



## Members Newsletter June 2026

### Dear Alnwick u3a members

It looks like another mixed summer ahead, but that won't stop us having fun! The coach trips take a lot of organising and planning but are so much fun. There are a couple more this summer, do have a look at your diaries with this newsletter. I enjoyed the trip to The Sill and Vindolanda, managing to get around some of the site, and spending time with members, familiar and new to me. Thank you to the organisers. We hope you enjoy reading this edition, interacting with the quiz, and reminding yourselves about our monthly speakers.

**Best wishes, Carollyn, Chair**

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# April Monthly Meeting

## Empathy Architecture: Why our Built and Natural Heritage Matters - Tim Wickens

Tim is Chair of the Planning and Development Team at Newcastle and Northumberland Society (N&NS). The Society began in 1924 as the Newcastle upon Tyne Society and Northumberland was incorporated in 1929. At the start the society had the following statement. 'To promote a wider concern for the beauty, historical interest, amenity, healthfulness and development of the city' with the motto 'Pulchra Petendo Consequemer' which translates as, 'Beauty only comes with effort'.



The society is concerned with town planning and in its early days this included: - smoke abatement, ancient monuments, antiquities and amenities. Leading local figures were involved including, Robert Temperley, a lawyer and Robert Burns Dick, an architect. It is not a pressure group and aims to be constructive using 'moderation and helpfulness' in its discussions. An early success story was Bessie Surtees House on Newcastle Quayside which was saved from demolition.

Professor George McCauley Trevelyan was a prominent early member of the society and had concerns about quarrying around Hadrian's Wall. He purchased Housesteads Farm and passed it to the National Trust. Sir Charles Trevelyan and Lady Trevelyan of Wallington Hall were supporters of the society.

Oswin Craster was chair in 1968. He was Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments for the Ministry of Works. The Kielder Viaduct was purchased by the society in 1969 for the nominal sum of £1. It was the first of only five railway viaducts in England to be designated as scheduled monuments. This happened while Oswin was in charge. It is now part of a footpath and cycleway around Kielder.



There are many reasons why we should value our heritage. It has been said that 'No country has a greater diversity of historic places...'. There are impressive figures for the gross value added to our economy by the heritage sector. In 2021, in London alone £10.7 billion was generated. Heritage supports 80% of construction, libraries and the architectural sector, although the Northeast is at the bottom of the list for England. However, places such as Beamish Museum stand out, and in 2025 it had 815,000 visitors.

## April Monthly Meeting – contd

The Planning and Development Team's activities involve the review of planning applications; advocacy for heritage; working with other partners; and responding to consultations e.g. local council plans. Northumberland has 5607 listed buildings, a huge number. The society must be pragmatic and cannot win in every case. However, their comments in previous years have been referenced in 90% of cases and Local Planning Committee decisions have agreed with N&NS view in 80% of cases.

'Empathy Architecture' is not opposed to new development but aims to prevent poor design and unsustainable buildings, and a lack of sympathy for our heritage and cultural identity. There are benefits of an empathetic approach in that good design endures and brings vibrancy to cities. Re-using existing buildings reduces emissions. There are 670,000 heritage buildings in England which could readily be adapted to dwellings.

Carloli House in Newcastle was built in 1927 and is a grade II listed building. In 2003 it was due for partial demolition, but it was almost totally demolished leaving just a single wall standing. N&NS tried to prevent this but was not successful in this case. The society was more successful in stopping a couple of inappropriate buildings on the quayside. Several examples of buildings being preserved include the House of Tithes, Malmaison Hotel, the Spanish City in Whitley Bay and Barter Books in Alnwick. The society wants to dispel the perception that renovation is poor value compared to demolition and reconstruction.



