



Drumbeat

Durham & District u3a Issue 28, August 2026

Welcome to another Drumbeat, at the tail end (??) of the long, long heatwave. The Environmental Group's showing of "The People's Emergency Briefing" on Monday 27 July does feel very timely indeed.

In this issue, we've got numbers with personality, a supermarket surprise and a fairy tale with a difference. Plus some excellent photos. They really are worth a thousand words, so do send in any pics of people, places and things you think will be of interest.

Last call for the Summer Quiz on 11 August; and hello to new D&D members **Timothy Blackman, Jayne and Karl Hemmingway and Denis Lascelles.**

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Laura Woods, editor

IN THIS ISSUE

The Power of Plagues (July mtg)	p.2
A Scenic Amble	p.2
Just Perfect	p.3
The Girl	p.4
Reflections	p.4
Have you been a fraud victim ?	p.4
Regional u3a News	p.5
National u3a News	p.5
A View from Craghead	p.5
Summer Quiz, 11 August	p.6
Calendar	p.6
Fraud research details	p.10

NOTICES

No meetings in August for: Book Group, Circle Dancing, Historical Novels, Topical Discussion.

Full payment due by 15 August for Kiplin Hall visit on 9 September.

The Power of Plagues

Pandemics that changed our history

Monthly meeting, 30 July

Our speaker on Thursday, 30 July is Paul Nash, with a fascinating topic that's become all too familiar in recent times.

Ever since homo sapiens emerged in East Africa over 200,000 years ago, we've been plagued by plagues. Most of them have been local, but just occasionally, they've been infectious enough to spread across the known world – and deadly enough to change the way we lived our lives.

This talk will explore in detail three of the most devastating plagues, explaining why they happened, describing some juicy bits about their immediate impact and showing how they have affected us and will affect



us in the future, even in Northern England.

Paul uses his presentation in aid of Support for Prostate Cancer UK. There will be an opportunity to

make donations to the charity on the day.

*Venue: Bowburn Community Centre,
1.15pm for 2.00pm start*

A Scenic Amble

A small group of amblers set off for a stroll on a hot summer day. Luckily most of the way was on lovely, leafy paths affording welcome shade.

If I told you it started from Tesco in Annfield Plain, I bet you would be very surprised, but just walk to the edge of the building and there in front of you a beautiful lane stretches ahead.

We came across a wealth of tree species and masses of different wild flowers. Luckily, one of our number, Sylvia Warburton, is a botanist and was able to keep us informed as we went along. The pictures show a wild orchid and what I think is a strange woodland formation.

Afterwards we went to the Willowburn Hospice cafe which does lovely light lunches and scones etc. I took home a couple of rhubarb and ginger ones –mmmm.



We had such a nice walk that I am putting it on again soon – but going the other way round, which will feel very different for those who have done it before.

Tina Naples



Just Perfect

Factors: Perfect Numbers

Last time we discussed prime numbers. Now we move our attention to **perfect** numbers. We all know that perfection is a rare commodity but in the world of mathematics, there are numbers that are defined as being perfect.

The wordy definition of a perfect number is: **a number whose factors (excluding itself) add up to the number**. Let's look at an example;

The number '6 has three factors, other than itself. These are 1, 2 and 3. Now add these numbers together: $1 + 2 + 3 = 6$. So 6 is indeed a perfect number.

What's the next perfect number?

If we consider the number 8, its factors (other than itself) are 1, 2, 4. The sum of these numbers is 7, so 8 is not a perfect number.

If we consider the number 24, its factors (other than itself) are 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 12. The sum of these numbers is 36, so 24 is not a perfect number.

The next perfect number is 28. Its factors (other than itself) are 1, 2, 4, 7, 14. The sum of these numbers is 28 – so it is a perfect number.

The next perfect number is 496: its factors are 1, 2, 4, 6, 16, 31, 62, 124, 248, which sum to 496. The next two perfect numbers are 8128 and 33,550,336.

How many perfect numbers are there? Well, so far 52 perfect numbers have been found. They are all even numbers. The

largest perfect number found has over **82 million digits**. The search for more perfect numbers goes on.....

Another interesting aspect of perfect numbers is that they can each be expressed as the sum of consecutive numbers starting from 1. So:

$$1 + 2 + 3 = 6$$

$$1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 = 28$$

$$1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 + + 30 + 31 = 496.$$

When the sum of the factors of a number is less than the number itself then that number is termed **deficient**. So 8 is a deficient number.

