

Drumbeat



Durham and District u3a

Issue 7, October 2024



The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness is with us yet again. And pretty nice it is, too, so let's savour the moment.

This month we welcome **Jean Davidson**, **Kersty Evans** and **Malcom Williams** to our u3a. We wish you all well in your membership of D&D.

Several people have expressed an interest in being u3a secretary to our chair Mike Forrest, so hopefully this critical role can be filled soon.

In this issue you'll find, among other things, news from a number of groups, a poetic plea from the heart, the promise of chocolate heaven, and a delicious short story from Annie Hitchman. Oh – and in case you're ready for a little challenge, a bumper autumn quiz.

Laura Woods, editor

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Chocolatrice: Open meeting 31 Oct	p.2
New group: Historical Novels	p.2
Poetry please!	p.3
Taking it stage by stage	p.3
Raising a glass: The Wine Group	p.4
Note of open meeting, 26 Sept	p.4
Walking Group	p.4
Prison Break: short story	p.5
Regional u3a news	p.5
National u3a news	p.6
A quiz for autumn	p.6
Word wall	p.7
Solutions	p.7
October/November calendar	p.8

NOTICE

WANTED! Help with newsletter editing and promotion, particularly cover for holidays, etc. If you're interested, please get in touch:
lauramw100@gmail.com.

Chocolatrice Open meeting, 31 October

Join us at Bowburn for an inspiring talk by local chocolatier Zoë Rutter. Zoë will share her journey from training in France to founding her handmade chocolate business, La Chocolatrice, in November 2019, taking us behind the scenes of her



world of handmade chocolate bars, bonbons and more, and offering an intriguing glimpse into the art and passion of a chocolatier.

During the talk, Zoë will recount her experiences, from learning her craft in France to launching a business right here in the UK. And afterwards, there'll be the chance to buy some of her delicious creations – the perfect opportunity to treat yourself or pick up some unique gifts.



Zoë in action

Don't miss a fascinating story and the sampling of some chocolatey delights!

New Group: Historical Novels

There are still some spaces available in the Historical Novels reading



group, starting on **10th January**. I'll be inviting people for coffee to discuss arrangements before then. For those just wondering what sort of books we might read, it's up to you. Everything from Georgian romps to the weighty Hilary Mantel. You choose!

If interested, please email me at tina.naples@aol.com

Tina Naples

Poetry please!

From: Poetry Appreciation Group

To: Durham and District u3a

Have mercy, o Committee, on these humble poets who meet to share and read the Good, the Bad and the Famous in their Temple the Gala Coffee Shop, at a moderate price. Replete with teas and coffees, Dennis is our Listener to keep us right.

Carl is a poet of some standing, favouring the Bard in his choices; Linda is bubbly and fizzes with her choices; Tarnia if not on a journey somewhere else maintains her contact; Steven, an orator of Neruda, leaves us all agape. David, a Reverend, has the ultimate accolade of published poems by a proper publisher.



Where two or three are gathered there is Ivy also, who doesn't like to miss things, and is the convenor.

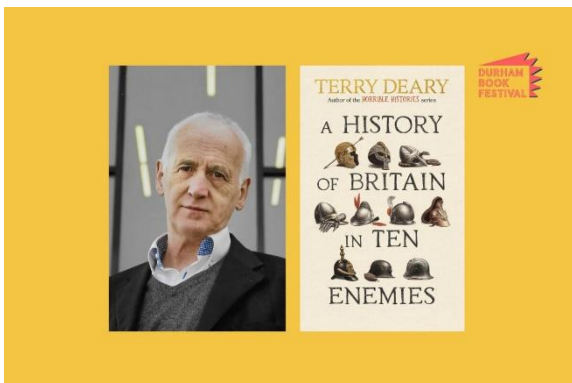
O Committee, send us more poetry lovers to the Poetry Appreciation Group – every second Monday of the month at 2pm, Gala Coffee Shop!