# May Monthly Meeting

## Good Day Sunshine – The Beatles in Florida

by Brian Ward

Brian gave a short reminder of his last talk which focused on how, in the early days, The Beatles had been influenced by music from the US South. Moving on to 1963, The Beatles performed 250 shows in the UK and Europe and wanted to conquer the USA, which was always difficult. However, in early 1964 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' was released and topped the Billboard charts which led to The Beatles travelling to America to appear on The Ed Sullivan Show. Crowds greeted them at the airport in iconic scenes which were widely reported in the press.

They spent five days in New York before moving on to Florida for eight days. This visit is much less well known, yet 5-8000 people greeted them here, against 2-3000 in New York. They visited the beaches in Miami and were able to look around and enjoy some free time. The photos of this visit show them looking a lot freer than in NY where they always looked to be hemmed in by crowds and the press.



Their arrival coincided with concerns about Cuba which was very close to Florida geographically. There was a particular controversy when the British government agreed to supply Castro's Cuba with a fleet of Leyland buses President Johnson suggested

that the government should simply send the \$1.4 million invoice to his Texas ranch and he'd buy the buses himself. "Instead of buses, why don't the English send [the Beatles] to Cuba?" suggested one Southern critic. Many cartoons appeared in the US press including one that said 'On top of Fidel we get Beatles'.



## May Monthly Meeting (contd.)



The whole visit was painted as a very 'white' experience despite the population being 22% black. Almost no people of colour are in photographs (although this applied to poor white people too), apart from one unusual shot of The Beatles in a car driven by Buddy Dresner, their police guide/minder. They had stopped next to a bench where three black women are seated. The photo is taken from behind the women so you cannot see their faces, but Paul and John appear to be talking to them through the car window. It is likely that the civil rights movement in the South had an influence on the band who later refused to play in front of a segregated audience, which was in line with the policy of the Musicians Union, of which they were members.

A high point for The Four was a meeting with Cassius Clay (later Mohammed Ali) who was due to fight Sonny Liston. Both boxers asked for a photo shoot with The Beatles, but they ended up at Cassius Clay's camp.



The Florida visit gave the band an insight into Florida life when they experienced local hospitality, but they saw that behind the veneer there was race discrimination. In September 1964 they visited Florida again, during hurricane Dora and found lots of civil rights demonstrations going on. Their accommodation was segregated so they decided to leave.

Brian's talk is based on his new book - 'She Loves Y'All: The Beatles and the US South' which is due out in 2027.

**Mary Brazier**

# Updates

**Holiday news** - National u3a has partnered with Riviera Travel to support local u3as. When a local u3a member books a holiday directly with Riviera Travel, 10% of the basic cost (excluding supplements and upgrades) will be donated to The Third Age Trust and given to the nominated local u3a (10% of the donation will be retained by the Third Age Trust to contribute to the running costs of the scheme).

For queries regarding this u3a scheme, call 01283 523 470, or email [affinity@rivieratravel.co.uk](mailto:affinity@rivieratravel.co.uk)

## **First Aid Training**

We had a well-attended First Aid Training session in February, given by Ian Chisholm, from St Johns Ambulance. Everyone who went said it was a useful and informative event. I am pleased to announce that there will be another training session on 29<sup>th</sup> September at 10pm in the Small Hall.

I have asked Ian to cover some of the original topics, but also some new ones. If you are interested in attending, please send me an email.

**Trevor Robinson**

**[trevor.robinson2@btinternet.com](mailto:trevor.robinson2@btinternet.com)**

# June Photos by Alan Sayers

## Keukenhof Spring Gardens in The Netherlands



## Remaining Monthly Meetings in 2026

**JUNE 18th** '**A Royal Medieval Travelogue**' - Aidan Harrison uses the manuscript of John Yonge, Somerset Herald, to describe the events of the 20-day journey of Princess Margaret Tudor from Kent to Berwickshire in 1503.

**JULY 16th** '***The Story of the Bathing House***' - Jen Teulon will talk about the history of the Bathing House at Howick and the various people who have lived there over the years.

