

# South Durham U3A

Active in Darlington, Cockerton and surrounding areas



## Monthly Newsletter – April 2019 – No 198

### Chair's Message

You will have noticed that the newsletter has a new look this month. In the absence of anyone else taking it over, the committee are endeavouring to continue producing a newsletter for the membership, as it is clearly much appreciated. We hope you continue to enjoy reading it. Anyone submitting reports or new items should send them to [southdurhamu3a@gmail.com](mailto:southdurhamu3a@gmail.com). This is the same address for items for the website.

I am pleased to inform members that we have received a letter from Dorothy's Well thanking us for your generous donations totalling £250. Thank you for supporting a very worthy cause.

We have taken a year's membership with The Hub at Barnard Castle, which has 16 seater minibuses for hire either as volunteer or self drive. Dave Boyd has a licence to drive it (do any other members have the same?). Cost is £20 per day and 80p per mile and we hope this will help our groups who have smaller numbers and wish to take trips further afield instead of car sharing.

Can I remind you that if paying for trips by cheque please make them payable to **South Durham U3A**.

Finally I'd like to finish by thanking the ladies who are baking cakes for us to enjoy with our coffee!

Carol Boyd – 01325 496153 – [carolboydu3a@gmail.com](mailto:carolboydu3a@gmail.com)

**National & Regional U3A put all their events and publications online now, they send us very little by post. Please go online and take a look at what's going on nationally and regionally.**

**National U3A:** <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

**Northumbria Region:** <https://u3asites.org.uk/northumbria/home>

## RECENT EVENTS

### Last Month's Speaker

#### Dorothy's Well Project Tanzania Jim O'Connor

The project which is a registered charity was set up by Jim O'Connor in memory of his wife Dorothy, who died of breast cancer in September 2006. Initially he went to Nkoraya primary School, Tanzania with a group of teachers who were working there. He was appalled by the lack of sanitation, poverty and clean water. He saw older pupils carrying dirty containers to a polluted stream, this was the water used for cooking and drinking. In addition to illness and death from polluted water, the water turns teeth black and bends limbs. He explained that children sat 3 to a bench and were sharing one pencil between 3. That there was no classroom floor and worms could climb on to and into the skin. On his return home Jim began researching, planning and fund-raising. He eventually raised £20,000 and returned to build his first well and 12 bay latrine, which he dedicated to his wife. He has now sunk 18 wells, 17 of which are working, they are all deep solar powered wells with 10,000 litre storage tanks, standpipes and taps. Four, 12 bay latrines have also been built, each well has a dedication plaque. Schools can use the clean water to grow seeds and vegetables enabling quality food to be grown and used in school meals. On each visit Jim takes a gift for each child in the school of a Beanie hat, wrapped in the hat is a toothbrush, pen and pencil. He prides himself on the fact that 100% of the fund-raising goes back into the charity. Thank you Jim for a memorable and moving talk. **Marie Graham**

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**ICE CARDS (In Case of Emergency) will be available for collection at April's meeting.**

**Please complete one and carry it with you at all U3A events and trips.**

### Design Appreciation - 28th March

Our subject for the March meeting was the Arts and Crafts architect Philip Webb. Clive explained that his interest was alerted when he attended a talk about the life of Gertrude Bell and it transpired that her very wealthy industrialist father and grandfather had known, and had had, buildings designed by Webb. One of these was Rounton Grange in East Rounton, not far from the A19, but Webb had also designed, or his assistant George Jack had, other buildings in and near that village. Rounton Grange was demolished in 1953 but the Gatehouse, School, Village Hall and a delightful lychgate, remain.

Philip Webb had been one of the founders of the Arts and Crafts movement in association with William Morris, and Webb designed Morris's own house, The Red House, in Bexleyheath in Kent. He also designed Standen in East Grinstead for the solicitor James Beale, as well as many other projects and in many of these he worked with other artists and craftsmen, to produce a comprehensive design statement. Another close associate was the painter Edward Burne-Jones. The Red House and Standen are today both run by The National Trust.

A large part of Clive's presentation inevitably featured William Morris but with references to Philip Webb and other designer/craftsmen, such as C R Ashbee, and we saw some wonderful metalwork, joinery and ceramics. The influence of the Arts and Crafts movement spread to Europe and had a considerable influence in the United States where similar approaches to design spawned many local workshops and even larger ones, such as Tiffany's.

*Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or, believe to be beautiful - William Morris.*  
**Clive Reeves**

### Discoverers 28<sup>th</sup> March

The International Fire Training School transferred from Stansted to Teesside in 1981 since when it has gone into private ownership and now trains fire fighters from 183 countries around the world. They train Aviation Fire Fighters (based at airports), North Sea workers (on the rigs), industrial firefighters (eg. ICI on Teesside) and local fire brigades. They are based in the old RAF buildings where they offer accommodation, food and training for a wide variety of residential and day courses. On site they have a bar, dining room, gym and prayer room.

After this initial briefing our group was taken in a convoy of vehicles to the 'Fireground' out beyond the airfield, passing the Air Ambulance (soon to be removed to Urray Nook) and 6 fighter jets used by the MOD for target practise! On the Fireground we were confronted by a number of fire engines, many firefighters in full protective gear and huge 'rigs' – the pieces of equipment they use to replicate real life scenarios where they must douse the fire and save casualties. During the visit I learned:

- That they are not allowed to set fire to real aircraft because of the pollutants they would release
- That the 'rigs' they do set fire to will last 10-15 years before they need replacing
- That dummy 'casualties' come in all shapes and sizes to replicate the people they may have to save including those who are obese.
- That 96% of the water used on the site is filtered and reused (taking oil out of it)
- That different 'rigs' replicate different size planes – eg. Category 5 rig is like a 737 and smaller than a Category 8, 9 or 10 rig (one of which is double decker) and has more room to manoeuvre.
- There is also a helicopter rig and a rig replicating a North Sea platform.
- A variety of ordinary looking containers were adapted for rescues in confined spaces.

We were able to observe a couple of real exercises – one of which had a NATO team responding to a vehicle crashing into a fuel stand and the subsequent fire of fuel storage and a transformer station. There were also 4 casualties to recover. The exercises are overseen and assessed by Tutors who can pass or fail the participants. There was so much happening wherever we looked, whether groups of firefighters, smoke, flames, heat, foam, or water cannon it was a thoroughly remarkable visit – and the time went very quickly. Thank you Carol, for organising yet another successful Discoverers visit. **Ruth Beckett**

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### Hill Walking 15<sup>th</sup> March

On the 15<sup>th</sup> March five hardy souls set off from Bowes to walk to God's Bridge in gale force wind and then we were rained on as we had our fruit stop! When we arrived at God's Bridge we had our lunch break and decided that it was silly to go up a height in the wind so just returned the way we had come to be hit with hailstones and rain, even a bit of sun! I think we all enjoyed the fresh air and the coffee and cake stop on the way home. Thank you Susan for leading this walk. **Dave Boyd**

### Intermediate Walking 18<sup>th</sup> March

Thirteen members took part in a walk from Seaton Carew to Hartlepool on a bright morning. There were some interesting diversions before we all managed to meet up on the sea front. Some of us carefully followed instructions from Google maps and were directed to a cul de sac on a housing estate, but common sense asserted itself and we found our way. An easy walk with crashing waves to watch as we strolled along. In the Marina at Hartlepool we stopped at the Green Olive restaurant and had our lunch before returning under cloudy skies to Seaton Carew. Thank you Dave for organising the walk. **Liz K.**

### Local History - Richmond Station

On Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March John Young (retired Lt. Colonel) treated the Local History group to an illustrated talk on the history of Richmond Station. He had first arrived there as a young soldier in 1966, but the station dates back to 1847 when the new railway line was opened as a branch line from Darlington. Back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century this meant you could now travel from Richmond to London in 12 hours, a previously unimaginable journey time!

The train line went from Darlington via Croft Spa, with stations at Moulton, Scorton and Catterick Bridge then on to Richmond. Here they built (on a large piece of land on the other side of the river) the new station building, engine shed, gas house, stationmaster's house and 6 cottages. The railway company also built the bridge over the River Swale in order that people and goods could reach the station. It was in 1915 when Catterick Camp was established that the platform was extended to cope with the troop trains and the road over the bridge extended up to the Camp. The bridge then became the responsibility of the local authority.

The railway was well used until the 1960s when increased competition from road transport began to affect it and then Dr Beeching proposed its closure. Passenger trains were maintained for a few years but goods trains were removed, along with the sidings, signals and signal box. As the station's income dropped dramatically the station finally closed in 1969. The site was purchased by Richmond District Council who built a pool and fitness centre on part of the land. The station building was used as a Farm and Garden Centre. Ultimately the building became empty and luckily remained intact without any damage to the structure until the Richmondshire Building Preservation Trust took it over paying £60,000 for a 999 year lease. By now the station building was Grade 2 Listed and therefore any changes would have to be very carefully controlled.