Ivy Hudson

Taking it stage by stage: Theatre Group

The Theatre group has been very busy recently, with four performances in October and six in November, at seven different venues.

This includes two recent Saturday nights in Durham, where all the action is not on the stage! On 12 October we visited the Gala as part of the book festival. We heard an interview with Terry Deary, who wrote the Horrible Histories books. He talked about life, the world and his new book "The History of Britain in Ten Enemies"



The Elysium players, a locally based but national touring group, performed Shakespeare's Othello at the Assembly rooms. It isn't a play I knew before and some of us

were surprised by the length, it was last bus home time. As always at the Assembly Rooms we pushed the audience's



average age up considerably. We were a very attentive audience to a powerful performance.

Elysium Players' Othello

The play was very relevant, with unrest in the eastern Mediterranean and issues of rumour and innuendo. Iago is an early purveyor of fake news and manipulation leading others to question their understanding, and inciting them to violence. This leads to the play's inevitable tragic ending.

Sue Vanden Bon

Raising a glass: The Wine Group

The Wine Group meets once a month on a Wednesday evening at Lynn Jordison house at Carrville.



In August we had a celebration of Portuguese wines, and at the same time an informal birthday celebration for one of our members.



The meeting in October was in the form of a 'Call my Bluff', where one of the members, Alan, gave us two possible names and descriptions of the wines we were blind tasting, and asked us to use our wine knowledge to decide which one was correct. An enjoyable evening with some differences of opinion, proving we still have much to learn!

November has become something of a tradition – a fish and chips evening paired with wines brought by the members.

Cynthia Bolton

Note of Open Meeting, 26 Sept From Barrow to Baghdad

Ever regretted a missed opportunity, and wondered where it might have taken you in life? For Philip Caine, the guest speaker at September's open meeting, it has clearly never been an issue, because he grabbed his chances with both hands. And what a picaresque adventure he made of them.

Starting as a 16-year-old apprentice in a Barrow kitchen, Philip went from the hotel business to the oil rigs to facilities

management in far-flung corners of the earth – notably Kazakhstan, where he soon found that a good relationship with the KGB made all the difference to business. After he set up on his own, 2008 saw him losing everything in the financial crash. He was soon up on his feet again, this time setting up military bases in Baghdad, where he spent 7 years before retiring back to Barrow. But surprise, surprise, it turned out that golf and gardening weren't for him, and he decided to try his hand at writing novels based on his experiences. Now, having just published



his ninth book, he is a regular public speaker, and has a 4-part TV series coming out next year.

What a whirlwind career! Philip had his audience hooked from the minute he started his fascinating story.

Walking Group

This is a scene from a recent sunny day's walk led by Sue Vanden Bon around Lanchester.



Prison Break: A short story

Martha knew she was a slave to herself. Philip knew it too. Martha passionately believed that if you could not do something perfectly, it wasn't worth doing at all.

One early autumn Sunday the pair were ensconced in their conservatory with a mid-morning cup of camomile and guava tea – a unique blend devised by Martha to complement her homemade Belgian chocolate biscuits, which resembled folds of delicate French lace.

While Martha studied her immaculately tended garden, Phillip perused the Sunday Times. "I was just thinking," ventured Phillip, "we could have an additional night in London on our way back from the Vienna book fair in a couple of weeks. You could make a start on your Christmas shopping," deliberately not looking up, as he spoke.

"Sounds a splendid idea," Martha replied, gazing critically at the purple blossom cascading from the faux marble fountain. "I really must discipline the lobelia to trail itself along the fountain contours."

Martha's elaborate preparations for the festive season were legendary. She meticulously researched the appropriate gift for their countless nieces and nephews. She would then spend several days tying each little gift with shimmery curlicues of tinsel ribbon.