**SEPTEMBER 17th** '***We are what we eat: how our food intake expresses our affiliations and life journey***' - Lynn Harbottle, dietitian and medical social anthropologist, will talk about her own food influences to illustrate the meanings and significance we assign to food and eating.

**OCTOBER 15th (AGM first)** '***A marine animal on the beach - what should you do?***' - Lorna Llewellyn, a volunteer with the British Divers Marine Life Rescue, will enlighten us with her presentation.

**NOVEMBER 19th** '***The buildings of David Stephenson***' - Richard Pears, Durham University Librarian, makes a welcome return to introduce us this time to David Stephenson, an 18/19<sup>th</sup> century architect from the Northeast.

**DECEMBER 10th** '***Daring to make a comeback***' - Martin Shingler, writer, editor and film historian, making a welcome return to explore the reasons why some ageing film stars have risked reputational damage by making a comeback after a significant period of absence.

# On This Day – 1<sup>st</sup> June



**NUMBER 1 IN THE CHARTS  
ON THIS DAY, 1ST JUNE 1980  
The theme tune to M\*A\*S\*H  
“SUICIDE IS PAINLESS”**

MASH is an American, war, comedy, drama which aired from September 17th 1972, to February 28th 1983. It was a spin-off series from the 1970 film. This was adapted from the book:

*MASH: A Novel about Three Army Doctors by Richard Hooker*

The series follows a team of doctors and support staff stationed at the "4077th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital" in Uijeongbu, South Korea, during the Korean War(1950–1953). It focuses on the interrelationships, stress and trauma involved in being a part of a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital. They survive the odds with the help of practical jokes and fun.

This is one famous quote from Hawkeye, I'm sure you know many more.

*Hawkeye: War isn't Hell. War is war, and Hell is Hell. And of the two, war is a lot worse.*

*Father Mulcahy: How do you figure, Hawkeye?*

*Hawkeye: Easy, Father. Tell me, who goes to Hell?*

*Father Mulcahy: Sinners, I believe.*

*Hawkeye: Exactly. There are no innocent bystanders in Hell. War is chock full of them - little kids, cripples, old ladies. In fact, except for some of the brass, almost everybody involved is an innocent bystander.*

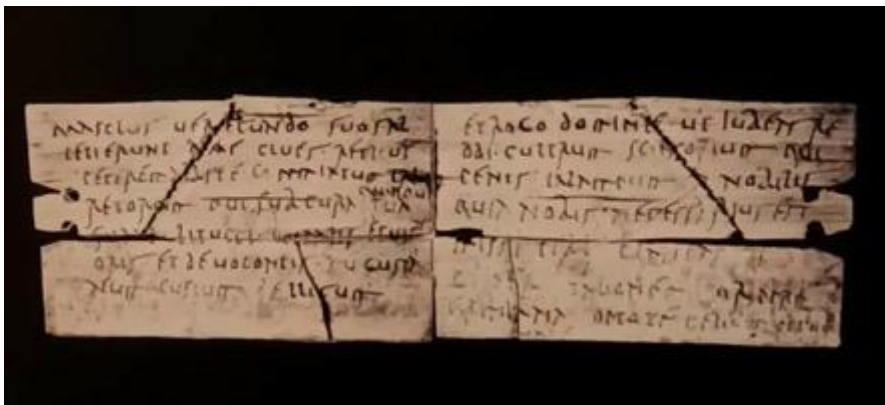
# Archaeology trip to The Sill and Vindolanda

## 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026 – by Mary Brazier

At The Sill we were able to walk up onto the roof, look at a photo exhibition, and see a part of the felled Sycamore Gap tree which has been made into a sculpture. Lunch was also taken here.

The Vindolanda site is a Roman Fort and village containing the remains of many buildings including barracks, baths, houses etc. In the museum we saw many items excavated at the site including, shoes, weapons, jewelry, coins, domestic items, and the tablets which contain early written messages, some 350 letters in total.

