



## Members Newsletter April 2024

### A Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

By the time you read this, we will be the other side of Easter. I hope you have had an enjoyable time with family, or friends, or fellow worshippers, as appropriate. We are now definitely emerging from winter into spring, and it is to be hoped that the weather will improve. As I write this, I am sitting in my garden in bright sunshine! Summer will be on us before you know it. Why not take this opportunity to try a new Group to visit?

Mindful that we are part of a nationwide organisation, we've been reviewing useful policies (see p11). In particular, your attention is drawn to our Member Code of Conduct, something we should all follow. Also have a look at the item on Developing our u3a (see p12); as Lou Reed wrote in his song *Perfect Day*, "you reap just what you sow."

Trevor Robinson, Chair

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## Monthly Meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Life in Japan

#### Presented by Denise Howe

Denise gave us a very entertaining and informative talk about Japanese customs, and her time living in Japan. She also had an assistant, Judith, who modelled some Japanese clothing for us. Denise herself wore some typical Japanese clothing.

One of the interesting aspects of Japanese life is the Portuguese influence. Since 1543 missionaries from Portugal came to Japan successively. Some of them came with merchant ships from Portugal. So Portuguese language, culture and Christianity took root in Japan.

Denise has been interested in Japan since 1974. She is a 4<sup>th</sup> dan in karate, which is a quite well-known sport, and is also a 2<sup>nd</sup> dan in iaido, which is not so well known. This is a Japanese martial art that emphasizes being aware and capable of quickly drawing a sword and responding to sudden attacks. It consists of four main components: the smooth, controlled movements of drawing the sword from its scabbard (or saya), striking or cutting an opponent, shaking blood from the blade, and replacing the sword in the scabbard. Practitioners of iaido are called iaidoka.



Japan is a land of contrasts. It has a very large network of bullet trains, and vending machines for a wide range of goods, much wider than what we are used to here in the UK. The Japanese have great pride in their heritage and lineage.

Religion is widespread, but not necessarily in organised faith groups. For example, Shintoism is not a faith but an appreciation. Only around 3% of the population are members of Shinto organisations, but some 70% consider themselves followers of Shintoism. Around the same number consider themselves to be Buddhist, but many people follow both belief systems.

About 1% of the population are Christians; Catholicism was introduced to Japan by Portuguese Jesuits.

Modern sports such as karate have developed in last 150 years, and there are many different types in addition to the two in which Denise has a dan rank; for example, judo, jujitsu, kendo and aikido. Martial arts uniforms are known as “gi”.

## February Monthly Meeting - Contd



One thing that is widespread in Japan and virtually unknown here is the heated loo. This is a bathroom plumbing fixture or type of electronic bidet toilet which incorporates traditional bidet cleansing with the added enhancement of modern SMART home technology, including heated seats and air drying.

Denise had brought with her a wide range of everyday items, including chopsticks, lacquer ware, cups and sake, shrine ornaments and netsuke, which are little carvings.



KitKats are a very popular snack in Japan; amazingly, there are over 300 different flavours!

Denise showed us several different types of clothing, some of which were beautifully illustrated. For example, the garment shown opposite has a colourful display on the reverse. The garment worn by Judith also had an interesting design at the bottom.



Everyone agreed that Denise gave us a fascinating look into life in Japan.

**Trevor Robinson**

## Monthly Meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024

### PETER THOMPSON MASTER WHEELWRIGHT

Peter Thompson, the last Wheelwright in Northumberland, gave an excellent talk at the March Monthly Meeting on the history and the technique of making wooden wheels.

A wheelwright is a craftsman who builds or repairs wooden wheels.



Peter served his apprenticeship as a joiner. When he joined the Wheelwrights' Guild, he had to be able to make a perfect wheel to be included into the Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights, they are craftsmen of the highest order.

The main timbers used in a traditional wooden wheel are Elm for the nave, Oak for the spokes and Ash for the felloes (felly) although this can vary in some areas of the world, Americans use a lot of Hickory as it is more pliable.

