

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Annual General Meeting. 2.00 p.m. Wednesday 27 June at the Bat & Ball Community Centre

The meeting will be followed by a talk by the well-known author and journalist, Bob Ogley, on V1s and V2s, or Doodlebugs and Rockets if you prefer.

There will be no Monthly Meeting in August. The next meeting will be the Open Afternoon on 26th September.

The Diary appears on page 4

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

I am very pleased to let you know that Sue Christy has agreed to stand for election as Vice Chair to the Executive Committee. In addition Richard Baxter has agreed to be our Monthly Meetings Manager and Barbara Coleyshaw will step in as our Speakers Secretary.

My thanks to them for volunteering and wishing them well in their new roles.

This summer we are also saying goodbye to our current Vice Chair - Nick White, who is taking a sabbatical year off and will be standing for election as Chairman in 2019.

Thank you Nick for your service to our U3A

Jim Purves

01732 463041 chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS Susan Henson groupdev@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

The Cycle Group ride to Ypres

This year, being the centenary of the end of the First World War, we decided on an expedition to the battle areas around Ypres in Belgium. A member of the group who had lived in Belgium, and his wife, went to enormous lengths to plan the trip, but sadly could not join us for family reasons. So huge thanks to Huw and Althea Davies.

Most of us travelled to Ypres by car, but two decided to cycle from Dunkirk. Not a wise decision as it turned out, as they strayed onto a motorway by mistake and were escorted off by police motorcyclists! They arrived at the hotel somewhat in need of a drink!

The three days of cycling over such flat terrain graphically illustrated how horrendous the fighting must have been – absolutely nowhere to hide. The large memorial graveyards like Tyne Cot were impressive - all in beautiful white stone with lawns and flowers immaculately

maintained. But what impressed us even more was the huge number of small graveyards all over the countryside equally well maintained, usually where the battles had taken place. The War Graves Commission really does do a good job.

The town of Ypres was interesting – re-built in the old Flemish style. We cycled around a lot of the ramparts. At the vast Menin Gate, inscribed with over 54,000 names, we attended the moving Last Post ceremony on two evenings. We will not forget a Welsh male voice choir singing "Abide with me".

Then there was a brewery tour! The one brewery of the town is housed in the cavernous arches of an ancient weapons and ammunition store. The famous trench magazine, Wipers Times, was published there during WW1 by British soldiers and the brewery has given that name to their beer.

Patrick Pascall

Photo: Patrick Pascall



Photo: Margaret Thorpe



U3A HOLIDAY TO NORTHUMBERLAND 10 – 14 May 2018

Reports by members of the party



Photo: David Taylor

Thirty six members travelled to Northumberland for our recent holiday. We had an excellent driver in Marek who drove and looked after us well. Our first visit before reaching our hotel was to Harewood House, the state apartments and the gardens being visited. We arrived at our hotel in good time to gather for our evening meal. On the Friday morning, we met Jan Williams our Blue Badge Guide. Jan was excellent, had been raised in the Newcastle area and looked after our party very well and went off our scheduled route on a couple of occasions, most notably to visit Anthony Gormley's Angel of the North, which for many on the trip had been only a quick glimpse while speeding along the A1! The weather was kind to us apart from Sunday morning when we visited Lindisfarne, but by the time we departed the island for our afternoon visit to Cragside the sun was breaking out. We arrived back in Sevenoaks just before 7.00pm and members said it had been most enjoyable. Already I have received suggestions for future trips.

Joyce Allen

Durham

We set out to spend the morning in Durham. En route our excellent blue badge guide, Jan Williams, gave us an introduction to the history of the City which cannot be separated from the story of St. Cuthbert. Durham had been part of the Kingdom of Northumbria which stretched from the Humber River in the south to the Firth of Forth in the north. William the Conqueror had been anxious to find an ally he could trust in the north to defend the border against Scottish invaders. He feared a secular man could become ambitious for himself so chose the Bishop, establishing the tradition of Prince Bishops who had the right to raise an army to secure the northern border. Prince Bishop William Van Mildert was one of the founders of the university, the most ancient after Oxford and Cambridge. The University colleges and lecture halls are spread throughout the City, even the Castle houses students known as Castlemen or Castlewomen.

On first arriving Jan showed us a moving sculpture entitled The Journey showing six monks solemnly carrying the relics of St. Cuthbert as they tried to find a safe place for their burial. The sculptor was Fenwick Lawson. The magnificent cathedral needs a chapter of its own. For us, writers of this piece, the moving focus of our time in the cathedral was the shrine where the relics of St Cuthbert were finally interred. We also deeply appreciated the Pietà, a wooden sculpture also by Lawson, of Mary and Jesus and a beautiful modern stained glass window of the Last Supper

where the viewer has the feeling of looking down from above. We were immensely grateful to the guides for sharing their detailed knowledge of the cathedral with us so eloquently.

Patricia Wilson

Beamish Open Air Museum

Set in a valley, once the site of several drift mines, the Beamish Museum took us back to a time of horse-drawn farm machinery, hand-worked coal seams and shops where you were served across a counter. There were miners' cottages, a board school, a band practice room, a co-op stores and many other types of building, a few surviving onsite after closure of the mines, a few built as copies, but mostly they were redundant buildings, brought in from nearby villages. There were vintage trams and buses to take us around the extensive site, and there is apparently no shortage of volunteers to populate the place, dressing up to represent their character, some convincingly enacting their role. All the buildings are furnished and filled with the artefacts of the home or trade. The collection of redundant equipment, furniture and everyday objects, began even before a site for the Museum had been found in the 1970s. There was a real sense of lives far less comfortable and more precarious than our own, just a generation or two before our own time.