The Trust raised funds locally and then applied for help from the Heritage Lottery Fund and European Social Fund. Conversion began in 2006 and was completed at the end of 2007 providing 3 cinema screens, a cafe/restaurant, art gallery, meeting rooms and a selection of shops. It has proved very popular over the last eleven years and is well used by a large number of local groups.

It was agreed before the meeting ended that the Local History group would welcome an opportunity to visit the station and enjoy a guided walk around the site (and maybe have a coffee & scone or lunch while we are there!!). Thanks to John for his time and enthusiasm. **Ruth Beckett**

### Local History Group visit to Elm Ridge 22 March 2019

Hiding behind Elm Ridge Garden Centre on the corner of Coniscliffe Road and Carmel Road South lies a former Pease mansion designed by G G Hoskins and built for John Pease as a family home and later converted to a Methodist Church.

Local History Group members met in the beautiful grounds of what is now Elm Ridge Church and enjoyed refreshments in the Harroway Room, (the former kitchen of the home) George Harroway being the local business man responsible for transforming the former Pease mansion into a place of worship in 1932.

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The story begins in 1866 when a pair of houses were built on farmland at Salutation Corner, the first house Woodburn was a wedding present for John Pease's elder daughter Sophia, the 2<sup>nd</sup> house, Elm Ridge, was not ready for occupation when John died in 1868. The Property was then occupied by John's widow, and on her death her younger daughter Mary Anna inherited the property. She married Jonathan Backhouse Hodgkin and Elm Ridge became the family home for them and their 7 children for many years.

On the death of both Jonathan and Mary Anna in the 1920's the future of Elm Ridge was in jeopardy. Fortunately George Harroway, a member of Bondgate Wesleyan Church, living locally on Blackwell Hill, imagined the Pease Mansion as being a place of worship for local Methodists. The Church were extremely fortunate that George Harroway was able to arrange matters financially and he offered Elm Ridge with its garden and grounds to them as a gift.

The transformation from a family home to a place of worship involved the removal of the main staircase and some of the upper floor to create the wonderful conversion we see today. Mr Harroway was very much involved in the process, acting as the clerk of works. The official opening of Darlington's new Church took place on 8 June 1932 when Civic dignitaries and representatives of the Church had lunch at Bondgate Memorial Hall before marching to Elm Ridge, Hundreds of people assembled in the driveway while Mrs G N Harroway and Miss Mary Hodgkin performed the opening and naming ceremony. More than 80 years later the former mansion continues to be not only a place of worship but a great centre for the wider community.

Unlike Elm Ridge, the 2<sup>nd</sup> mansion Woodburn, did not survive and was demolished in 1935, substantial properties were built on the site and the builders were able to incorporate some of the original stonework from Woodburn into the houses on what is now Woodburn Drive. The original gardens became Woodburn Nursery, and more recently a further housing development.

On commencing our tour of the Church we entered by the main front door, this lead us into what is now the traditional place of worship. The windows originally in the rooms on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor now form part of the upper part of the Church. A balcony was added some years ago to provide more seating; again the windows remain, providing a view of the grounds and beyond. The ground floor of the Building contains the original family Dining room, with two doors, one for the family and the other for the staff to serve the meals.

Two of the upstairs rooms are now occupied as offices and the steward occupies an apartment on the first floor, however we were able to walk around various other rooms containing original features, each still displaying family photographs and some containing original furniture and other items belonging to the Hodgkin's family. We were able to look at photographs of the inside of the building whilst standing in the actual places as they are now. Some of the Mansions outbuildings remain, i.e. the Butlers Lodge is now part of Elm Ridge Garden Centre, and some of the outbuildings have now been converted to private dwellings. The lawn area remains with views towards the banks of the Tees.

We all thoroughly enjoyed our talk and tour of Elm Ridge and really appreciate the time and effort put in by Mary & Ali, they are happy to accommodate a further group later in the year, so please let me know if you would like to take this opportunity to walk around a former Pease mansion. **Debbie Hardy**

### **Reading Group 1 - Conversations with Friends by Sally Rooney**

This is the debut novel of a young Irish writer and was completed while she was at Trinity College Dublin, studying for her Masters degree. The book has received many accolades and was subject to a 7 party auction for the publishing rights and sold in 12 countries.