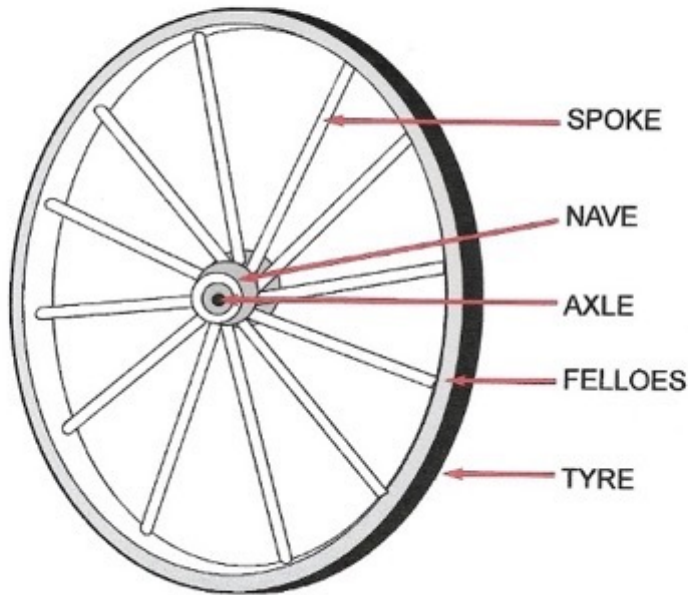
Elm is used for its interwoven grain; this

prevents the nave from splitting with the force of the spokes being driven in tight.

The Oak is used because it does not bend, compress or flex and transfers any load pressures directly from the felloes to the nave.

The Ash is used for its flexibility and springy nature, this acts as a form of suspension and protects against shock damage.

## March Monthly Meeting - Contd



Over the years the overall appearance of the wheel has barely changed but subtle changes to the design such as dishing (an English cartwheel is saucer shaped) with staggered spokes, meant these small changes made a massive improvement to the strength of the wheel whilst reducing its weight.

Naves were originally rough-hewn with an axe but were later turned on a lathe. The wheelwright then marked out the places where the spokes were to be morticed into the nave and bored the holes for them. The spokes of oak were then shaped by axe and shaved to have the maximum of strength with the minimum of weight. They were driven into the nave with a sledgehammer, not straight, but at an angle to give the right amount of dish.

Spoked wheels require precise spacing and careful calculations to construct a perfect circle, the spokes fit into the nave at one end, and into the felloe or felly, a curved piece in the circumference of a wheel at the other end. Using a compass plane (which is adjustable) to curve the wood at the required angle, guarantees the accuracy of the curve. Dowels made of oak or brass secure the spokes, and these are then wedged in place; this will take an enormous amount of strength. On large wheels a chain can be used but there is a chance the spoke may snap.

Generally, the wheel would be bound by an iron tyre. An iron traveller is used to measure the circumference of a wheel by rolling it along the rim and then measuring an iron bar of same measurement to make a tyre. Peter in his early days used a traveller dated circa 1812 which he inherited from his great grandfather, who in turn had bought it from a retiring blacksmith.

## March Monthly Meeting - Contd



A fire is laid in a circle to heat the iron hoop expanding it to the required size. Once the wheelwright has judged it to be the correct size it is lifted from the fire onto the wheel. Buckets of water are used continually to cool the iron and to prevent the wheel from burning.



The Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights is one of the 110 Livery Companies of the City of London. Incorporated by Royal Charter in 1670 the original purpose of the company was to regulate the manufacture and quality of handmade wooden wheels (the Ancient Craft of Wheelwrighting). The Worshipful Company maintains a flourishing (government-backed) apprenticeship scheme that began in 2013.



The photo on the left shows a "bone shaker" bicycle that Peter made.

## Remaining Monthly Meetings in 2024

Note that the April meeting has changed. The previously arranged speaker is unable to attend and has been replaced with the speaker originally booked for December. There is now a new speaker for the December meeting.