When the sum of the factors of a number is greater than the number itself then that number is termed **abundant**. So 24 is an abundant number.

In the next instalment I will discuss another aspect of factors – **amicable numbers**.

Who said that numbers couldn't be romantic?

Stephen Brand

*Euclid first studied
perfect numbers
in ca 300 BC*



The Girl



Robert woke earlier than usual. The June light entered his bedchamber. His first thoughts were, "I will view the village. I don't usually see it at this early hour."

After quickly dressing he quietly descended the splendid staircase of his castle.

As a duke, it was fitting that his dwelling should be richly furnished.

He entered the stables and was pleasantly surprised that several of his men were already attending to his horses. He chose his favourite horse, "Rapide".

The duke's route to the village led him close to the river.

To his surprise and delight, a young maiden was washing herself in the river. Robert was smitten by her goodly naked figure and the way her long auburn hair tumbled over her shoulders. Robert had never experienced such intense feelings before.

Previously he had never been attracted to women. In his mind there were two sorts of the so called "fair sex". Either they had elaborate hair, jewels and many

affectations, or were rough and coarse. He had never married and had no children.

This girl changed him. He was now consumed with desire. He took her to be his mistress. In time they had one son, William. Robert was delighted in his strong sturdy son.

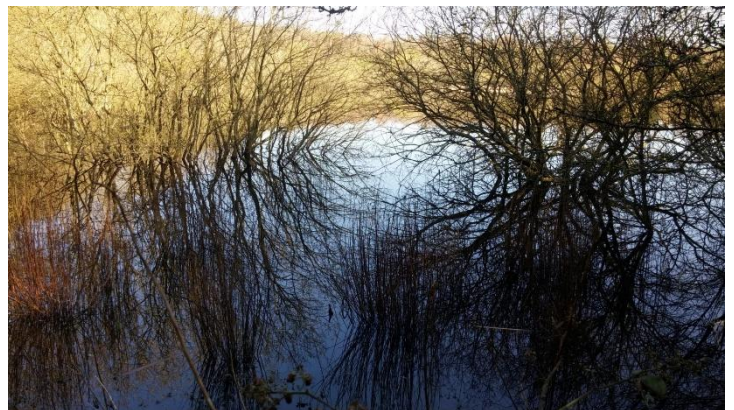
William went on to great things. In fact, his name is known far and wide.

He became William the Conqueror.

Paul Kingston

Reflections

Here's a beautifully atmospheric picture from the camera of John Liddle.



Have you been a victim of fraud?

A Leicester University academic is undertaking doctoral research to understand how older adults respond to fraud by people they know or trust.

If you have been a victim and are interested in taking part, see the poster attached to this newsletter (p. 10).

Regional u3a news

Regional meeting, 23 September

The next regional meeting will be held at Whickham Golf Club from 10am to 3.30pm. It includes a buffet lunch and afternoon entertainment by "Old English". All are invited. Details [here](#).

20 October: A date for your diary

The Laing Art Gallery is staging an exhibition on Pre-Raphaelite art and poetry in the autumn, and two tours for u3a members are being arranged for Tuesday, 20 October. Further details to be issued, but see [here](#) for a taster.



Short story/poetry competition

Open to all, on the topic of "happiness". Entries are due in by noon on 11 September. See [here](#) for details, or email Cecilia Coulson: cecu3a@gmail.com

Ushaw 2027: Call for volunteers

Another regional Ushaw event is to be held next year, on 19 May. Would you like to lead an activity? See [here](#) for details.

National u3a news

U3a essay competition

The deadline for this year's competition is **Friday, 31 July**. Topic: a remarkable real-life journey – of discovery, adventure or transformation – in fewer than 1000 words.

Find out more [here](#).

Online learning events include Digital Hobbies for the Third Age (11 August) and the Scottish Colourists on Iona (20 August). See [here](#) for more.

Interest Groups Online

A reminder that there is a host of online interest groups, including many new ones covering everything from beginners' Latin to Improv to Tennis News.

See [here](#) for more.

A view from Craghead

The height of summer, captured here.



John Liddle

The Durham and District U3A – Summer Quiz - 2026

When is it happening?

Tuesday
August 11th at
1:30 – 3:45pm
(doors open at 1:15 pm)



??

Numbers

??

Where is it taking place?

