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### Monthly Meeting

4 June 2024 at 2:00 pm

## at the Mart

### Topic: The Power of Plagues

Given by Paul Nash

Pandemics that changed history.

Ever since homo sapiens emerged in East Africa 200,000 years ago we have been plagued by plagues, most of them local but just occasionally infectious enough to spread across the then known world and deadly enough to change the way we lived our lives. This talk will explore in detail three of the most devastating to explain what happened, to describe some juicy bits about their immediate impact and to show how they have affected and will affect our future life, even in North East England.

*If you miss the Monthly Meeting you will be able to view the talk  
with the video link that will be emailed to all members*

### Travel to the Monthly Meeting

Since we moved the meeting to the Mart, we are aware of difficulties for people who used to come into Hexham by bus, so if you drive in from Corbridge in the east, or Haltwhistle, Bardon Mill or Haydon Bridge from the west, would you be willing to give less mobile members who live in your town a lift?

Similarly, if you live along the Tyne Valley and would like a lift, please get in touch and we will try to link you up. It would be good if we can help each other out.

Please email John Dark, Membership Secretary, at [tyneu3amemsec1@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3amemsec1@gmail.com) or let him or any committee member know at the monthly meeting if you need a lift or can provide one.

## Auckland Castle - Thursday 18th July

Join our summer outing to Auckland Castle with its fabulous gardens, museums and galleries.

Auckland Castle, is a former bishop's palace located in the town of Bishop Auckland in County Durham. The building of the castle was probably started by Hugh de Puiset, who was bishop from 1153 to 1195, and completed in the first half of the thirteenth century. It is Grade 1 listed and was a residence of the bishops of Durham from about 1183 and was their primary residence between 1832 and 2012, when the castle and its contents were sold to the Auckland Castle Trust (now the Auckland Project). It still houses the bishop's offices.

The castle is notable for its chapel, described as "one of the finest rooms in North East England" in the Buildings of England series, which was the medieval great hall until it was remodelled by Bishop John Cosin in 1661–65. The woodwork, which includes the pulpit, stalls, and screen, was commissioned by Cosin and combines Gothic and Baroque forms. The castle also contains twelve paintings depicting Jacob and His Twelve Sons by the Spanish painter Francisco de Zurbarán; the thirteenth portrait, Benjamin, is a copy, as the original hangs in Grimsthorpe Castle, Lincolnshire.

### Travel

There are extensive gardens with a Castle Cafe and a Tapas Bar to buy snacks and lunch, or you can bring a picnic and eat it in the Cafe Courtyard with views of the castle. The Castle and grounds are open 10.30am - 4.00pm. It will take the coach just under an hour from Corbridge and we will plan to be at Auckland Castle for about 10.30am. The coach will pick up at Chollerford, Haydon Bridge, Haltwhistle, Hexham and Corbridge; times will be agreed with the coach company

### Tickets

There are two ticket types. You can choose which ticket you would like and whether or not you would like a guided tour of the castle. Prices include return coach travel.

- a) Castle and Gardens + Faith Museum £33.00 or
- b) Castle and Gardens, Faith Museum and Mining Art Gallery £37.50  
plus
- c) for either ticket type add an optional guided tour of the castle £2.50

The guided tour of the castle lasts about 1 hour, plus 15 minutes for questions

**To book please email Margaret at [tu3aevents@yahoo.com](mailto:tu3aevents@yahoo.com) or ring 01434 689123**

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### News About the Proposed Garden Party



Unfortunately we have had to cancel the plans for the Garden Party in July. We realise this will be disappointing for many members.

The cancellation is not because of the general election, but due to our not being able to find a suitable venue. We were looking for somewhere that could cater for a large number of people outside, but also inside should the weather change for the worse (as it does very occasionally in the North East). The venue also has to have plenty of parking spaces and be easy to access for anybody with mobility issues.

The good news is that we will have a **Christmas Party**. It will be on Tuesday 3 December as part of the monthly meeting.

## The Mike Forster Funnies.....

### Zee Little Grey Cells

The famous detective Hercule Poirot used to stress the importance of “zee little grey cells” so what do our members do to exercise their brains as well as play online bridge or scrabble?

Numbers of people go in for Sudoku grids or large (up to 15x15) Suguru puzzles whilst others are word orientated. I love word wheels and there's an OK one in the *Daily Express* online whilst there is one by the same compiler in the *Irish Examiner* which rewards longer words. It can be a real Corker!

