly realised food and attention was available from this big blue coach.

Lastly we travelled back down the slopes to see a herd of Highland Cattle who rushed down from their pastures to pose for us. The tour finished around 13.30 and we headed back to our hotel for our final evening meal and to prepare for the journey home,



One of two stags in the herd of Red Deer



Typical pose of the Highland Cattle on the estate.



Thought
Bubble

CHRISTMAS CAPTION COMPETITION
I wonder what the ‘local inhabitants’ really think
of the visitors.

Please send your captions to the editor at
newsletter@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

No prizes, just the glory, for the winning entry

Day Five: Sunday November 12th: Travel Home.

The coach left the hotel on time at 08.30 in a “Scotch Mist” covering as we headed down the A9 towards Perth and Sterling in daylight, seeing the sites that we missed on the outward trip when it was dark. Our first stop was Moffat Woolen Mill at 11.30, leaving again at 12.20, and crossing the border back into England at 12.55. We stopped for another break and driver change at Ferrybridge Services, and left there at 16.04 in the dark, in the rain, straight into a traffic jam. Most of the journey home from Kingussie was either a bit misty, overcast, or raining, but we made good time and finally arrived back at WCH around 19.30.