

# Drumbeat



Durham & District u3a

Issue 15, June/July 2025



Welcome to Drumbeat, and to official summer – though we’ve been enjoying it for some time now. This scene looking south west from the Cock of the North captures its essence (thanks to Linda Lane for the pic).

There’s plenty to go at in this month’s newsletter, with group news, details of a new book, science snippets, two poems and a tongue-in-cheek short story. Enjoy the read.

And a warm welcome to this month’s new members: **John Nicholson, Philip Powell and Linda and Michael Lane.**

*Laura Woods, Editor*

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## NOTICE

**There’s no photography group meeting in July.**

**Next meeting is on 18 August, 1.30pm.**

## Tax, care and toyboys

### Open Meeting, 26 June

This is the intriguing title of a talk from Rachel Ellison of Co-op Legal Services at our June monthly meeting in Bowburn.

Rachel will be offering expert advice on



planning for the future and safeguarding your assets. She'll be covering issues such as not only making a will, but

making sure to update it if circumstances change. Mistakes with wills – or the absence of them – can lead to legal pitfalls with serious consequences.

Have you heard of sideways disinheritance, for example? This is a scenario where children find themselves disinherited because their mother or father failed to write or amend their will after remarrying. It happens more often than you might think.

Check it out on Thursday, 26 June.



## Group News

### Inter u3a quiz, Hurworth

A couple of teams from our u3a went down to Hurworth

Community Centre on 18 June to take part in South Northumbria Regional Inter u3a quiz. Teams



were there from Bishop Auckland, Sedgefield, Bedale, Teesdale, Darlington and Hartlepool. Our knowledge was tested on history, sport and entertainment, numerical music, pictures of famous authors, and of course the famous Wipe Out Round, *Who Dares Wins*.

One of our teams had the highest score at 61, along with 2 other teams. A nail-biting tie breaker took place, and Carrville took the glory.



*The Carrville victors*

We have gone to Hurworth for a number of years. We enjoy competing, we had fun along the way, but it was nice to win.

*Jennifer Banks*

*(On a related note, don't forget the Grand Summer Quiz – see p.8.)*

## Amblers



The Amblers are pictured below a Danger sign. Little did we know that Mike Forrest was about to get bitten by some nefarious insect. The next day he had hand as big as a ham!

Otherwise all went well and we enjoyed a bite in the Low Barnes cafe. Looking forward to the next one. Do keep an eye on the calendar. Failing that you can email me on [tina.naples@aol.com](mailto:tina.naples@aol.com) for details.

*Tina Naples*

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## Stepping Lively

A new view of the Browney Steppy Stones,



*Lane)*

courtesy of the walking group, who crossed the river on their way up from Holliday Park to Durham recently. More challenging than you may think !  
(Photo: Linda

## An Artist's View

*John Campbell explains the background to his new book, published last month.*

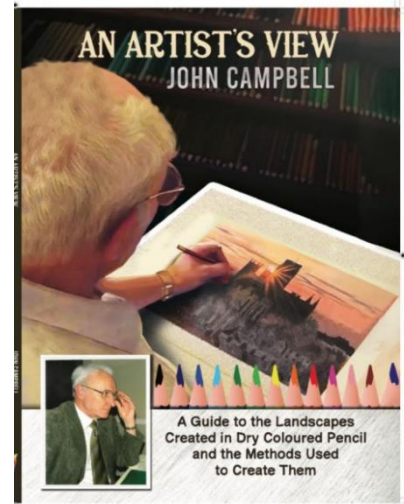
Why write the book?

More important to ask first is "Why draw the pictures contained in the book?"

The simple answer is purely for selfish reasons, a pastime, a means of relaxation, a challenge to test if I had the skill to do it. A drive to record the beauty of a city I loved to visit at all seasons.

Once seen people were impressed and wanted copies and in some cases the originals. An aware friend then impressed on me that the images should be brought together in a book as a way of keeping the work together.

What has only now become apparent, and something I was completely unaware of at the time, was that the



beauty and importance of what I was recording, namely the central spectacle of the 'World Heritage Site', was steadily being hidden away by rebuilding developments. Although it dominates a hilltop, this site is in fact in a hollow formed by the bend of the River Wear.

Even more strange is the fact that only two of the pictures in the book were not reproduced as prints other than as occasional Christmas cards.