Many people do crosswords and some U3A branches have GEGS groups (9,4). They range in difficulty and the type of knowledge required. As well as the newspapers, there's an interesting one in *Private Eye* magazine. This demands an excellent knowledge of past and present British politics plus an unhealthy interest in perversions.

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### Boffin Jokes

The sad death of Professor Peter Higgs brought to mind the classic Higgs Boson joke which you can find along with other boffin jokes at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b037c5yn>

I still love the classic limerick:

There was a young lady called Bright  
Who could travel faster than light  
She set out one day in a relative way  
And came home the previous night

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### We Can Be Too Trusting

Before moving to Hexham five years ago or so the warning signs were up when I had an email from a U3A member up there I'd had no contact with since moving. And when I sent a noncommittal reply, back came the predictable request to buy something online for them and they would repay me later! But it turned out I was one of the lucky ones who didn't fall for the scam.

Apparently, the original U3A member fell for a scam email and she sent off money to a friend and the website she went through downloaded some ooh nasties to her laptop which copied her email address book. It took Victim #1 and her daughter over six hours to get the hackers to release her email and I don't know if she had to pay a ransom or what nasty sleeping malware they left on her PC that would emerge later. A convenor friend was given the task of contacting her U3A group about the scam but sadly, two people had already sent off money to Amazon cards.

So, please always be super-wary of all emails and texts, even when purporting to come from friends. People will still like you even if you don't send off money. Given their email may be hacked, try to contact them by their landline or mobile phone or ask a mutual friend to do this. Also, take time to review your email contact list. Any promises of money-off cards or money requests for some dire need belong to the fairy tales like “Your cheque is in the post” and “Of course I'll still love you in the morning...”; they have just been updated for the 21st century.

***Having read Mike Forster's piece it's worth looking at John Dark's article on Page 5 about scamming..***

## Night Sky June 2024

While there may be fewer stars visible in the lighter summer night skies, there's a chance of seeing the beautiful electric blue glow of noctilucent clouds over the next couple of months.

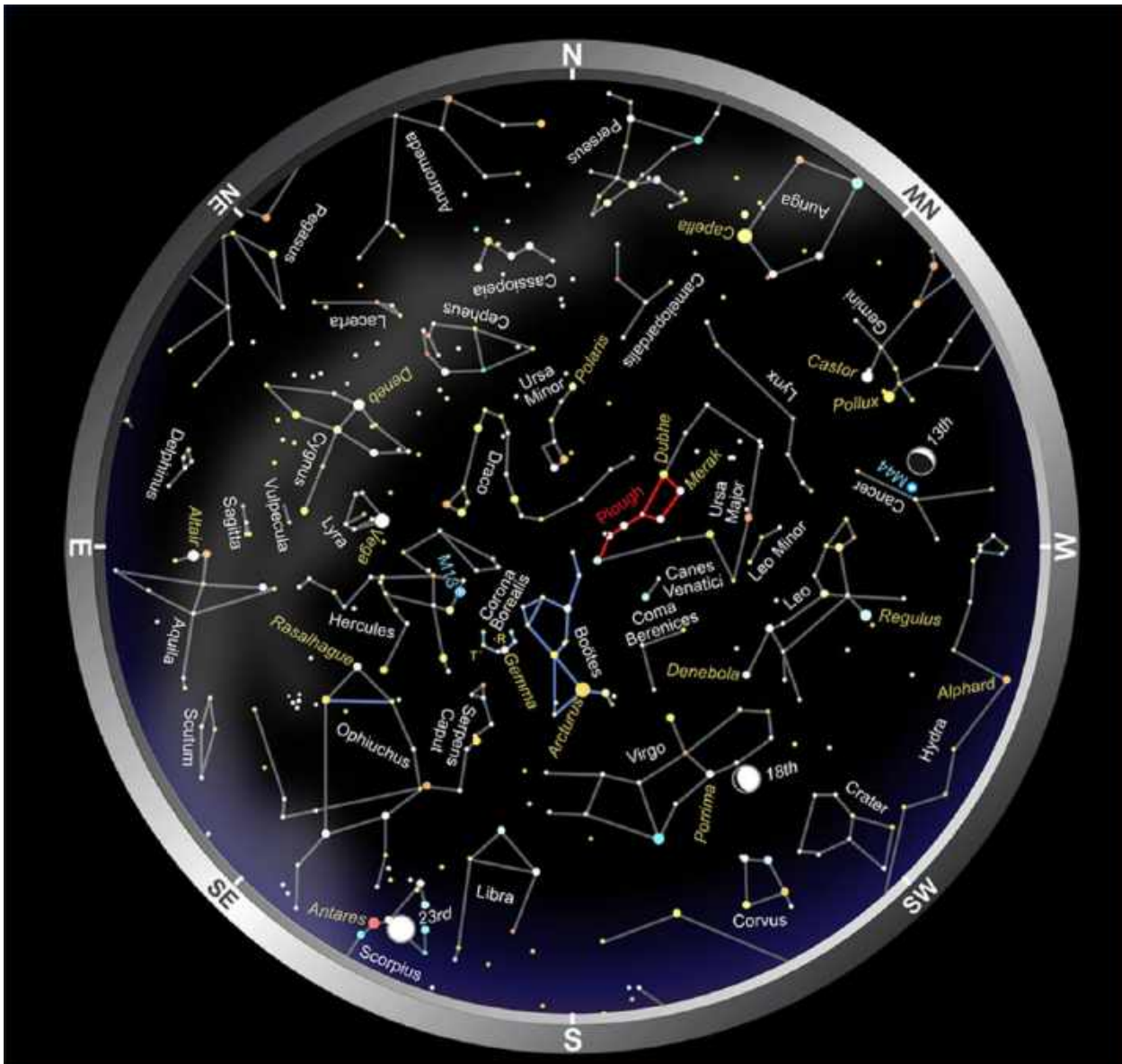
In the UK the angle of the summer Sun below the horizon, combined with our high latitude's relative proximity to the cold air above the Arctic, gives rise to a rare and beautiful night sky phenomenon, noctilucent clouds.