Bowburn Community Centre



Who can come along?

ALL U3A members are welcome.

Geography

Music

History



Featuring MC and quizmaster,
Dave Tucker

Entertainment

??

General Knowledge



How much does it cost?

£2:50
including light refreshments

??



Tickets from Maureen Craik or Cynthia Bolton, or at the monthly meeting



August 2026 Calendar

To contact a group leader, please see the website Groups page, or click [here](#)

Date	Time	Place	Group	Contact
JULY				
Mon 27 th July	10.30am	Sacriston Methodist Church	History Too (Sacriston) <i>British East India Company</i>	David Willock
Mon 27 th July	12.00pm	Waddington Street URC Church	Environmental Group <i>'The People's Emergency Briefing' ALL WELCOME</i>	Charles Jolly
Mon 27 th July	1.30pm	Bowburn Community Centre	Canasta Cards Group	Mike Forrest
Tues 28 th July	10.00am	Belmont Community Centre	Art Appreciation: (full) <i>Art from former Soviet Union countries</i>	Carol Tritton
Wed 29 th July	2.00pm	Business School Bistro	Français Amical (full)	Mike Gibb
Thurs 30 th July	1.15pm for 2.00pm	Bowburn Community Centre	Monthly Meeting <i>The Power of Plagues (Paul Nash)</i>	Lynn Brooks
AUGUST				
Tues 4 th Aug	2.00pm	Sacriston Methodist Church	History at Sacriston	Maureen Craik

Wed 5 th Aug	12.00pm	Indoor Bowling Centre	Bowls	Malcolm Dawson
Wed 5 th Aug	1.30pm	Member's home	Craft (full)	Marion Lotts
Wed 5 th Aug	1.30 pm	Sacriston Methodist Church	Geology	Lesley Collins
Wed 5 th Aug	2.00pm	Business School Bistro	Français Amical (full)	Mike Gibb
Thurs 6 th Aug	9.45am	Member's Home	French	Elizabeth Morgan
Thurs 6 th Aug	10.15am	Business School Bistro	Reading Shakespeare (full)	Sue Childs
Thurs 6 th Aug	2.00pm	The Story	Parlez Français <i>'Un jour je voudrais...'</i>	Paul Newby
Fri 7 th Aug	10.30am	Bowburn Community Centre	Singing for Fun	Mike Forrest
Mon 10 th Aug	10.30am	Bowburn Hall Hotel	Coffee Morning	Marion Lotts
Mon 10 th Aug	1.30pm	Bowburn Community Centre	Canasta Cards Group	Mike Forrest
Mon 10 th Aug	2.00pm	Business School Bistro	Poetry Appreciation <i>Holidays and holiday seasons</i>	Steve Beckett
Tues 11 th Aug	2.00pm	Business School Bistro	Spanish	Mick O'Sullivan
Tues 11 th Aug	1.30pm	Bowburn Community Centre	Big Summer Quiz	Jennifer Banks
Wed 12 Aug	10.00am	Member's Home	Creative Writing (full)	Irene Wilkinson
Wed 12 Aug	10.30am	Meet at Poplar Tree Garden Centre	Amblers <i>A riverbank walk from Shincliffe</i>	Tina Naples
Wed 12 Aug	2.00pm	Business School Bistro	Français Amical (full)	Mike Gibb
Thurs 13 th Aug	9.45am	Member's home	French	Elizabeth Morgan
Thurs 13 th Aug	10.00am	Waddington Street URC Church	Poetry Reading	Pauline Butler
Fri 14 th Aug	10.00am		Walking <i>A walk near Beamish with Derek and Jennifer</i>	Richard Dennis
Mon 17 th Aug	10.30am	Sacriston Methodist Church	Monday Crime Club <i>'Last bus to Woodstock' by Colin Dexter</i>	Tina Naples
Mon 17 th Aug	1.30pm	Bowburn Community Centre	Photography <i>Weather</i>	Alan Morrison
Mon 17 th Aug	2.00pm	Sacriston Methodist Church	Quiz at Sacriston	Maureen Craik
Tues 18 th Aug	10.30am		Housing and Health <i>Visit to Extra Care block of flats</i>	Dorothy Hamilton
Tues 18 th Aug	12.00pm	For venue contact group leader	Pub Lunch group	Maureen Craik