I now see on further examination why I felt the emotional need to capture my admiration of this historical site, contained in 'The Vision of Camelot' (*facing*) which has its own poem to accompany the image.

The scene being imagined by the children is steadily being hidden from view.

The children's fantasy imagination has in fact a historical basis. Thinking beyond the definition of the world heritage site, Durham was the centre of the administration of the palatine, the area under the control of the bishop, an individual trusted by the King to administer and control the defences of the Northern Borderlands. This gave him huge powers to mint his own money, have his own army, and administer justice.

The book is now published and available for sale at £21.99 softback. If members want to see me at the next meeting (26 June), they can purchase a copy for £19.99.

(Also available as an ebook for £3.50.)

See the trailer at  
[https://youtu.be/Z2\\_ecyXn47w](https://youtu.be/Z2_ecyXn47w)

*John Campbell*

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## A Vision of Camelot



Children clamber before the view  
the scene transformed, the way young minds do.  
The view which they behold  
influenced by sights seen and stories told.  
The Citadel, centre of Palatine  
rises skywards and seems to shine.  
Of knights and battles tales abound  
in the true tradition of the table round.  
Out to the Cross of Neville ride  
the fate of the Scots invaders to decide.  
Is that Londonderry there?  
or just a memory from the Market Square.  
He cannot belong with the ancient knight!  
Perhaps it's just a trick of the mist and light!  
thrilled and inspired to see this spot  
in the mind's eye, A Vision of Camelot.

*John Campbell*

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## Perfect Harmony

### Hartlepool Male Voice Choir, 29 May

Bowburn's main hall resounded with three-part harmonies at the open meeting on 29 May. The sounds were those of Hartlepool Male Voice Choir, making a welcome return to Durham and delighting their u3a audience with a selection of well-known and well-loved melodies.

Beginning with a seamless medley of songs from the deep South, the songsters moved on to pop standards such as *You've lost that lovin' feelin'*, favourites from the musicals *Les Mis* and *South Pacific*, and a touching *Song for the unsung hero*, before a rousing finale of *Nessun dorma*. Always guaranteed to bring tears to the eyes (or is that just me?), this was a beautiful rendition.

It was a far from sombre affair, though. The whole performance was laced with humour, as compère Simon told jokes in between songs, to give "the lads" a bit of a rest; while director David Gibson joshed with him, the singers and the audience. Clearly the choir was having great fun – as were we.

And as a bonus, we were able to collect free CDs on our way out.

Accomplished, uplifting, and highly enjoyable.



*In full song: HMVC*

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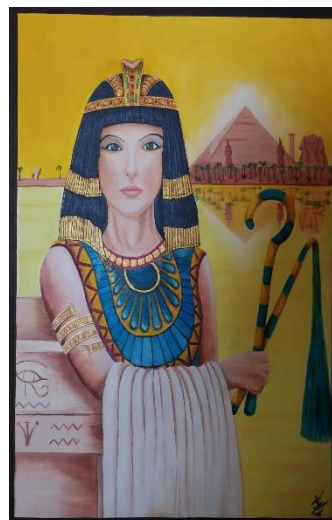
## **Bits & Bobs by Badger** **'The Air That We Breathe'**

Did you know?

The Earth has, surprisingly, only a finite amount of air and water. No new air or

water has been created since their formation many billions of years ago.

Thus, there is a possibility that you are breathing molecules of air that were



previously exhaled by Cleopatra, Socrates, Pontius Pilate or Shakespeare. However, exhalations from more recently dead people, such as Elvis, have not had time to mix

thoroughly enough for you to breathe – be patient!

Likewise with water: this passes through a cycle and there is a strong possibility that you are drinking the same water as dinosaurs did about 65 million years ago.

The technical reason is known as the 'Conservation of Matter' which says: 'Matter can neither be created nor destroyed, it can only change its form'. For example, it may change from a solid to a gas, but there is still the same amount of matter, just in a different form.

*Robert (Badger) Lebar*

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## **Reading party invitation**

Former Durham resident Charles Yeats would like to invite D&D members to a Reading Party to be held in Muker in Swaledale from 15th–17th September.

This is an attempt to capture something of the spirit of reading parties hosted for

Oxford University students in the Alps. If you're interested, please email Charles for further information at:

[charles.yeats@btopenworld.com](mailto:charles.yeats@btopenworld.com).