So, how does it live up to all the hype? The Guardian describes Rooney as the 'Salinger of the snapchat generation' which pinpoints the appeal of the book to a modern generation of readers whose own lives are dominated by 'conversations' on social media as are the lives of the 4 protagonists of the story. The characters do also have face to face conversations but these sometimes come over as pretentious perhaps a feature of young people struggling to form their own ideas and feelings. I can remember being like that myself!

However, the author is adept at capturing the ways in which people interact nowadays even to the extent of abandoning punctuation, and this may explain the appeal of a story in which not a great deal happens.

Described by the group as akin to a soap opera which is reflected in the inconclusive ending, this is perhaps a little harsh. Rooney's second novel NormalPeople has won even more awards than her debut.

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We felt that she shows promise in this early work but hope she will mature into a writer who really deserves all the praise that has been heaped upon her. Although not the 'cup of tea' of most members of the group it was an interesting insight into the lives and preoccupations of modern young people and the ways in which they communicate. **Toni Carr**

**Reading Group 2**

The new Reading Group met on 25 March to discuss the latest Book choice, Sally Heathcote, Suffragette, a graphic novel written by Mary Talbot with illustrations by Bryan Talbot and Kate Charlesworth. The book tells the story of the campaign for votes for women through the eyes of the fictional character Sally Heathcote, a housemaid who becomes involved in the suffragette movement in the early 1900's.

The historical details in the book are factual, telling the story of events mainly in London, but also highlighting events that took place in Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle. The graphics were not to everyone's taste, but it was agreed that the book demonstrated the harsh treatment of the suffragettes, particularly the force-feeding which caused lasting damage to the woman.

The story of Sally Heathcote finishes in 1969 when, as an older lady surrounded by suffragette memorabilia, she is visited in hospital by her granddaughter, about to reach the age of 18. Sally reminds her she will soon be able to vote, ironically her reply is "I don't think I'll bother grandma'. Oh dear after all the suffering of those brave woman.

**Debbie Hardy**

**Group Contacts**

<b>Boules</b>	Sue	07811 129179
<b>Canasta</b>	Margaret	485403
<b>Current Affairs</b>	Kathy	462020
<b>Design Appreciation</b>	Clive	358247
<b>Discoverers</b>	Carol	496153
<b>Gardening</b>	Ruth	252054
<b>Garden Visits</b>	Kathy	484208
<b>Hill Walking</b>	Susan	252713 & Liz 359921
<b>Intermediate Walking</b>	Dave	496153
<b>Local History</b>	Debbie	482165
<b>Mah-Jong</b>	Adrienne	482386
<b>Music for Pleasure</b>	Pat & Barry	482391
<b>Play Reading</b>	Muriel	486129
<b>Reading Group 1</b>	Ann	356847
<b>Reading Group 2</b>	Debbie	482165
<b>Rummikub</b>	Liz	359921 & Kathy 462020

**REGULAR GROUPS IN APRIL**

**Boules**

Boules is now in hibernation until the Spring. Contact Sue

**Canasta**

We meet at the Travellers Rest at 1:45 on 1st & 3rd Thursdays each month. We have more room here and new members are very welcome. Contact Margaret

**Current Affairs**

We meet on the last Tuesday of the month – **30<sup>th</sup> April** will be the next one. Contact Kathy Clulee.

**Design Appreciation**

Unfortunately there will no meeting on our next due date, 25th April, but I am anticipating a meeting on the **23rd May**. Contact Clive Reeves

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### **Discoverers**

April's visit to *Tennant's Auction House* on **Friday 26 April** 11am till 4pm. Meeting Cockerton Car Park to leave at 10am prompt.

Tour of *Embroidery and Textiles at Durham Cathedral* **Wednesday May 15** 10-30am till 12-30pm. £8 per person. Afternoon tour of Durham Castle: unfortunately this cannot take place till 3-15pm for 1 hour. Cost £ 4 per person.

May's visit to *Arbeia Roman Fort (South Shields)* on **Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May**. Tour is booked for 11am, lasting 1 hour.

We could then go to Coleman's Fish Restaurant for lunch.

Would people prefer a coach or car share for this trip?

List available at April's meeting. Contact Carol Boyd

### **Gardening Group**

Anyone interested in helping with others' gardens (whether giving advice or by using a spade or secateurs!) please contact Ruth

### **Garden Visits**

Kathy Liddle & Krissy Marshallsay have taken on this group and are putting together a programme of visits through the summer – usually on a Wednesday. Next visit – Harlow Carr on **1<sup>st</sup> May**.