### **APRIL 18th *'Hidden Gems of Northumberland'***

**Speaker:** Alnwick u3a member Richard Booth has combined his interests in hill walking, photography, history, and archaeology since moving to Northumberland. He will illustrate the story of Northumberland's early history through images of historic sites still found in the landscape.

### **MAY 16th *'The History of Lindisfarne Castle, Past and Present'***

**Speaker:** Nick Lewis, Collections and House Officer, National Trust, Lindisfarne Castle.

### **JUNE 20th *'The Dialects and Music of Northumberland'***

**Speaker:** Musician Kim Bibby-Wilson will talk about aspects of the Northumbrian dialect, illustrated with songs, and recordings of local poets and speakers.

### **JULY 18th *'The Life of a Submariner'***

**Speaker:** Craig Weir, retired submariner, will talk about his experience of having been a submariner.

### **AUGUST – NO MEETING**

### **SEPTEMBER 19th *'The Buildings of William Newton'***

**Speaker:** Richard Pears, Durham University Librarian, will talk about William Newton, architect of over forty buildings, including Howick Hall and Lemmington Hall.

### **OCTOBER 17th (preceded by Annual General Meeting)**

#### ***'How Emergency Surgery has changed over my lifetime'***

**Speaker:** Alnwick u3a member, George Nasmyth, retired general surgeon.

### **NOVEMBER 21st *'The Northumberland Hedgehog Rescue Trust'***

**Speaker:** Jen Stephenson joined the Trust 2 years ago wanting to work with wildlife after retiring from teaching. The Trust was set up over 25 years ago.

### **DECEMBER 12th *'Something About Bette Davis'* (followed by Christmas Social)**

**Speaker:** Martin Shingler, film historian, independent scholar, freelance writer, editor and researcher. He is the author of *Star Studies* (2012), *When Warners Brought Broadway to Hollywood, 1923-39* (2018), and *Diana Dors: Film Star and Actor* (2022).

# BAILIFFGATE MUSEUM & GALLERY

*Heritage at the Heart of the Community – This is Alnwick*



Jean Humphrys, Chair at Bailiffgate Museum & Gallery, gave a short talk at the March monthly meeting. She told us that the Museum and Gallery has been awarded £374,395 to fund their *Heritage at the Heart of the Community – This is Alnwick* project.

The five-year project will allow them to work with our community to become a bigger, stronger, and more diverse heritage organisation, led by volunteers for the benefit of our local communities and visitors to Alnwick and the surrounding area. Rooted in our locality but delivering activities, projects, and exhibitions of national significance.

The project will work with local partners to create opportunities for volunteering, employment, innovative work placements and skills development in heritage, and also in other business sectors. They will engage with partners to deliver skills and job-related training. The project will create two new part time posts in the first instance, with an intended project start date of 1 April 2024. Jean said she would be pleased to return in the future to give us project updates.

# Long Walks Group

## The Inn Way...to Northumberland

The Inn Way ... to Northumberland is a circular walk of 94 miles, which the Wednesday walking group tackled as part of their 2023 programme.

The first section started at Seahouses Farm, Howick. 17 walkers set out on a cold but bright morning, to enjoy the delights of the Northumberland coastline, as they made their way to Seahouses. The next walk continued along the coastline to Bamburgh before turning inland to Lucker and then our destination of Warenford.



Day 1 Dunstanburgh Castle



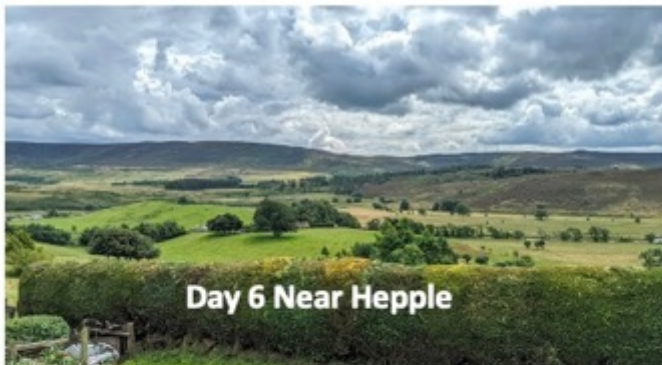
Day 3 Lunch in Chatton village

A band of happy U3A walkers gathered for the third section, which turned west via the delightful village of Chatton to reach Wooler. Onwards and upwards for the next 2 sections,

as the route meandered south through the Cheviot Hills to the picturesque village of Alwinton.