The cafe served delicious treats, and the weather was better than forecast with the rain holding off until we were leaving. Many thanks go to George and Pat for organising such an excellent trip.



**Tablets**



**View of  
Vindolanda  
site**

## Archaeology trip – contd.



**Sycamore Gap tree sculpture**



**A Horse's Chamfron**

## Archaeology trip - contd.



**Swords**



**Butchers shop and house**



**Another building**

## Sum-Mer Quiz

All the answers include the letters "sum" or "mer" in the answer

### No. Question

- 1 TV soap opera set in the Yorkshire dales
- 2 Japanese full-contact wrestling
- 3 Curved stick with aerodynamic properties
- 4 Short description of the main facts
- 5 Silver coloured liquid metal
- 6 Easy peeling fruit that is popular at Christmas
- 7 Very soft expensive wool material made from the hair of goats
- 8 Important formal meeting or highest point
- 9 Imaginary creature with the upper body of a woman and the tail of a fish
- 10 Latin word meaning "back" used in medical names and descriptions
- 11 Gymnastic rolling movement or jump
- 12 Hard white substance used to make plaster of Paris
- 13 Green stone often used in jewellery
- 14 Start an activity again after a pause
- 15 Piece of wide cloth worn around the waist for formal clothing
- 16 Accept something to be true without question or proof
- 17 Author of 'The Iliad' and 'The Odyssey'
- 18 Use fuel, energy, time or product
- 19 Old MacDonald's occupation
- 20 Hole or container, especially in the lower part of an engine
- 21 Humorous poem with five lines

## **My Journey to Alnwick u3a – by Tessa Nichol**

I was raised in Alnmouth & started my career in Social Work in Alnwick after graduation. After many years continuing my career as a counsellor & college lecturer on Tyneside I was ready to retire to where it all began – Alnwick – in July 2014.

I only knew about five people & one of them was Judy Williams, who asked if I wanted to join a walk led by a u3a member, during which I learned about all the other activities on the programme.

I wanted to join a book group, but the existing one was full so Kathy Platt suggested I stand up in the monthly meeting & ask if anyone would like to join a new group at my house in the evening. Two ladies came to me afterwards and they were my founder members, one of whom is still coming today, nearly 12 years on.

I couldn't believe how many interest groups were represented. I tried a couple of them and found they were not for me, but I still attend at least 8 groups on a regular basis and contribute to some of them by giving talks on subjects that interest me.

I really enjoy the trips we have and am very grateful to the group leaders who organise them.

## **My Journey to Alnwick u3a – contd.**

It is wonderful to see so many u3a members at various shifts I do at the Playhouse as a volunteer steward which is the other source of joy for me.

Retirement is meant to be enjoyed & I have found both friendship & stimulation through the u3a, even attending their Summer Schools in Scotland.

My daughter laughingly refers to it as Mum's cult but if it is one, I'm very pleased to have been indoctrinated into it!

**Tessa Nichol**

This is the third article from one of our members about what brought them to Alnwick u3a, and what they have enjoyed since they arrived.

It would be great to have more articles from our members! If you fancy writing a few words on this topic, why not let me know?

**Trevor Robinson, Newsletter Editor**

## ZOOMING AROUND U3A – EDWARD CARTNER

Membership of any u3a offers a range of additional and external activity, sponsored and organised by national and regional committees; one such is u3a North East Region. In May this committee organised a ‘u3a Creative Journey’ at Ushaw Historic House, Durham. It was a full day of activity that offered 20 subjects to the nearly 200 members who attended (including the CEO of the Third Age Trust).

Thanks to my association with a u3a writing group, I was invited to jointly lead the poetry writing and separate short story writing activity. These are only two of a fascinating choice that included: organ and piano recitals; Irish History; the impact of Artificial Intelligence; Tai Chi and Line Dancing. Further presentations covered St. Julian of Norwich, Willow weaving; Birdwatching, Flower Walks, Bayeux Tapestry, Hieroglyphs and the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior. Those attending had been invited to register their particular interests for the day and there was sufficient time allowed for movement between rooms.

