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**Monthly Meeting**

**3 September 2024 at 2:00 pm**

**at the Mart**

**The Day the Music Died**

**given by Keith Prosser**

Former international welding consultant but a lifelong Buddy Holly fan since his days in a school band when he found that his songs were easier to play than some of his rivals!

Kevin's talk will cover the background to Buddy's career, his influence on British bands of the time, what led up to the fateful 'Winter Dance Party' tour and the subsequent plane crash, and the theories about why the crash happened.

He will also describe what happened '50 Winters Later', when he attended a performance at Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake by many of the original stars in tribute to Buddy's final concert. There will be an opportunity to guess the stars from their 'then and now' photographs (not compulsory!) and to hear some of their music.

*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*



As colleagues have moved to pastures new there are now vacancies for an **Events Secretary** and a **Publicity Officer**.

Both roles are very important for the continuing growth of the Tynedale u3a and ensuring that there is a wide a range of outings and activities that meet the interests and enjoyment of members.

If you are at all interested but would like an informal chat before making any commitment please do contact Barrie Mellars by calling him on 07831255520 or emailing him at [chairtu3a@gmail.com](mailto:chairtu3a@gmail.com)

Alternatively, you may find it easier to chat to any of the committee at the Monthly Meeting and they can describe what is involved.

## **Tynedale u3a Membership Renewal**

It's that time of year again, and membership renewal is due on **September 1st**. There will be a series of reminders over the weeks and months to come

**The easiest way to do this is through the membership page on the website -**

<https://tynedale.u3asite.uk/membership/>

There is an online form, which when completed and you push 'submit' automatically comes over. The form does not allow payment, which needs to be done separately.

If there have been no changes to your contact details, such as address and phone number, you can simply fill in the basic information

**The basic renewal subscription is £14.00 per person.**

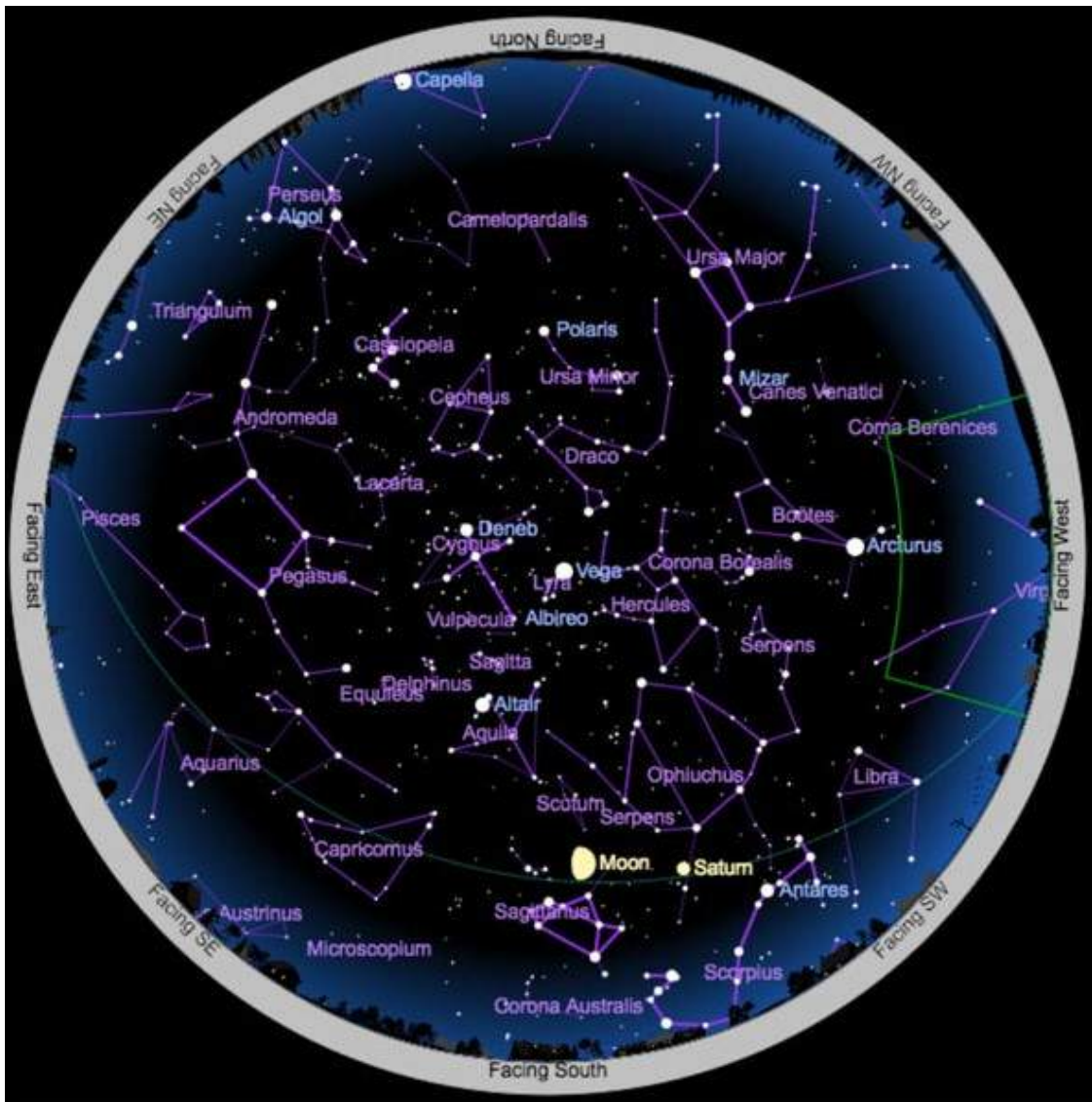
**If you wish to receive the National u3a magazine, Third Age Matters, this has now gone up to £17.80 – it just reflects the increased cost of postage**