Day 5 At Little Dod



Day 6 Near Hepple

With the hard walks behind the walkers, the next two stages followed the River Coquet, all the way to the sea at Warkworth, passing Brinkburn Priory along the way. What we hadn't anticipated were the autumn storms and the glorious mud!!!

The final day arrived, with 16 people striding out along the coast from Warkworth back to the start at Seahouses farm. A walk to remember.

**Julie Hall, Walk Organiser**

**Photos by Gill Battye**

## More Photos of The Inn Way...to Northumberland



## Alnwick u3a Member Code of Conduct

Like all u3as, as a charity Alnwick u3a is expected by the Charities Commission to have a number of Policies and Procedures. Our policies are listed below, and they can be found on our website at:

<https://www.u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=411&page=126555>

Legitimate Interest Assessment	Disciplinary Procedure
Data Protection Policy	Code of Conduct
Privacy Policy	Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
Alnwick U3A Constitution	Trustee Code of Conduct
Finance Policy	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Complaint Procedure	Health and Safety Policy

One very important policy is drawn to your attention here: the **Member Code of Conduct**, which we should all follow. As this relates to how we should behave as Members of the u3a, it will in future be referred to in the Membership Form.

The Guiding Principles referred to are The Third Age Principle, The Self-help Learning Principle and The Mutual Aid Principle. These are set out in detail on p6 of the Welcome Pack (<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/a/alnwick/docs/welcome-packamended24-03-24.pdf>)

### Code of Conduct

Alnwick u3a members are expected to conduct themselves in line with the Movement's Guiding Principles. They are also expected to treat each other with dignity and respect. Specifically:-

- Members are expected to know, follow and promote the Principles of the u3a Movement at every opportunity.
- Members must always act in the best interests of Alnwick u3a and the u3a Movement, strive to uphold its reputation and never do anything which could bring their own, another u3a or the u3a Movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk.
- Members are expected to use Alnwick u3a's resources responsibly and only to further its stated charitable objects/purposes.
- Members are expected to reflect the current organisational policy of Alnwick u3a, regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views.
- Members are expected to abide by Alnwick u3a's procedures and practices

## Developing our u3a

Those of you who read the Third Age Matters may recall an article by Liz Thackray, the National u3a Chair, in which she discusses things to consider when looking at how to maintain and develop individual u3as. She argues that growth is not just about numbers; we also need to consider who we want our new members to be. How might we engage with a more diverse membership? How do we encourage members to contribute?

Equally importantly, how do we make newcomers, indeed all members, realise that they are in an organisation in which members are expected to contribute in some way.

This can cover a wide range of activities such as:

- inviting and welcoming new members;
- chatting to people you don't know well yet;
- helping with the monthly meeting teas and coffees;
- serving on the Committee;
- being a group leader;
- putting chairs out for meetings;
- even giving presentations at groups.

We should all consider what we can put in as well as what we take out. This is the best way to develop our u3a for the future.

## Tom's Tales

A 92 year-old man went to the Doctor to get a physical. A few days later the Doctor saw the man with a gorgeous young lady on his arm.

At the next physical the Doctor talked to the man and said 'You're really doing great, aren't you'? The man replied " Just doing what you said Doctor "Get a hot mamma and be cheerful".

The Doctor explained "I didn't say that. I said 'You've got a HEART MURMUR. BE CAREFUL.'"