At midday everybody met in the magnificent refectory for a very well-organised packed lunch-style break. The superb setting of Ushaw Hall – especially for the recitals in St Cuthbert’s Chapel – enhanced the occasion, and I believe the regional committee are considering a repeat.



**U3A Recitals in St Cuthbert’s  
Chapel - Ushaw Historic House**

## ZOOMING AROUND U3A – CONTD.

For me, the day was the latest in my involvement with u3a activity beyond Alnwick (although I always identify myself as from 'Alnwick U3A'). Once a month I login to an online 'Zoom' group called Northern Region Creative Writers (NRCW). Typically, there will be about eight or nine of us on screen from Alnwick to North Yorkshire. During a two-hour session we will swap ideas and read our 'homework' created from the prompts set by our energetic leader. Occasionally we meet face-to-face – Newcastle City Archive being a notable example – usually followed by a friendly lunch in some back-street place known only to Newcastle folk.

NRCW have offered writing workshops in prose and poetry; one such was at The Sill at Once Brewed, 'Roman Wall Country' the event was organised by u3a Central Office, and members came from all over the country. More locally, we ran a successful Creative Writing workshop at Brunswick Methodist Church in the centre of Newcastle.

Another u3a 'Zoom' interest is the u3a Online Learning Events programme. Here, u3a Central Office publishes online a monthly programme of talks, activity and interest groups. All are free to individual members who register their choice with a booking agency. They acknowledge your interest and, in turn, give a 2-day, and also on-the-day reminder of your choice, together with the online link, identifier and password. You do need the Zoom 'Workplace' app on your system, of course, but I'm no tech wizard and it works well for me. The event I 'attended' last week had over 200 on-screen participants. The web address to sign up for these events is [u3a - Online learning events](#) .

# Odds and Ends

Chap just rang my doorbell. I opened it. He was about 3ft 3" tall. I asked who he was. He told me he was the metre man.

A police officer pulled me over and asked me if I knew why he had pulled me over. I asked him to wait a minute, as I was on the phone.

"Politicians and diapers must be changed often, and for the same reason".

I was really ugly as a baby. People used to stop my Mum in the street and say "what a beautiful pushchair".

Mark Twain

When I was very young, we only had an outside toilet.

So, three conspiracy theorists walk into a bar. You can't tell me that's just a coincidence.

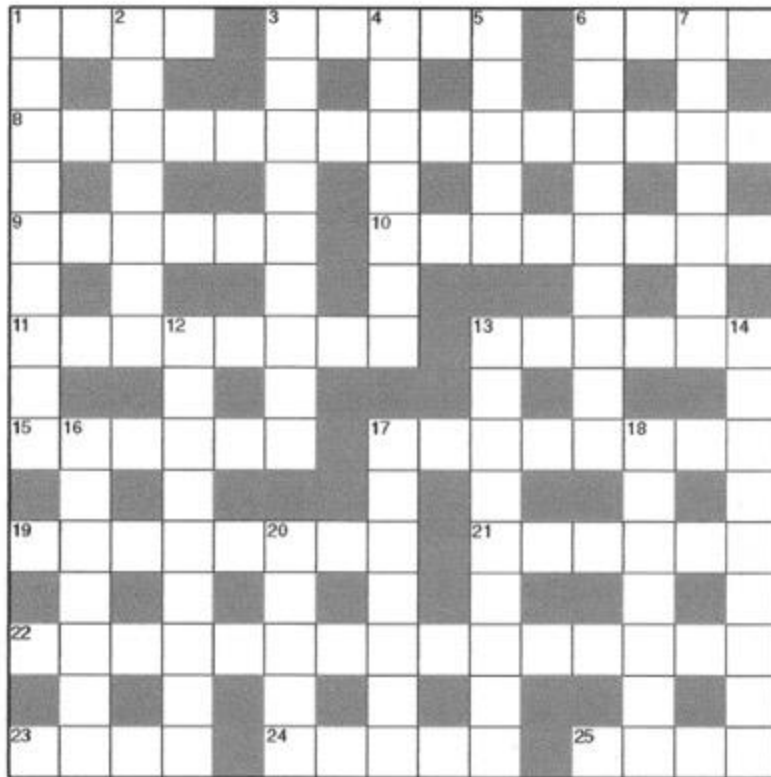
But my Dad was a very hard worker, and eventually we had a house as well.