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## Regional news

### Raby Castle Visit, 4 September

A few places are still available for this trip. If you're interested, contact Moira Stokoe ([moirastokoe@gmail.com](mailto:moirastokoe@gmail.com)) as soon as possible.

### Durham Cathedral Visit, 15 September

The cut-off date for registering for this trip is **25 August**.

### Northern Quiz, 15 October

Entrance fee: £10 per team (no limit on number of teams; max four quizzers per team)

As usual, the quiz will be held at Sunnyside Club, Gateshead. But please note that the timings are now **1–4pm**, to help avoid rush-hour traffic.

Please bring home-made cakes or savouries. No onlookers please – quizzing is required!

### Use of Social Media to Grow Awareness

Following a recent presentation to Northumbria region on this topic by Sheila Crawley of Ashbourne & District u3a, the pdf is now available from the [News](#) page of the region website.



## National news

### u3a image library

There's a call-out for photography group photos of group activities for the national u3a image library. They're looking for "candid and organic photos showing one or two members doing activities", with the appropriate permissions in place, of course.

To send photos, or get more information, email [communications@u3a.org.uk](mailto:communications@u3a.org.uk).

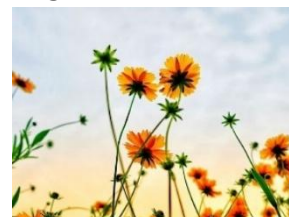
### Online learning

As usual, a multitude of topics feature over the next month. They include:

**Ice to Athelstan – The Emergence of England** (3 July, 10 am), tracing the development of a frozen landscape over 10,000 years to the creation of a recognisable England and the crowning of the first English king.

**Time to get out the barbecue!** (10 July, 10.30am) offering up some delicious vegetarian recipes to try in your own back yard.

**Plants, medicine and magic** (15 July, 11 am) looking at the contributions made by plants to modern medicine.



**Planning ahead: Age-proofing your home** (17 July, 10 am). This offers some handy tips on how to make your home easier to live in.

There are plenty of other talks too – see [here](#).

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## Miss Conception et al (short story)

*(Names have been changed to protect individual identities.)*

Having worked for over 30 years as a therapist in the women's section of the psychiatric clinic, many interesting characters have come through my door. I've interviewed enough to fill a shelf with novels.

Miss Conception springs to mind. She had a strange desire to conceive. Although single, she believed that a bouncing baby would make her forever happy and joyful.....that she would be fulfilled. I was never sure what fulfilled meant. Did therapy work? That's a secret I'll keep to myself.

Another intriguing character was Miss Ann Thrope. She was challenging. She was a cynic and anti-social. She hated most things, especially people. In the clinic it took her six months to smile and a further six months to mean it.

Miss Adventure was strangely delusional. She had a compelling urge to book a cruise on the "Titanic". I explained patiently that that would be difficult. She grudgingly accepted my explanations and blithely decided that the "Marie Celeste" would be an ideal alternative.

Two fascinating clients were the Misses Take and Hap. Both had been working for many years in a top-end Chinese restaurant. Miss Take plated the food. Miss Hap was a waitress, front of house. Unclear whether their problems were physiological or psychological, I analysed both.

With Miss Take the plate of expensive food you received might not necessarily be the food that you ordered...black bean sauce minus black beans, spicy chicken rather than pulled pork. Alternatively, with Miss Hap you might find your front

splattered with soy sauce and maybe half a steaming dim sum in your lap.

Other patrons of note were Miss Apprehension and Miss Shapen. The former had many phobias. You name one...she had it. The latter, a very attractive young lady, had body image problems that originated in her teens. Both ladies needed much care and attention.

Then we have cheeky Miss Chievous, a silver haired, twinkly eyed senior citizen. She loved to play hide and seek with her husband's dentures and many times hid his reading glasses in her knicker drawer.

"Just for fun," she'd say. "Just for fun."

A younger client, Miss Information was totally addicted to social media. Her brain was scrambled. Her lies were Trumpian in magnitude. She needed a lot of sessions to mend.

Prudish Miss Management worked in an international bank. Financially illiterate her life seemed a total mess.

Miss Place next comes to mind, always losing keys, phones, credit cards and sometimes words. She was completely disorganised and needed to sort out her life.

Time to conclude with Miss Ellaneous. Her mother was Greek. She had bits of everything....depression, anxiety, lack of confidence, topped off with an intermittent eating disorder. She needed careful handling.