**For Bank Transfer -**

Pay to Tynedale u3a: Sort code: 20-40-09: Account: 60601209:

For renewals, the reference is your membership **number** and surname. (The 'reference' makes it much easier for us to process your renewal.)

If sending a paper form and a cheque, please don't forget to make it out to "Tynedale u3a"



**Top 3 in Septembers night sky:**

**1. Constellation of Pegasus**

- a. The constellation of Pegasus starts to dominate the evening sky this month and is easily recognised by the four stars that mark the points of a square.
- b. Pegasus' head and neck are represented by four stars that offshoot from the star Markab in the southwestern corner of the Great Square, while the horse's front legs are attached to Scheat which is in the northwest. The north-easterly star in the Great Square is Alpheratz and is shared between the constellations of Pegasus and Andromeda.

**2. The Andromeda galaxy**

You need a very dark night to see our nearest galactic neighbour Andromeda (2.4 million light years) with no moon but it is well placed in September's skies. It shows as a fuzzy patch in the inky black sky near to the W of Cassiopeia where the peaks of the constellation point. Best seen with a telescope or good binoculars.

**3. The Planets**

- a. Jupiter and Saturn are both visible low in the South, but the former is very close to the horizon and not easy to spot.
- b. Neptune is in opposition this month and at its closest to the earth at 2.7 billion miles but it is so faint that even with a telescope it shows as only another star.
- c. Venus and Mercury are both visible (just) but very low on the horizon and only in the early morning.

Good star gazing!

## Northumbria Region u3a Events

### 'Threads through Creation' at Hexham Abbey on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024



Hexham Abbey is delighted to be one of the venues chosen for the exhibition of 'Threads Through Creation' a spectacular sequence of twelve huge textile panels. It's an exuberant retelling of the creation story in the book of Genesis, a retelling which many visitors will find both moving and breath taking.

The exhibition is one of the largest textile projects by a single artist, ever. It has taken Jacqui Parkinson nearly three years. It follows on from 'Threads through Revelation', her first huge exhibition which visited 14 cathedrals from 2016 to 2018 and was seen by more than 500,000 visitors.

On 7<sup>th</sup> November Hexham Abbey will be pleased to welcome a Northumbria Regional u3a visit and included in the visit will be an opportunity to listen to an organ recital, have a sandwich lunch in the Great Hall and a guided tour of the Abbey. It is a great opportunity for a regional u3a gathering in Tynedale giving members a chance to meet people from other u3as.

#### The suggested itinerary:

- 11.00am Arrive to enjoy the Tapestry
- 12.15 Sandwich lunch in the Great Hall at £7.50pp
- 1-1.45 Organ recital in the Abbey
- 2.00pm A guided tour of approx. one hour's duration at a cost of £7.50pp

Please register your interest with Wendy Dale of Tynedale u3a at [w.dale381@btinternet.com](mailto:w.dale381@btinternet.com) as early as you can so we have some idea of the numbers to expect.

#### **Author Event - Thursday 24th October at 2pm In the Great Hall in Hexham Abbey**

#### **A Talk on: 'The Magician of the North' and 'Magnificent Women' given by Henrietta Heald, FRSA**

Henrietta Heald had a long and successful career in book publishing, working with many of Britain's leading authors, before taking up the pen herself.

She is the author of 'Magician of the North', a biography of William Armstrong. She describes him as Britain's forgotten genius. He was a visionary, engineer and scientist. Many of us know him as the man who built Cragside.