Philip smiled quietly to himself as he turned the page of his newspaper and contemplated the sheer pleasure of what

was to come. He would have a lie-in, stating that he didn't want to upset Martha's self-tortuous plans for her day in Knightsbridge.

Then, after gorging on sausage, bacon, black pudding and chips, he would climb aboard a red double decker for the ride to Tottenham Hotspur's home-ground.

Ahead of him would lie a joyous afternoon of freedom, shouting and chanting with the crowd – perhaps even indulging in the odd swear word – while cheering his team to victory over West Ham.

Annie Hitchman, Creative Writing Group'

Regional u3a news

You might be interested in these two events for all members hosted by Northumbria Region u3a (click on links for more details and to book a place):

7th November 2024

[Threads Through Creation](#) at Hexham Abbey, 11.00 am – 3.00 pm

27th November 2024

[Keeping it Legal](#) workshop (delivered by national u3a), 10:00 am – 12:30 pm on [Zoom](#)



Tapestries at Hexham Abbey

Northumbria region is looking for more committee members, especially since the chair, business secretary and membership secretary will be standing down in 2025, so if you're interested, take a look at the website.

And here's the October [Messenger](#), which features an account by Mike Forrest of the Dunelm/Durham merger, and includes James Gilman's Astronauts' Hymn (see Drumbeat issue 4).

National u3a news

The 2024 AGM held on 16 October saw the installation of a new CEO, Iain Cassidy, and a new Chair, Alan Walmesley.

Members voted to change the articles of association of the Third Age Trust, which will result in a smaller Board of Trustees and a new Council with regional representatives, in place by April 2025.

The u3a have published a report, [Learn to Live](#), which outlines the benefits of non-formal learning in later life.

Finally, don't forget u3a [online learning events](#) which range in November from Summing up the Nineteenth Century (7 Nov) and The Drifting Continents (15 Nov) to A Deep Dive into the 1921 Census (18 Nov) and Bollywood Yoga Laughter Dance (25 Nov). Take a look!



Continental drift: a geology lesson, 15 November

A Quiz for Autumn

Questions and answers all relate to the time of year. Solutions on p. 7.

1 Historical events

1. What was Guy Fawkes's real name?
2. This canine became astronomically famous on 3 November 1957.
3. What 2-minute speech on 19 Nov 1863 is seen as one of the finest examples of public oratory?
4. What grim interloper is thought to have arrived on British shores in autumn 1349?
5. A groundbreaking scientific work published on 24 November 1859.

2 Music

6. What jazz standard, recorded by artistes from Nat King Cole to Eva Cassidy, started life as an elegiac song by French poet Jacques Prevert?
7. Melodic song by The Kinks featuring a crawly caterpillar and celebrating English customs and characters.
8. "Autumn (The wind sighs in the trees)" is the first movement in North Country Sketches, this composer's homage to the moors of his childhood.
9. "A fantabulous night to make romance/Neath the cover of October skies". Which song features these lines?
10. Where did Autumn seem so inviting to Ella Fitzgerald?

3 Sport

11. What accusation rocked the conker world at this year's world championships in Northants?
12. What prestigious equestrian event takes place in the Antipodes on the first Tuesday of November?
13. Who won his seventh F1 title on 15 November 2020?
14. Who were the protagonists of the Thrilla in Manila in October 1975?
15. What much-loved footballing legend died on 23 October 2023?

4 Literature/Films

16. "No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds.....November!" Says who?
17. Which novel, the first in a seasonal quartet, opens in November 2016 just after the Brexit referendum?
18. Who directed the film Autumn Sonata, exploring a fractured mother-daughter relationship?
19. This novel is set in a New England campus in autumn and tells the story of a bunch of misfit undergraduates.
20. 1986 film noir set against the gloomy background of a London autumn and featuring Bob Hoskins as a low-life gangster.

5 Anagram corner

21. *Memo verb* –time to avoid close shaves
22. *Normal dance* –it lights up the sky, pyrotechnically
23. *Capri coupon* – superabundance of harvest?