Tues 18 th Aug	10.30am	Wetherspoons Bishop's Mill	Theatre <i>Discussion and planning</i>	Nancy Gemski
Wed 19 th Aug	1.30 pm	Member's home	Scrabble	Maureen Craik
Wed 19 th Aug	2.00pm	Business School Bistro	Français Amical (full)	Mike Gibb
Wed 19 th Aug	12.00pm	Indoor Bowling Centre	Bowls	Malcolm Dawson
Wed 19 th Aug	7.00pm	SPRA community room Sheraton Park	Wine tasting	Jennifer Banks Cynthia Bolton
Thurs 20 th Aug	9.45am	Member's home	French	Elizabeth Morgan
Thurs 20 th Aug	10.00am	Waddington St URC Church	Poetry Reading	Pauline Butler
Thurs 20 th Aug	10.15am	Riverfront Bistro, Business School	Reading Shakespeare (full)	Sue Childs
Thurs 20 th Aug	1.15pm	St John's Church Hall, Meadowfield	History at Meadowfield. <i>Looking at War</i>	Audrey Adams
Thurs 20 th Aug	1.45pm	The Story	Parlez Français: TBD	Paul Newby
Fri 21 st Aug	10.30am	Bowburn Community Centre	Singing for Fun	Mike Forrest
Mon 24 th Aug	10.30am	Sacriston Methodist Church	History Too (Sacriston) <i>The French Revolution</i>	David Willock
Mon 24 th Aug	12.00pm	Waddington Street URC Church	Environmental Group <i>'No Miracles Needed' by Mark Jacobson</i>	Charles Jolly
Mon 24 th Aug	1.30pm	Bowburn Community Centre	Canasta Cards Group	Mike Forrest
Tues 25 th Aug	10.00am	Belmont Community Centre	Art Appreciation (full) <i>Open session – Forceful women</i>	Carol Tritton
Tues 25 th Aug	12.00pm	Various	Pub Lunch	Sylvia Buxton
Tues 25 th Aug	2.00pm	Business School Bistro	Spanish	Mick O'Sullivan
Wed 26 th Aug	10.30am	Meet outside Tesco at Annfield Plain	Amblers <i>The reverse Annfield Plain leafy walk</i>	Tina Naples
Wed 26 th Aug	2.00pm	Business School Bistro	Français Amical (full)	Mike Gibb
Thurs 27 th Aug	1.15pm	Bowburn Community Centre	Monthly meeting <i>Artificial intelligence: the good, the bad and the unknown (Bill Oxbury)</i>	Lynn Brooks
Sat 29 th Aug	2.00pm	Sacriston Methodist Church	Music appreciation <i>Robert Lebar</i>	Stephen Brand
Mon 31 Aug	1.30pm	Bowburn Community Centre	Canasta Cards Group	Mike Forrest

Other groups/activities include:

Cinema – normally Mondays, but depends on film being shown

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

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

[Paul Newby](#)

[Rita McGarr](#)

The following groups are full: Art Appreciation; Craft; Creative Writing; Français Amical; Shakespeare; 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.

Your contributions to Drumbeat are actively invited! Send your items, ideally by mid-month (around 400 words max), to Laura Woods, editor (lauramw100@gmail.com), or Jim Crinson, deputy editor (website committee page).





Are you aged 65 or over? Have you experienced fraud by someone you know or trust?

We want to hear your story.

I am conducting doctoral research at the University of Leicester to understand how older adults experience and respond to fraud by people they know or trust. This research aims to move beyond simple narratives to understand the complexity of your experiences.



What's Involved

- A confidential interview lasting up to 75 minutes
- Choose between in-person (East Midlands), online via Microsoft Teams, or by email
- Share your experiences in a safe, supportive environment
- Your identity will be protected, with all identifiable information removed



Can You Take Part?

- You are aged 65 or over
- You have experienced fraud or deception by someone you know or knew (partner, family, friend, or professional)
- Any investigation into the fraud has been completed
- You can speak and understand English fluently
- You are willing to share your experience

Why Your Voice Matters



Improve understanding of how fraud affects older adults



Inform psychological theory and clinical practice



Support service development & safeguarding strategies

Interested in Participating?

Contact: Shannon Edwards

Trainee Clinical Psychologist
DClinPsy Programme · University of Leicester
se220@leicester.ac.uk

As a thank you for
your time, you will
receive a £20
Love2Shop voucher!

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Leicester Research Ethics Committee: 5266