Henrietta also wrote 'Magnificent Women and Their Revolutionary Machines' a history of the women's engineering society (WES). Rachel Parsons (1885– 1956) who lived in both Ryton and Wylam, was a key figure in the WES. Henrietta describes her as one of the most remarkable and trailblazing women of her generation.

The meeting is being put on by Book Group 4 and is open to all members of the Tynedale U3a. It will be followed by tea and biscuits and the opportunity to buy Henrietta's books.

We will be asking for a small voluntary contribution from attendees, at the end, to help to cover costs.

Julia Madgwick (Convenor, book group 4)

## Something to think about.....

The Space Group talks cover many aspects of our universe, from the likely shape of aliens(!) to the creation of elements. Today space telescopes reveal awe-inspiring images from a universe that stretches far beyond the imagination of our ancestors both in space and time. Nevertheless, it is a remarkable fact that mankind has developed models that explain much of the detail of our universe - but there is still much we don't understand. For example, astronomers estimate that roughly 85% of all the matter in the universe is dark matter, but we have never detected dark matter, only inferred its influence.

One of our more philosophical members posed the question: Does an understanding of the universe remain a scientific question or ultimately do we have to think in terms of an external designer (God?) for a satisfactory explanation? For a cosmological perspective on the existence or otherwise of God, I recommend Paul Davies' book *The Goldilocks Enigma*. My thoughts are as follows:

Most cultures seem to have a creation myth that invokes a higher being to explain how the cosmos evolved and how people came to inhabit it (e.g., Genesis). These myths led to the development of today's mainly monotheistic doctrinal based religions. As scientific knowledge grew, it inevitably brought science into conflict with religion – rationality vs faith. For example, Galileo was put on trial for promoting a heliocentric view of our solar system that conflicted with the church's geocentric view.

Today the laws of physics, expressed in mathematical equations, are central to explaining physical reality. But a deeper question is where do these rules come from and why these particular rules? The English astronomer James Jeans said "The universe appears to have been designed by a pure mathematician?"

Modern theology sees God as a creator whose existence is manifested through the rational order of the cosmos, an order that is revealed by science and the language of mathematics. Unlike the discredited intelligent design version (Richard Dawkins' *The Blind Watchmaker*), this sort of God is less vulnerable to scientific attack.

Time is intrinsic to the universe, inseparable from space and matter, but it is a concept physicists are currently struggling to understand - is it quantized, why do we perceive time only going one way, etc? (Carlo Rovelli's *The Order of Time*). But if God is a creator of the universe he must lie outside time.

So, do we live in a simulation (*The Matrix* film)? If so, who built it and who controls it? Nick Bostrom, a noted philosopher on the future of humanity, has postulated that our technologically advanced descendants might create computer simulations of their forebears (us) and hence we exist in their simulation. Is our universe then just a manifestation of an AI program?

The really big question is why the universe appears to be exactly fit for life (us)? From some perspectives it looks suspiciously like it has been arranged that way (Martin Rees, *Just Six Numbers*).

Does this imply a creator? I leave you to think about it, and if you have a view send me an email.

Ian Diggory diggoryian@gmail.com  
Space Group convenor

## Let's Form a Band

Play a musical instrument and would like to be playing with others – so let's form a band!

Repeat call for musicians.

Further to the article in last month's newsletter, a small number of musicians have come forward and steps are being taken to have a get-together and see what we can do.



We would still like to attract some more musicians to join us and make an even bigger and better sound. So do get in touch if you are thinking about it as there is still time to join in.

Adrian Woolley ([arwoolley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:arwoolley@hotmail.co.uk))



## The Putting the World Right 2 Group

The group currently has a couple of vacancies for new members.

The group meets at 10.30 to 12.00 on the 4th Friday of the month and is a "pub-type conversation".

We have a different theme each month and people chip in their contributions with everyone treating each other with respect. We don't have homework though some search out related information first. We also go off on tangents when of interest so there is much to stir the grey matter.

If interested please email Mike Foster at [mikef@wowu.co.uk](mailto:mikef@wowu.co.uk)

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## Do You Want to Form a New Group?

As our membership numbers increase, so too does the demand for membership of existing groups and the development of new ones.

If you are interested in developing an offshoot of a current group or starting a new one please contact Michael Brockway, the Groups Liaison Officer, at [mjb.TyndaleU3a@proton.me](mailto:mjb.TyndaleU3a@proton.me)

Michael and other committee members will happily provide the support and help you may need.

