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Monthly Meeting

at the Mart

2nd December 2025 at 2:00 pm

Links Between Northern Prehistory and Rocks

from stone circles and axes to rock art and peat bog bodies

given by **Ian Jackson**

Ian Jackson was born in Carlisle and read geology and geography at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. He is a Chartered Geologist and Fellow of the Geological Society. He spent 18 years surveying the geology of parts of the north of England for the British Geological Survey. Later he was responsible for national and international programmes that produced the first UK, European and global digital geological maps and made them web accessible. In addition to many scientific maps, articles and reports, he is the author of a number of popular books about the rocks of Northumberland, Cumbria and Durham.

Defined by Stones

This is Ian's latest book was published on 3 November 2025. The book describes how connected prehistoric societies were to the natural landscape of Northern England and how reliant they were on its rocks. The book visits 50 special places across the north to describe the close relationship ancient people had with their landscape. Stone defined our ancestors. Without it they could not shelter, hunt, farm, or light fire. It was essential to their daily lives but also central to their beliefs. Rocks are prehistory's most persistent record.

*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*

Chair’s Report

Winter is now starting to make its presence felt with short days and dark nights. Consequently many groups have now curtailed the outdoor activities and looking to pursue their interests in the warm and dry. On the subject of groups we continue to have members asking how they join groups which are full. The answer is, of course, they cannot but there is nothing to stop anyone starting a new group and convenors of established groups will usually offer help as will our Group Liaison Secretary Steve Rozario. Whilst talking about groups, we are always very mindful of the important role that the Convenors play. This role is very rewarding but many members seem reluctant to step up to the plate. Groups are the lifeblood of u3a and without coordinators they cannot function. So I urge budding Convenors out there to make themselves known.

We will be holding a Convenors lunch at the Mart in the New Year at which we hope to see as many as possible to both reward them for their efforts and discuss any issues the groups may have.

At the next Monthly meeting we have an old favourite making a return. Ian Jackson is a well-known and highly reputable Geologist who has entertained on previous occasions and this month he will be showing his new book on links between northern prehistory and rocks. You will no doubt not be surprised that copies of this and his other books will be on sale at the meeting. They make great Christmas presents!

One final point. At the AGM in March our excellent Secretary Ann Atkinson will be stepping down after some years in the post together with Tim O’Brien, the editor of our splendid newsletter. Without volunteers to fill committee posts we cannot run, so if there are any budding committee members amongst you, please come and talk to us.

To mark the start of the Festive Season there will be free mince pies provided with the tea and coffee at the meeting.

I hope to see as many of you there as possible and I wish you all a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year (Rachel from Accounts permitting!).

Barrie Mellars

Events

The Nissan Trip. You will have seen our group photo in the last newsletter. We were left breathless by the management and organisation of the car factory. One new car leaves the production line every 58 seconds, each a different colour, each with different wheels, engine, specification, trim, interior and seating. The conveyors which supply the production line each deliver the correct part at the right time and in the right place. The IT systems behind the manufacture were extraordinary. We learnt more about the Japanese concept of Kaizen, or ‘continuous improvement’. Ideas come from the shop floor and make a massive difference to efficiency.

If any one who missed the trip would like me to arrange another visit then please let me know - I have three names so far, but need 15 to make up a second visit. The cost (Nissan’s charge) will be £20 per head. Andrew Rigg.

We have an all day visit to **Durham** on Thursday 26 February 2026 to visit the **Oriental Museum** and **Harrison and Harrison** (organ makers and repairers of church organs around the world!).

There is also an opportunity to visit the **Durham Botanic Garden** for those who have never been. Names to me, Andrew Rigg, please by Christmas and I will advise on transport, timings and costs - events2riggtu3a@gmail.com

Wallington Christmas Afternoon Tea on Tuesday 2nd December is now booked for those attending.

Seeking a copy editor, design, image setting and proof reading volunteer(s)

Two u3a members are looking for people with relevant knowledge to help prepare a manuscript to be published. Some members may remember a joint u3a project with the Northumberland National Park (NNP) to digitise their image library. We followed that up with an oral history project called Volunteer Voices on the role of National Park volunteers since the early days of the Park. This will be the subject of an exhibition at The Sill next autumn. The story has been written up with a view to publishing a short book (about 49,000 words), illustrated with many archive photos, to accompany the exhibition. However, the NNP are unable to fund its production. Thus we are seeking volunteers from the u3a to do a full copy edit, check spelling and grammar, look for inconsistencies etc., and to help with design, photo layout, and proofreading the final copy. If you are interested or know someone who might like to help, please contact Sally or Sue hewitt.sallyann@yahoo.com or sjloader@hotmail.com.

Sally
07500 136870

Steve Rozario has formally announced that plans for combining the meetings of the **Pole Vaulting Group** with the **Limbo Dancing Group** have been shelved after it proved impossible to agree on a setting for the bar height that was low enough for the Pole Vaulters to clear and high enough for the Limbo Dancers to get under.