These 'clouds' consist of tiny ice crystals high in our atmosphere (around 80 km or 50 miles) being under-lit by the Sun, even as it sits below the horizon to us on the ground. These ice crystals are at a temperature of around -130 degrees centigrade, are only visible at certain latitudes (50 – 70 degrees from the equator) and only appear in the northern hemisphere between May and August each year.

They appear to have a pale blue 'glow' (indeed the name noctilucent means 'night-shining' clouds) and while it is not uncommon to see them forming striking lines and patterns in the night sky, they do not limit the light from the stars beyond as normal clouds do.

### Planets

At this time the planets are very low on the horizon and not easy to see. However, early risers may catch a glimpse of Jupiter and Saturn in the SE and at dusk Mars and Venus are low in the western sky.



Thanks to the UK Space Agency for the information

## Scamming and Solutions - Ways to Improve Your Knowledge and Skills

This is following on from the piece about being scammed in the last Newsletter – “We can be Too Trusting”. There were a number of newspaper articles and TV pieces about Sir Geoff Hurst (England World Cup Final player in 1966, for those of us who can remember that far) about older people gaining computer skills. <https://www.itv.com/news/2024-05-08/is-it-all-over-for-online-scammers-sir-geoff-hurst-hopes-it-will-be>

He has linked up with a charity, AbilityNet, who have a website - <https://abilitynet.org.uk> – which explains a lot of what they do. There are offers of training courses or online training. It's undeniable that you need some computer skills just to look around their website, but some of our members might find this useful.

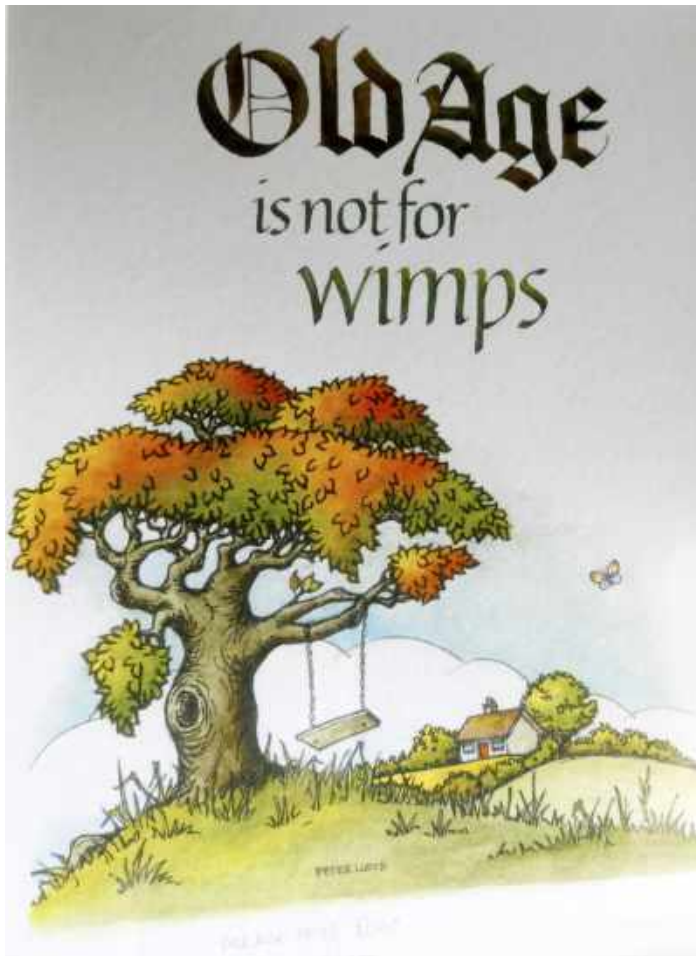
This is not a scam!