24. *Fell even, alas!*– the tidy gardener's headache
25. *Dreamy burns menace* – annual commemoration.

Word Wall

Find the connections between 4 groups of 4 words in this wall.

WASH	PUDDING	CHEESE	ELEPHANT
DOG	MURDER	BEAN	GOODS
MOON	GODDESS	KNIGHT	BELT
NOISE	MANURE	LEG	WHALE

Answers (upside down – no peeking)

QUIZ

History: 1) Guy Fawkes; 2) Laika, the Sputnik traveller 3) Gettysburg Address; 4) Black Death; 5) "On the origin of species"

Music: 6) Autumn Leaves (Les Feuilles Mortes) ; 7) Autumn Almanac ; 8) Frederick Delius ; 9) Moondance (Van Morrison); 10) New York

Sport: 11) David Jakins (now exonerated) was accused of using a steel conker; 12) Melbourne Cup; 13) Sir Lewis Hamilton; 14) Muhammad Ali & Joe Frazier; 15) Sir Bobby Charlton

Literature: 16) Thomas Hood, in his poem "No!"; 17) "Autumn" by Ali Smith; 18) Ingrid Bergman; 19) "Secret History" by Donna Tartt; 20) "Mona Lisa. Anagram corner: 21) November; 22) Roman Candle; 23) Cornucopia; 24) Fallen leaves; 25) Remembrance Sunday.

WORD WALL

Clue: Think in colour!

October/November Calendar

Date	Time	Place	Group	Contact
OCTOBER				
Sat 26th	2.00pm	Sacrison Methodist Church	Music Appreciation <i>Tina's Eclectic Selection</i>	Group Leader
Mon 28th	10.00am	Sacrison Methodist Church	History Too <i>Oliver Cromwell</i>	Group Leader
Mon 28th	12.00pm	Waddington St URC Church	Environmental Group	Charles Jolly
Tues 29th	2.00pm	Gala Café	Spanish Conversation	Group Leader
Wed 30th	2.00pm	Gala Café	Français Amical	Mike Gibb
Thurs 31st	10.15am	Gala Theatre	Reading Shakespeare	Group Leader
Thurs 31st	1.15 for 2.00pm	Bowburn Community Centre	Open Meeting <i>Chocolatrice (Zoë Rutter)</i>	Rob Page
NOVEMBER				
Friday 1st	10.30am	Bowburn Community Centre	Singing for Fun	Mike Forrest
Mon 4th	10.00am	Member's home	Book Group: <i>Alone in Berlin (Hans Fallada)</i>	Lynn Bilsborough
Mon 4th	1.30pm	Carrville Methodist Hall	Quiz at Carrville	Jennifer Banks
Tues 5th	10.00am	Broomside Park Beefeater	Topical Discussion	Janis Goodson
Tues 5th	2.00pm	Gala Café	Spanish Conversation	Group Leader
Tues 5th	2.00pm	Sacrison Methodist Church	History at Sacrison	Group Leader
Wed 6th	1.30pm	Member's home	Craft	Marion Lotts
Wed 6th	2.00pm	Gala Café	Français Amical	Mike Gibb
Thurs 7th	9.45am	Member's home	French	Elizabeth Morgan
Thurs 7th	1.00pm	St John's Church Hall, Meadowfield	History at Meadowfield <i>Visit to Chester-le-Street</i>	Audrey Adams
Thurs 7th	2.00pm	Sacrison Methodist Church	Circle Dancing	Circle Dancing
Fri 8th	10.00am		Walking: <i>Trimdon Parish (Laura Woods)</i>	Richard Dennis
Mon 11th	10.30am	Bowburn Hall Hotel	Coffee Morning	Marion Lotts
Mon 11th	2.00pm	Gala Theatre	Poetry Appreciation <i>Home</i>	Ivy Hudson
Tues 12th	2.00pm	Gala Café	Spanish Conversation	Group Leader