# April Photos - Edinburgh

By Maureen and Alan Sayers



## Committee Members 2023/24

<b>Trevor Robinson</b>	Chair (and Newsletter Editor) chair.u3a.alnwick@gmail.com
<b>Carollyn McDonald</b>	Vice Chair
<b>Maureen Sayers</b>	Secretary secretary.alnwick.u3a@gmail.com
<b>George Ellames</b>	Treasurer
<b>Pat Ashton</b>	Membership Secretary membership.alnwick.u3a@gmail.com
<b>Anne McMillan</b>	Groups Coordinator groups.alnwick.u3a@gmail.com
<b>Kathy Platt</b>	Speaker Secretary
<b>Mary Brazier</b>	Facebook Secretary
<b>Shelley Willis</b>	Member

The Committee members are elected annually at the Annual General Meeting, which is usually held in October. The current Committee members were elected at the AGM held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023, except Mary Brazier, who was co-opted at the Committee meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

The next AGM will take place on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024. **Why not consider standing for election to the Committee?**

## A longed-for hobby

I'm Carollyn, the current Deputy Chair and safeguarding person. I retired two years ago and quickly converted a room in my 3 bedroom terrace to be a craft room and library. I'd tried patchwork decades ago but putting it all away after an hour's work just wasn't practical. It is as mesmerising a hobby as I'd hoped-but who would I give quilts to?

I discovered a charity while I was making my first Log Cabin knee warmer at Thirkelow Retreat in Derbyshire. Quilts 4 Care Leavers (Q4CL) donate 'hugs' usually around Christmas. The young people choose their own from the dazzling array of colours and patterns made. For a small charge people with Long arm quilting machines will quilt and bind for us, if we don't have room on our machines.



I'm learning as I go, and trying out different patterns. My American heritage inspires me, and Q4CL has fabric sharing to help us design and build the hundreds of varied quilts for those youngsters setting out into their adult lives. Better than my relatives hiding unwanted hobby gifts from me!!



**Carollyn McDonald**  
**Vice Chair**

# Chocolate Quiz

Can you work out the names of these chocolates or chocolate bars?

1	Locals from Malta
2	Subject
3	High class thoroughfare
4	Clever folk
5	Arrange marriage partners
6	Talk quietly
7	Outside meal
8	Big bus
9	Small wave
10	Istanbul harem
11	Dark occult
12	Big cat's pub
13	Spin around
14	It's a party
15	Small dog
16	Mother's local
17	Feline Equipment
18	Garden flowers
19	Sly giggles
20	Legendary brave people
21	Up out there
22	Even more up out there
23	Dairy holder
24	Reward

# Odds and Ends

I remember the first time I saw a universal remote control.

I thought to myself, "Well, this changes everything!"

The Patron Saint of copying people in on emails is St Francis of a cc

Everyone is saying my homemade wine tastes horrible. I think it's just sour grapes!

The man who makes the giant eclairs at our local patisserie is retiring next week. There'll be some choux to fill when he goes.

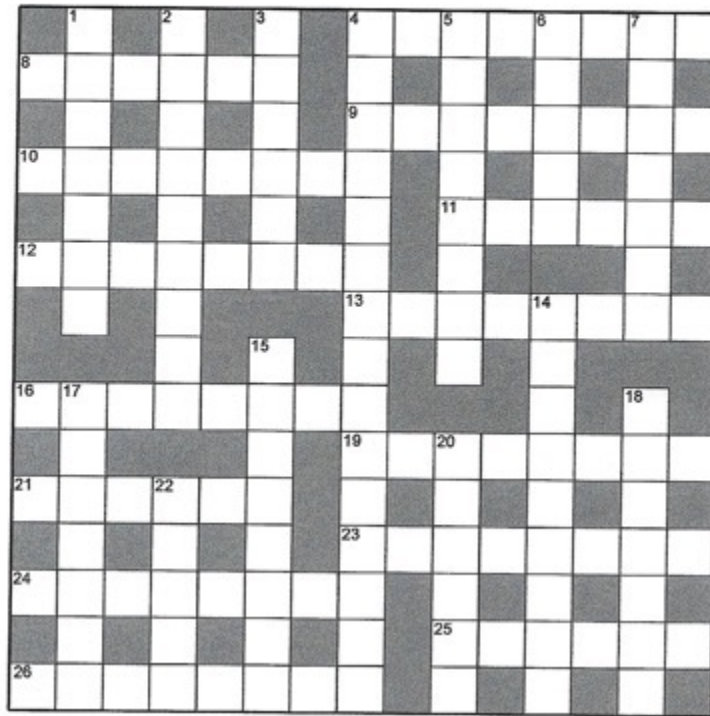
My wife bought me a second-hand pack of playing cards. Several cards are missing and I'm struggling to deal with this.