### **Hill Walking**

The next hill walk is on Friday **26<sup>th</sup> April**: Reeth, Grinton, Harkerside Moor, High Harker Hill, Reeth. Approximately 7miles.

We now meet at Linden Avenue, (Coniscliffe Road end) to leave at 9.30. Contacts- Susan or Liz.

### **Intermediate Walking**

The next walk will be the **15<sup>th</sup> April**. This walk will be from Ingleton, about 5 miles. More information will be sent out nearer the time.

Then following that it will be **6<sup>th</sup> May** which will be a Bluebell walk As usual meet at Cockerton car park to leave promptly at 10. Contact Dave

### **Local History**

Talk by Jean Kirkland on **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April**.

Please do join us from 10 o'clock onwards at Bradbury House. We have room for a few more members or guests.

Contact Debbie Hardy

### **Guided tour of Richmond Station**

Following the success of our Talk on the above in March, we have been able to arrange a guided tour on **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April**, commencing at 10 30. I realize that this date may not suit everyone but I wanted the tour to be ASAP after our Talk, so I hope that we are able to get a Group together and enjoy hearing more about this marvelous Building.

Please let me know asap so I can let our Guide know numbers. Also we will book a table in the Cafe for afterwards. Debbie Hardy Phone 482165 or email [dahardy@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dahardy@hotmail.co.uk)

**Mah Jong** We meet in members' homes on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 2.00pm.

Contact Adrienne

**Music Appreciation Group** on 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Contact Barry Garnett

**Play Reading** Contact Muriel

### **Reading Group 1**

The next meeting will be held on **10<sup>th</sup> April** at Bernard's when we will be discussing *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame. Contact Ann on 356847

### **Reading Group 2**

Our next Book is a lengthy one, Paul Auster 4 3 2 1. Meeting on **Monday 29 April** @1.30pm at 46 Westfield Drive, Darlington. Room for more members, please contact me if you would like to join us and be involved in the Book choice. Debbie 482165

### **Rummikub**

The Rummikub group meets 10.00-12.00 on the first and third Friday of every month

Contact Kathy on 462020 for **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April**

Contact Liz on 359921 for **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May**

# SPECIAL EVENTS

## Theatre Visit – Theatre by the Lake, Keswick

Well I make this the fourth Lakes Theatre Trip. This year we will be seeing a matinee of Little Voice on **Friday 30th August 2019**, departing by coach from Cockerton opposite the library at 9am. This is a little earlier than previous years, taking into account the fact that we encountered some unexpected heavy traffic last year which resulted into biting into our time at the Lake.

Tickets are a little more expensive this year at £19.80 per person, what hasn't gone up in cost, with the price of the coach to follow depending upon the number of travellers. The versatile performers at the Theatre by the Lake never fail to impress. This production, I believe, will be no exception. Some may remember the film version of Little Voice.

Please do add your names to the list at forthcoming meetings or contact me at 01325 358247 or 07526526227 or email at [john.sadler520@ntlworld.com](mailto:john.sadler520@ntlworld.com). Happy theatre going

## Factory Visit M-Sport at Cockermouth.

M-Sport are a world rally team which won the world championship last season running Ford Fiestas. The cost of the tour is £20. I am looking to book this for the **Thursday 2nd May** the tour will be at **17.00** hrs. For more information please contact me on 07790 706657 or [goggledaveboyd1954@gmail.com](mailto:goggledaveboyd1954@gmail.com)  
David Boyd.

**Great Big Quiz** – At Hurworth Grange on **Wednesday 5th June** at 2pm - for other local U3A groups to join us and enjoy an afternoon of quizzing. We would welcome more members to help with catering and to form teams.

## Summer trips – contact Carol 496153

- Visit to Temple Newsham: **Wednesday 12th June**
- Day trip to Whitby: **Wednesday 10th July**
- Visit to Yorkshire Sculpture Park: **Wednesday 4th September**
- Nuclear Bunker and York: **Monday September 23rd** leaving at 8-30am.

**Next Monthly Meeting - Tuesday 14th May**  
**Sue Trewitt – Dressing a Victorian Lady**



### **AND FINALLY :-**

After the Discoverers group left the International Fire School on 28<sup>th</sup> March many of them drove to Middleton Hall for refreshments.

To their surprise they were joined by EILEEN LORIMER who now lives at the Hall and she was delighted to be able to spend some time with her U3A friends!

**Our own website is now being regularly updated with information and photos – please have a look to keep informed!**