John Dark



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## A Little Bit of Fun



© Peter Lloyd  
National Trust Hanbury Hall  
submitted by Jenny Loring



The elderly man was an eyewitness to the car shop crime scene. When the police asked him to tell them what happened, he told them what he'd seen.

"The guy with the beer belly grabbed a wrench from the toolbox!"

"What happened next?" the detective asked.

"Oh terrible, it was a gut-wrenching moment."



The elderly grandmother always talked to the hens whenever she fed them.

One day, her grandson asked, "Granny, why do you talk to the chickens?"

"I'm just trying to egg them on."



I told my wife she should embrace her mistakes. She gave me a hug."



At my age, 'getting lucky' means, finding my car in the car park."



## Group News and Visits

### Hadrian's Wall Group

Photos of the group visiting Penrith Old Fort (Voreda), (although not much to be seen from the road as the site could not be accessed due to livestock being in the field, ), the one at Kirby Thorpe known as Bravoniacum with its associated civilian settlement or vicus and at Brougham Castle with the adjacent Roman fort called Brovacum.



After tramping across fields and narrow roads, as well as trying to absorb all the historical information, the group enjoyed a very good lunch at the Kings Arms in Temple Sowerby.



### Barton Grange Visit

We were lucky indeed to have a bright, warm, sunny day for our outing to Barton Grange. The coach picked us up at a civilised time at various local places and then set off for a leisurely ride to Killington Lake and our coffee break. A half an hour later we were off again arriving at Barton Grange well before lunch time and plenty of time for gardeners to have a good look around. Those of you who have been before will know that Barton Grange is a gardener's treasure trove and no-one just looks around, there are always purchases for house and garden and from the fabulous deli too. After lunch we headed for the canal boat dock to board the boat for our leisurely cruise along the canal; amazingly one boat managed to seat our coach load. We would have liked longer cruising but like all good things it came to an end far too quickly. Afterwards we journeyed home, with lots of zzzzzzzs flying about the coach!

### Garden Visits Group

Our May visit to Durham University Botanic Garden didn't disappoint. The tulip collection was magnificent, the cherry blossom was out and the azalea and rhododendron too. All beautifully coloured and a joy to see after our wet, often dull, Spring. The glasshouses offered both interesting plants and wildlife including tarantulas and salamanders. This was a two part visit and towards lunchtime we headed to nearby Crook Hall; well not quite as directly as we hoped after taking a wrong turning ending up in the congestion charge zone which fortunately only cost £2 per car.



**Crook Hall Visit** was a complete contrast to Durham. This garden has a medieval hall, with stunning views over Durham City. Winding paths led us through areas of ancient trees, and mature flowering plants, along with a living maze planted with cotoneaster. The visit was well timed as it started to rain just as we were finishing our afternoon coffee before heading home.

**Photos from Visits to Barton Grange, Durham Botanic Garden and Crook Hall Gardens**

these were taken by Margaret Earl ,who seems fascinated by the tarantula and costa rican zebra salamander!

**Durham Botanic Garden**



**Barton Grange**



**Crook Hall**



## Your committee

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## Membership

596 Members  
13 Associates



## A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Irene Young  
Jacqueline Jensen  
Margaret Swallow  
Fintan Hayes

Kathryn Richmond  
Peter Jensen  
Claire Hay

## Next issue of the newsletter

*We very much welcome written contributions and photos from groups and individual members.*

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor, Tim O'Brien, at [tyneu3anleditor@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3anleditor@gmail.com)

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.....

**DEADLINE for the JUNE NEWSLETTER**  
**20th June 2024**

## Forthcoming Monthly Meetings Topics and Speakers

**2 July 2024**

How the Industrial Revolution Changed the Art World Forever  
given by Ana Flynn

**3 September 2024**

The Day the Music Died  
given by Keith Prosser

We do hope you have enjoyed this edition of the Newsletter

Please join us on the **Tyndale u3a Facebook** page to keep up to date with information on events, interesting comments from members and engaging photos.



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