I was just remembering my Grandfather. He was a remarkable man. He once visited over 30 countries in less than 90 days. The Post Office was most embarrassed that they lost his ashes.

I'll always remember careers day at school. The teacher asked me what I wanted to be. I said I wanted to be a circus clown. She said "Trying to be funny, are we?"

We went up to the Ryanair check-in desk today. The assistant asked "Do you have reservations?". I said "Yes, but we're flying with you anyway."

## Crossword – courtesy of Alan Sayers



### ACROSS

- 4 Concerned about the cat being reprimanded (8)
- 8 This expression unravels at the edges by the sound of it (6)
- 9 Regard for dividends (8)
- 10 It's plainly apparent that the vase could tip up (8)
- 11 Partly lost, ending up in Belgium (6)
- 12 Depicts the harbour lights (8)
- 13 Formerly a pitman, now an assessor (8)
- 16 She has to cut everything back (8)
- 19 Drink that goes straight to one's head (8)
- 21 Stayed off until secured (6)
- 23 Brought together the components of a chain (8)
- 24 The sort of adventurer who can't be bothered to move a muscle (8)
- 25 Ticking along doing nothing (6)
- 26 Chief reporter resisted change (8)

### DOWN

- 1 Hill sheep (7)
- 2 Ran back to make allowances for the account (9)
- 3 A bulge leaping about in the water could be a whale (6)
- 4 Plants that comes with a fire risk (7,8)
- 5 Consideration always includes some logic and reasoning (8)
- 6 Partly regretted not seeing this feathered creature (5)
- 7 Concentrated on plant extract (7)
- 14 You might want your coffee straight away (9)
- 15 Fellow actor who's a real pal (8)
- 17 Went to bed after finishing work (7)
- 18 Servant about to work in public bars (7)
- 20 He takes a breather, that is, before going on a fishing trip (6)
- 22 A tax applied to a racecourse (5)

## Quiz Answers

1	Malteasers	13	Twirl
2	Topic	14	Celebration
3	Quality Street	15	Yorkie
4	Smarties	16	Mars Bar
5	Matchmakers	17	Kit Kat
6	Wispa	18	Roses
7	Picnic	19	Snickers
8	Double Decker	20	Heros
9	Ripple	21	Milky Way
10	Turkish Delight	22	Galaxy
11	Black Magic	23	Milk Tray
12	Lion Bar	24	Bounty

## Crossword Answers

**ACROSS** - 4 Carpeted. 8 Phrase. 9 Interest. 10 Overturn. 11 Ostend. 12 Portrays. 13 Examiner. 16 Prunella. 19 Nightcap. 21 Steady. 23 Enlinked. 24 Armchair. 25 Idling. 26 Editress.

**DOWN** - 1 Cheviot. 2 Narration. 3 Beluga. 4 Chinese Lanterns. 5 Rational. 6 Egret. 7 Essence. 14 Instantly. 15 Playmate. 17 Retired. 18 Taverns. 20 Gillie. 22 Ascot.

## End Piece

*Under the Sycamore  
lenten roses do penance until  
primroses pray for redemption and  
the trees come into leaf.*

**Mary Atkinson**