Chris Dance

SOCIAL EVENTS NEWS (CONT'D)

Alnwick Castle

Saturday started with our guide taking us on a brief tour of the bridges over the Tyne which link Newcastle and Gateshead. We then drove north to Alnwick Castle, home to the Dukes of Northumberland. Here we were able to admire the defences of this still formidable fortress, ready to keep out any marauding Scots. Inside the castle there are many treasures. These include Chippendale furniture and some superb china. There is also a stunning collection of Old Masters: Titian, Claude and Canaletto amongst others. The very helpful stewards were prepared to tell us not only which paintings were by Titian himself, and which by his assistants, but also which parts of each painting were thought to be by the artist himself. As well as the castle some of us visited the Alnwick Garden with its renowned cascade.

Alistair McPherson

Cragside

On a lovely sunny afternoon we visited Cragside, once known as 'the palace of a modern magician'. Originally the home of Victorian engineer Lord Armstrong and his wife, it was the first house in the world to be lit by hydro-electricity, using recently-invented filament light bulbs. He united elements that would become normal, such as hot and cold running water, central heating and electricity.

We explored the house, perched high on a steep slope and extended greatly by Norman Shaw, using unadorned timber and stone in the Arts & Crafts fashion. We were amazed by the gardens that the Armstrongs had engineered into a stunning Himalayan landscape with formal gardens, lakes and woods. This was helped by a very useful shuttle bus available to visitors, which also took us to the tea room!

Pam Walshe

Lindisfarne

An early start for our trip to Lindisfarne (Holy Island) to catch the tide so we are able to travel along the causeway, spend time in priory ruins and the village; before making any journey it is essential to study the tide table. On our way Jan, our guide, took us through the town of Morpeth and the surrounding countryside. Lindisfarne is home to a community of around 3,000 people.

St. Cuthbert is the most famous name associated with Lindisfarne but it was St. Aidan who founded the first monastery in 635 and it soon became a centre of Christian life and learning, being abandoned about 200 years later due to Viking raids. The second monastery was founded in the 12th century and it is ruins of this priory that we learned about life here. There is also an excellent visitor's centre. Soon it was time to return to our coach so we could return to the mainland without getting our feet wet!

Joyce Allen

Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Our final visit was to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Wakefield, an open air gallery situated in Bretton Hall. The park has more than 80 sculptures in over 500 acres of park land and exhibited the work of British and International artists. There is also a modern indoor gallery showing more sculptures. The subjects were very varied and thought provoking. Set in beautiful surroundings it was a lovely end to an excellent trip.

Evelyn Hubner



Photo: David Taylor

VISIT TO THE BARBICAN CENTRE

There will be a visit by train on **Tuesday October 2** to the **Barbican Centre** for a guided architectural tour lasting 90 minutes. The tour will include the high walks of the Estate as well as the Arts Centre and some hidden spaces. You will then be free for lunch and a visit in your own time to the nearby **Museum of London**, which is full of interest and where you will find a free Votes for Women Exhibition plus a newly commissioned film on the topic. Please apply on the flyer included or attached, where there are further details about what promises to be a fascinating and instructive visit.



MEETINGS AND EVENTS OPEN TO ALL

Bridge for Pleasure Wednesdays 11 & 25 July

The Group plays at Otford Village Hall on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings of each month from 9.50 a.m. until 12 noon. Dates for your diary are **27 June, 11 and 25 July**.

The winner on 9 May was John Christy and on 23 May John Franklin.

There will be no Bridge for Pleasure in August or September and we start again on **Wednesday 10 October**.

New members are always welcome. We are an "open" group, so new players can just come along on the day. We play the 'Chicago' format so you do not need a partner. For more information, please ring **John and Sue Christy**

Half Day Walking Monday 23 July

Meet outside the Kentish Rifleman at Dunk's Green in time for a 10 am start. TN11 9RU grid reference 612526. A 5 mile walk with some gentle hills. It goes to Peckham Hurst and Adam's Well Farm and ends along the Greensand Way. All U3A members are welcome. Lunch afterwards for those who stay will be at the Kentish Rifleman.

Leader: **Nick White**

Ambling Wednesday 18 July

Meet at Leigh Village Green (Grid Reference 549464) for a 4 mile walk, starting at 10 am. Park on the far side of the Green away from the B2027 road. The walk will be followed by an optional lunch.

Leader: Velma Keys

Please note, there will be no walk in August.

DIARY 2018

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| June 27 | JUNE AGM and Talk |
| July 11 | JULY Bridge for Pleasure |
| July 18 | Ambling |
| July 23 | Half day walking |
| July 25 | Bridge for Pleasure |
| Sept 26 | SEPTEMBER Open Afternoon |

ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER

Barbican Trip Flyer

Science Group

The Science Seminar will be reported in the next Newsletter.

The Science Committee have organised a series of talks starting in October for the next season. More details will be published in the new Handbook and future Newsletters.

Bob Ruffles sciencediscuss@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Apple Group

Next Meeting 22nd October after the summer break

Dave Simmons

Computer Group

The computer group does not have a Meeting in July.

The next meeting will be in October.

Mike Davies



Got any old French courses tucked away somewhere?

Sevenoaks U3A group "French For Not Quite Beginners" is looking for a set of the BBC course France Extra! with the associated cassettes (or just the cassettes, if that is all you have). If you have them and no longer need them, please get in touch with Sue Christy

MEMBERS' CORNER

Victoria Granville Baxter would like to buy a good second-hand ladies' road bike, and wonders if any of our members has one they no longer use.