On reflection I'm undecided about these characters in novels. How about adult cartoon books? I could make a fortune or am I mistaken? Is this my delusion?

Will my motives be misconstrued? Will I be misunderstood?

Who knows...and frankly, who cares?

*Brian Watts, Creative Writing Group*

## Grand Summer Quiz

Tickets are still available for the grand summer quiz, £2.50.

They will be available at the monthly meeting.

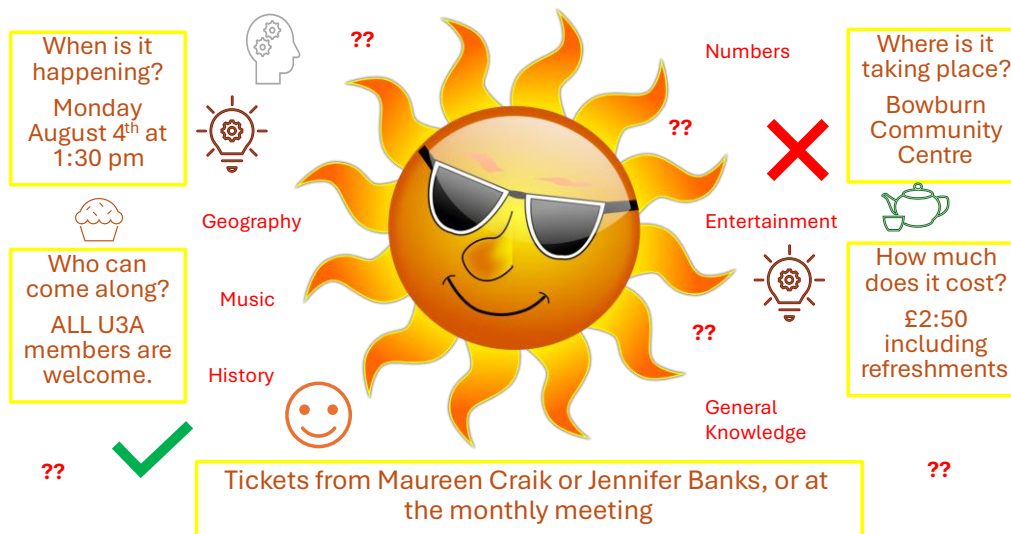
We have now booked a guest quiz master, Dave Tucker, so something slightly different to normal quiz group meetings.

This event is being coordinated by the leaders of the two quiz groups and is open to ALL u3a members.

Teams of 4 will be allocated on the day so just come along and have a fun afternoon.

*Maureen Craik and Jennifer Banks (Quiz Group Coordinators)*

### The Durham and District U3A – Summer Quiz



### Here comes the pun

1. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
2. i, for one, like roman numerals.
3. Which cheese do you use to coax a bear out of a cave? *Camembert*
4. Orion's belt - it's just a waist of space.
5. Corduroy pillows are making headlines.
6. As I passed the prison, a small man shinning down a rope sneered at me. It was a little condescending.
7. Never tell a pun to a kleptomaniac because they always take things, literally.
8. Why didn't the lifeguard save the drowning hippie? *He was too far out, man.*