## Group News and Visits

### Art Appreciation 2

In August some members of our group went to Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle to see the exhibition, 'Kith and Kinship: Norman Cornish and L.S. Lowry'.

The exhibition opened with a self-portrait of each artist. We felt these paintings reflected their individual style and approach to portraying their subjects. Both artists focussed on working people in the north of England but their emotional mind-set was very different.

Norman Cornish was born into a mining family and started working in the pits at the age of 14. There were strong and unspoken bonds among miners and their communities and you definitely feel this in Cornish's works, be they quick sketches made with a Flo-pen (a sort of felt-tip pen) in local pubs where he drank with fellow miners or the wonderful paintings of scenes in and around the pit village of Spennymoor.

L.S Lowry was born into the middle class, became a rent collector and looked after his invalid mother. We felt Lowry was much more removed from his subject matter. He said, 'I just paint people as I see them, as I see them in my mind's eye'. Tall people with big feet, no shadows, matchstick men. 'All my people are lonely. Crowds are the most lonely thing of all'. It is fascinating to look at his paintings in this light.

A wonderful and thought provoking exhibition, aptly named and beautifully curated. Well worth the effort to get there, it is on until 19th January.

*We have spaces for new members. If you are interested please contact the convenors.*

Lil Young Co convenor Art Appreciation 2



## Group News and Visits

### Hadrian's Wall Group

On a lovely sunny day, we ventured to the site of Magna Roman Fort to view the excavations that are currently being undertaken there under the supervision of archeologist Andrew Birley.

The fort guarded the road junction between two major Roman roads, the Maiden Way and the Stanegate. Set at the edge of the Whin Sill on Hadrian's Wall, these excavations have become very time sensitive, as climate change is rapidly affecting that boggy peat landscape. The peat is drying out and shrinking, turning a once anaerobic area into aerobic, resulting in the potential destruction of organic finds, such as those notably being excavated from Vindolanda (which is also similarly at risk). The shrinking of the peat has revealed a well, (age to be determined) and this is being excavated along with a large section of Vallum, which has revealed multiple Roman era cremation remains.



We were fortunate to have Andrew himself talk us through the excavations. After lunch and some time in the impressive Roman Army Museum, which is on the site, we took a short but lovely stroll to nearby Thirlwell Castle, which is built almost entirely from nearby Hadrian's Wall stone.

All in all, another lovely day spent together enjoying the legacy remains of Roman life in our region, a gift that keeps on giving.

Carole Soulsby (Co-Convenor)



## Landscape Group

On Monday 24th June the group ventured to the highlands of the North Pennines on a visit to Nenthead Mines.

Mining has had an enormous impact on the landscape of the North Pennines.

A huge thank you to Wendy Dale for organising this, and to the many volunteers from the Nenthead Mines Conservation Society who turned out to help, guide and inform us, with expert knowledge of mine history and geology. They also kept us fortified with much needed tea and biscuits.

We split into two groups and each group had a tour with an expert geologist explaining the geology of the valley and finding minerals and fossils in the rock exposures, and a trip down the mine with a mining expert.

The trip down the mine was rather more adventurous than expected and it was fantastic to see everyone cope with the cold, wet and dark underground conditions, negotiating low tunnels and climbing steep ladders. The helmets and head lamps provided by

tunnels and climbing steep ladders. The helmets and head lamps provided by

Nenthead Mines were essential. These were, of course, conditions the miners coped with on a daily basis, equipped with rough boots and candles.

The demonstrations of how the miners dug the tunnels, drilled holes in the rock and used gunpowder and dynamite for blasting were impressive. We were assured that the gunpowder and dynamite were fake.

We successfully emerged from the mines with the same number of people that we went in with. We were told that on one trip they actually came out with two more people than they had gone in with – do not let your imagination dwell too long on what might have happened!

Nenthead Mine tours for the public are held regularly, and can be arranged specially for groups, details at <https://www.nentheadmines.com>



**Please contact the convenor through the Tynedale u3a website  
if you are interested in joining the Landscape group**

# Your committee

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## Membership

602 Members

13 Associates



## A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Gwen Sams  
Julie Foster  
Ann Bainbridge  
Kim Cowie  
Joanna O'Neill  
Christopher Barker  
Graham Shore

Dean Jackson  
Pat Dobson  
Sandy Chrisp  
Robert Hood  
Liz McNeill Grist  
Janice Andrew

## 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.....

The October Newsletter deadline is 19 September

## Forthcoming Monthly Meetings Topics and Speakers

**1 October 2024**

The Reivers  
given by Maks Loth

**5 November 2024**

Rocks and Romans  
given by Ian Jackson

We do hope you have enjoyed this edition of the Newsletter

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