Sliced bread will be 98 years old on July 7. David Attenborough celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on May 8.

This makes sliced bread the best thing since David Attenborough.

# Crossword

(courtesy of Maureen and Alan Sayers)



## ACROSS

- 1 No needles in haystacks but you could find a nail! (4)
- 3 Additional part in a film (5)
- 6 Stern defender (4)
- 8 Shocking Weather (10,5)
- 9 Adding this to salad is hard somehow (6)
- 10 Tired of shopping having not written down what I wanted (8)
- 11 Oxygen provided by travel companies (8)
- 13 Oddly, spares are in short supply (6)
- 15 Carves up a bad golf shot (6)
- 17 Authorise account to accept money (8)
- 19 Exaggerates on stage (8)
- 21 Lifestyle for those with nothing on (6)
- 22 A reward for reaching a certain day of remembrance (8,7)
- 23 Encourages someone to add these to the breakfast menu (4)
- 24 Ridge broken up as part of a funeral rite (5)
- 25 Ford's Focus edition includes secondhand models (4)

## DOWN

- 1 Restrict intervals to decide the winner on the tennis court (9)
- 2 Gorge on a milk product (7)
- 3 Listeners phone in on the tiniest of speakers (9)
- 4 Gets to grip with competing for the ball (7)
- 5 Bodybuilder who had a book named after him (5)
- 6 Forceful woman wielding sharp weapon (9)
- 7 Process somehow used to deal with those in the mortuary (7)
- 12 Cuts cost in shoestring (9)
- 13 Can't decide if she looks after patients or she herself is the patient! (9)
- 14 Gussed the date and times got mixed up (9)
- 16 The French contesting the imposing of a tax (7)
- 17 Idiot takes a year out to analyse precious metals (7)
- 18 Motorists taken onto the golf course (7)
- 20 Gave up being a top tennis player by the sounds of it (5)

## Quiz Answers

No.	Answer	No.	Answer	No.	Answer
1	Emmerdale	8	Summit	15	Cummerbund
2	Sumo	9	Mermaid	16	Assume
3	Boomerang	10	Dorsum	17	Homer
4	Summary	11	Somersault	18	Consume
5	Mercury	12	Gypsum	19	Farmer
6	Satsuma	13	Emerald	20	Sump
7	Cashmere	14	Resume	21	Limerick

## Crossword Answers

**ACROSS** - 1 Tack. 3 Extra. 6 Back. 8 Electrical Storm. 9 Radish. 10 Listless. 11 Airlines. 13 Sparse. 15 Slices. 17 Accredit. 19 Overacts. 21 Nudism. 22 Birthday Present. 23 Eggs. 24 Dirge. 25 Used.

**DOWN** - 1 Tiebreaks. 2 Cheddar. 3 Earphones. 4 Tackles. 5 Atlas. 6 Battleaxe. 7 Corpses. 12 Lacerates. 13 Sicknurse. 14 Estimated. 16 Levying. 17 Assayer. 18 Drivers. 20 Ceded.

## End Piece

Touched by the sun the earth preens its green.  
Garnered with blossom, gardens bloom.  
Wisteria whispers to nesting birds  
to unlatch the scent of lilac.

**Mary Atkinson**