Wed 13th	10.00am	Member's home	Creative Writing <i>Villanelles</i>	Irene Wilkinson
Wed 13th	2.00pm	Gala Café	Français Amical	Mike Gibb
Thurs 14th	9.45am	Member's home	French	Elizabeth Morgan
Thurs 14th	10.00am	Waddington St URC Church	Poetry Reading <i>Shelley</i>	Pauline Butler
Thurs 14th	10.15am	Gala Theatre	Reading Shakespeare	Group Leader
Fri 15th	10.30am	Bowburn Community Centre	Singing for Fun	Mike Forrest
Mon 18th	10.00am	Lanchester Community Centre	Monday Crime Club <i>The Man on the Street</i> <i>(Trevor Wood)</i>	Group Leader
Mon 18th	1.30pm	Bowburn Community Centre	Photography <i>Steve Schapiro</i>	Deborah Blindt
Mon 18th	2.00pm	Sacriston Methodist Church	Quiz at Sacriston	Group Leader
Tues 19th	10.30am	Gala Theatre	Theatre Group <i>Discussion and planning</i>	Nancy Gemski
Tues 19th	12.00pm	Durham Bus Station	Bus Pass Safari <i>Metrocentre</i>	Group Leader
Tues 19th	2.00pm	Gala Café	Spanish Conversation	Group Leader
Wed 20th	2.00pm	Gala Café	Français Amical	Mike Gibb
Wed 20th	2.00pm	Member's home	Scrabble	Group Leader
Wed 20th	7.00pm	Lynn Jordison House	Wine Tasting <i>Sparkling wines with fish & chips (tbc!)</i>	Cynthia Bolton
Thurs 21st	9.45am	Member's home	French	Elizabeth Morgan
Thurs 21st	1.00pm	St John's Church Hall, Meadowfield	History (Meadowfield): <i>Stockton & Darlington</i> <i>Rlwy (Prof Alan Townsend)</i>	Audrey Adams
Fri 22nd	10.00am		Walking <i>Sherburn to Pittington</i>	Richard Dennis
Mon 25th	10.00am	Sacriston Methodist Church	History Too <i>Battle of Dunbar</i>	Group Leader
Mon 25th	12.00pm	Waddington St URC Church	Environmental Group	Charles Jolly
Tues 26th	10.00am	Belmont Community Centre	Art Appreciation <i>Central and South</i> <i>American artists</i>	Carol Tritton
Tues 26th	2.00pm	Gala Café	Spanish Conversation	Group Leader
Wed 27th	2.00pm	Gala Café	Français Amical	Mike Gibb

Thurs 28th	10.15am	Gala Theatre	Reading Shakespeare	Group Leader
Thurs 28th	1.15 for 2.00pm	Bowburn Community Centre	Open Meeting <i>The King's Shilling (Old English)</i>	Group Leader
Sat 30th	2.00pm	Sacrison Methodist Church	Music Appreciation <i>Group selection: Nature</i>	Group Leader

Other groups/activities include:

Cinema – normally Mondays, but depends on film being shown

Paul Newby

Lunch Group – meets once per month for meals at local venues

Rita McGarr

Pub Lunch Group – meets every 3rd Tuesday at local pubs

Sylvia Buxton

Bus Pass Safari – bus trips in the region

Tina Naples

(NOTE: November's trip will be the last bus pass safari)

The following groups are currently full:

- Topical discussion
- Monday Crime Club
- Français Amical
- French
- Spanish
- Reading Shakespeare

But that needn't hold you back, if you're interested in any of the above, or any topic not covered by this calendar – it's perfectly possible to start another group! Contact Paul Newby or Marion Lotts, group coordinators, if you think you'd like to set one up.

Contributions to Drumbeat are actively invited! Send your items, ideally by mid-month, to Laura Woods, newsletter editor, at lauramw100@gmail.com