## June/July Calendar

Date	Time	Place	Group	Contact
<b>JUNE</b>				
Mon 23rd	10.00am	Sacriston Methodist Church	<b>History Too:</b> <i>Was the atom bomb necessary?</i>	<a href="#">History Too</a>
Mon 23rd	12.00pm	Waddington St URC Church	<b>Environmental Group</b> <i>Creating a better climate future (Philip Kent Hughes)</i>	<a href="#">Charles Jolly</a>
Mon 23rd	1.30pm	Bowburn Community Centre	<b>Canasta</b>	<a href="#">Mike Forrest</a>
Tues 24th	10.00am	Belmont Community Centre	<b>Art Appreciation (FULL)</b> <i>Open session: Glass</i>	<a href="#">Carol Tritton</a>
Tues 24th	2.00pm	Gala Café	<b>Spanish conversation (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Wed 25th	10.30am	DH7 ORJ	<b>Amblers:</b> <i>From Hurbuck to Kingsley Farm Shop</i>	<a href="#">Tina Naples</a>
Wed 25th	12.00pm	Durham Indoor Bowls Club	<b>Bowls</b>	<a href="#">Malcolm Dawson</a>
Wed 25th	2.00pm	Gala Café	<b>Français Amical (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Mike Gibb</a>
Thurs 26th	10.15am	Business School Waterside	<b>Shakespeare (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Thurs 26th	1.15 for 2.00pm	Bowburn Community Centre	<b>Open Meeting:</b> <i>Tax, care &amp; toyboys (Rachel Ellison)</i>	<a href="#">Lynn Brooks</a>
Fri 27th	10.00am		<b>Walking:</b> <i>Sherburn Hill from Sherburn</i>	<a href="#">Richard Dennis</a>
Sat 28th	2.00pm	Sacriston Methodist Church	<b>Music Appreciation</b> <i>John Tompkinson</i>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
<b>JULY</b>				
Tues 1 <sup>st</sup>	10.00am	Broomside Park Beefeater	<b>Topical Discussion (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Janis Goodson</a>
Tues 1 <sup>st</sup>	2.00pm	Gala Café	<b>Spanish conversation FULL</b>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Wed 2 <sup>nd</sup>	12.00pm	Indoor Bowls Centre	<b>Bowls</b>	<a href="#">Malcolm Dawson</a>
Wed 2 <sup>nd</sup>	1.30pm	Member's home	<b>Craft (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Marion Lotts</a>
Wed 2 <sup>nd</sup>	1.30pm	Sacriston Methodist Church	<b>Geology</b>	<a href="#">Lesley Collins</a>
Wed 2 <sup>nd</sup>	2.00pm	Gala Café	<b>Français Amical (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Mike Gibb</a>
Thurs 3 <sup>rd</sup>	9.45am	Member's home	<b>French (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Elizabeth Morgan</a>
Thurs 3 <sup>rd</sup>	2.00pm	Sacriston Methodist Church	<b>Circle Dancing</b>	<a href="#">Circle Dancing</a>
Thurs 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10.00am	The Story café	<b>Parlez français:</b> <i>Museums</i>	<a href="#">Paul Newby</a>
Fri 4 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Bowburn Community Centre	<b>Singing for fun</b>	<a href="#">Mike Forrest</a>
Mon 7 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Member's home	<b>Book Group</b> <i>Ted Hughes poems</i>	<a href="#">Lynn Bilborough</a>

Mon 7 <sup>th</sup>	1.30pm	Carrville Methodist Hall	<b>Quiz at Carrville</b>	<a href="#">Jennifer Banks</a>
Tues 8 <sup>th</sup>	2.00pm	Gala Café	<b>Spanish conversation (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Wed 9 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Member's home	<b>Creative Writing</b> <i>Something unexpected</i>	<a href="#">Irene Wilkinson</a>
Wed 9 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Demesne Mill Car Park	<b>Amblers: Wolsingham Circular (Pauline Handysides)</b>	<a href="#">Tina Naples</a>
Wed 9 <sup>th</sup>	2.00pm	Gala Café	<b>Français Amical (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Mike Gibb</a>
Thurs 10 <sup>th</sup>	9.45am	Member's home	<b>French (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Elizabeth Morgan</a>
Thurs 10 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Waddington St URC Church	<b>Poetry Reading</b> <i>Marvell and Donne</i>	<a href="#">Pauline Butler</a>
Thurs 10 <sup>th</sup>	10.15am	Business School Waterside	<b>Shakespeare (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Fri 11 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am		<b>Walking</b> <i>(Laura Woods)</i>	<a href="#">Richard Dennis</a>
Fri 11 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Witton Gilbert Community Centre	<b>Historical Novels</b> <i>North and South (E Gaskell)</i>	<a href="#">Tina Naples</a>
Mon 14 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Bowburn Hall Hotel	<b>Coffee Morning</b>	<a href="#">Marion Lotts</a>
Mon 14 <sup>th</sup>	1.30pm	Bowburn Community Centre	<b>Canasta</b>	<a href="#">Mike Forrest</a>
Mon 14 <sup>th</sup>	2.00pm	Riverfront Bistro Business School	<b>Poetry Appreciation</b> <i>Personal favourites</i>	<a href="#">Steve Beckett</a>
Tues 15 <sup>th</sup>	11.15am	Gala balcony	<b>Theatre</b> <i>Discussion and Planning</i>	<a href="#">Nancy Gemski</a>
Tues 15 <sup>th</sup>	12.00pm		<b>Pub Lunch</b>	<a href="#">Sylvia Buxton</a>
Tues 15 <sup>th</sup>	2.00pm	Gala Café	<b>Spanish conversation (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Wed 16 <sup>th</sup>	12.00pm	Indoor Bowls Centre	<b>Bowls</b>	<a href="#">Malcolm Dawson</a>
Wed 16 <sup>th</sup>	1.30pm	Member's home	<b>Scrabble</b>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Wed 16 <sup>th</sup>	2.00pm	Gala Café	<b>Français Amical (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Mike Gibb</a>
Wed 16 <sup>th</sup>	7.00pm	Community Room Ustinov College	<b>Wine Tasting</b> <i>Wines from Chile</i>	<a href="#">Cynthia Bolton</a>
Thurs 17 <sup>th</sup>	9.45am	Member's home	<b>French (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Elizabeth Morgan</a>
Thurs 17 <sup>th</sup>	1.15pm	St John's Church Hall Meadowfield	<b>History at Meadowfield</b> <i>The Devil's Porridge &amp; Lawrence the Poet</i>	<a href="#">Audrey Adams</a>
Thurs 17 <sup>th</sup>	2.00pm	The Story Café	<b>Parlez français</b>	<a href="#">Paul Newby</a>
Fri 18 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Bowburn Community Centre	<b>Singing for fun</b>	<a href="#">Mike Forrest</a>
Mon 21 <sup>st</sup>	10.30am	Sacriston Methodist Church	<b>Monday Crime Club</b> <i>Death awaits in Durham (Helen Cox)</i>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Mon 21 <sup>st</sup>	2.00pm	Sacriston Methodist Church	<b>Quiz at Sacriston</b>	<a href="#">Maureen Craik</a>

Tues 22 <sup>nd</sup>	10.00am	Belmont Community Centre	<b>Art Appreciation (FULL)</b> <i>Early C20 British artists with overlapping careers</i>	<a href="#">Carol Tritton</a>
Tues 22 <sup>nd</sup>	2.00pm	Gala Café	<b>Spanish conversation (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Wed 23 <sup>rd</sup>	10.30am	Car park	<b>Amblers</b> <i>Malton Nature Reserve Circular</i>	<a href="#">Tina Naples</a>
Wed 23 <sup>rd</sup>	2.00pm	Gala Café	<b>Français Amical (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Mike Gibb</a>
Thurs 24 <sup>th</sup>	9.45am	Member's home	<b>French (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Elizabeth Morgan</a>
Thurs 24 <sup>th</sup>	10.15am	Business School Waterside	<b>Shakespeare (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Friday 25 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am		<b>Walking</b> <i>High Shincliffe and Butterby (Harry Morgan)</i>	<a href="#">Richard Dennis</a>
Sat 26 <sup>th</sup>	2.00pm	Sacriston Methodist Church	<b>Music Appreciation</b> <i>Val Tolladay</i>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Mon 28 <sup>th</sup>	10.30pm	Sacriston Methodist Church	<b>History Too</b> <i>American War of Independence</i>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Mon 28 <sup>th</sup>	12.00pm	Waddington St URC Church	<b>Environmental Group</b>	<a href="#">Charles Jolly</a>
Mon 28 <sup>th</sup>	1.30pm	Bowburn Community Centre	<b>Canasta</b>	<a href="#">Mike Forrest</a>
Tues 29 <sup>th</sup>	2.00pm	Gala Café	<b>Spanish conversation (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Group Leader</a>
Wed 30 <sup>th</sup>	2.00pm	Gala Café	<b>Français Amical (FULL)</b>	<a href="#">Mike Gibb</a>
Thurs 31 <sup>st</sup>	2.00pm	Bowburn Community Centre	<b>Open meeting</b> <i>Waste management and the environment</i>	<a href="#">Lynn Brooks</a>

**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](#)

And all volunteers/suggestions for **occasional outings** are welcomed.

**The following groups are full:** Art Appreciation; Craft; Creative Writing; Français Amical; French; Monday Crime Club; Shakespeare; Spanish Conversation; and Topical Discussion. But that needn't hold you back – you can start another group! And there are start-up funds available where needed. Contact [Paul Newby](#), groups coordinator, if you think you'd like to set one up.

**Contributions to Drumbeat are actively invited! Send your items, ideally by mid-month (around 400 words max), to Laura Woods, newsletter editor, at [lauramw100@gmail.com](mailto:lauramw100@gmail.com) [hide](#)**