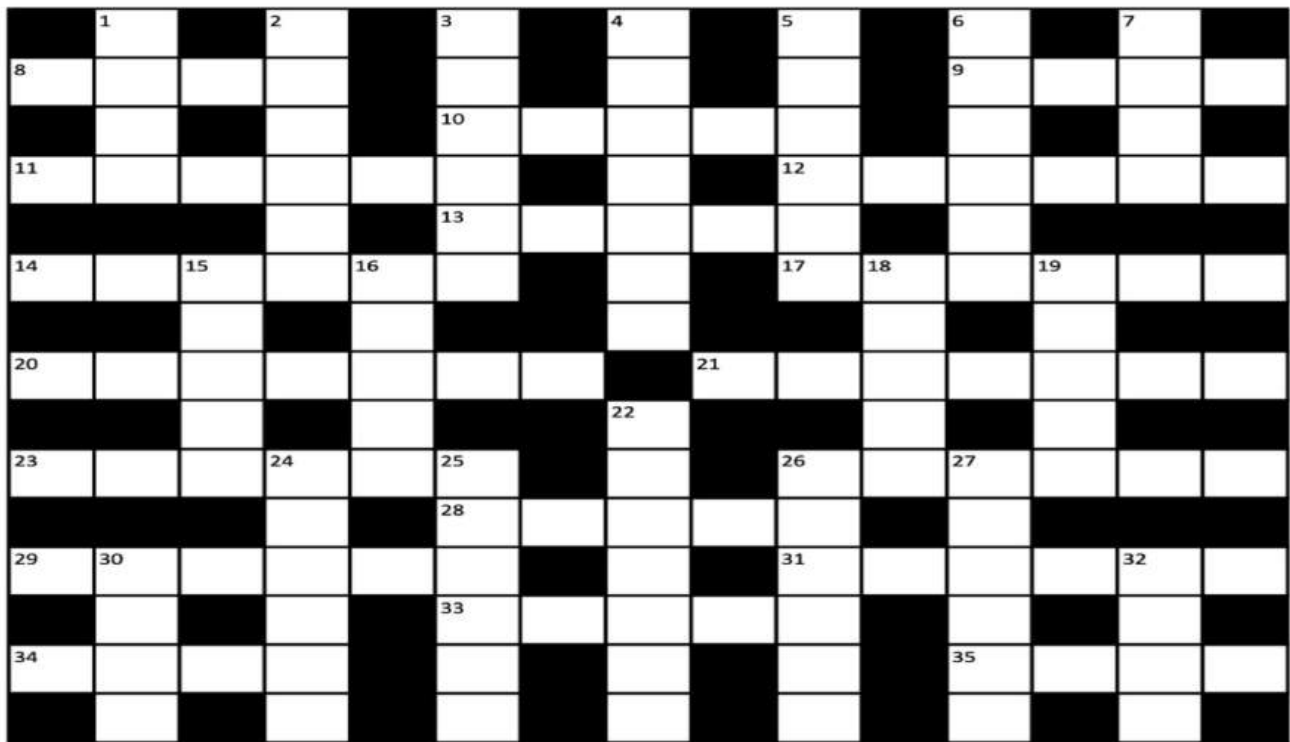
Newsletter Quiz December 2025

1. Which AA is a poetic name for water?
2. Which AA is the author of the plays Absurd Person Singular and The Norman Conquest?
3. Which A was rescued by, and then married to Perseus?
4. Which highly toxic A was once used cosmetically?
5. Which A is the furthest point from the sun in a planets orbit?
6. Which A was the Greek goddess of love?
7. Which AA is the name which eighties pop singer Stuart Goddard used?
8. Which A describes a final earth shattering battle?
9. Which A is a metal, with the chemical symbol Sb?
10. Which AA is a TV series of the 1960s featuring Gerald Harper in the title role?

Submitted by Barrie Mellars

Answers in the January 2026 newsletter

Cryptic Crossword



ACROSS

- 8 Make listener listen, finally (4)
- 9 Alien swallowed football team searching for way out (4)
- 10 Unit I arranged for northern folk (5)
- 11 Come with team to play at former Olympic host (6)
- 12 Footman in black-eyed make up (6)
- 13 Awesome couple of bones (5)
- 14 Return to centre of Playa de Noche, eventually (3,3)
- 17 New map revised for hock (6)
- 20 In a hard arrangement, he stone-walled! (7)
- 21 Horace wrote in Latin to create a stately hymn (7)
- 23 Fly! Retreat of Roman is repeated (6)
- 26 Put passport in sleigh, and sauntered off, shiftily (6)
- 28 First, go and make me an unspectacular mark (5)
- 29 Substitute for pretence (6)
- 31 Pleasant view, or missing hat (6)
- 33 The short card dealer had a nasty cough (5)
- 34 Sounds as though you need a clothes horse to hang out here (4)
- 35 This sounds restrictive, and it can be hard to dispose of (4)

DOWN

- 1 Phil audibly eats messily (4)
- 2 Acceptable direction of breeze lets you relax (6)
- 3 Yankee follows father to brothers' house (6)
- 4 Confused, discontented person lured by spoil (7)
- 5 Be beyond the pale and exceed in untruth (6)
- 6 Hot headgear for military policemen (6)
- 7 I become exhausted, but I rest inside (4)
- 15 Finish and head off signal to invest (5)
- 16 Donkey runs around road. Something's wrong (5)
- 18 Drama origin reveals Oceanic native (5)
- 19 Take advantage of a face covering, by the sound of it (5)
- 22 Open spaces where crossing the floor is not done (7)
- 24 Tragic, poetic alternative capital (6)
- 25 Holder is, for example, a big supporter (6)
- 26 Muse initially sought ancient philosophical poet, honoured once (6)
- 27 Sort of desperate pastry (6)
- 30 One little bird, not a thousand, would be elegant (4)
- 32 Secret agent in burrow (4)

Christmas Greetings from the two Tynedale u3a Cryptic Crossword groups!

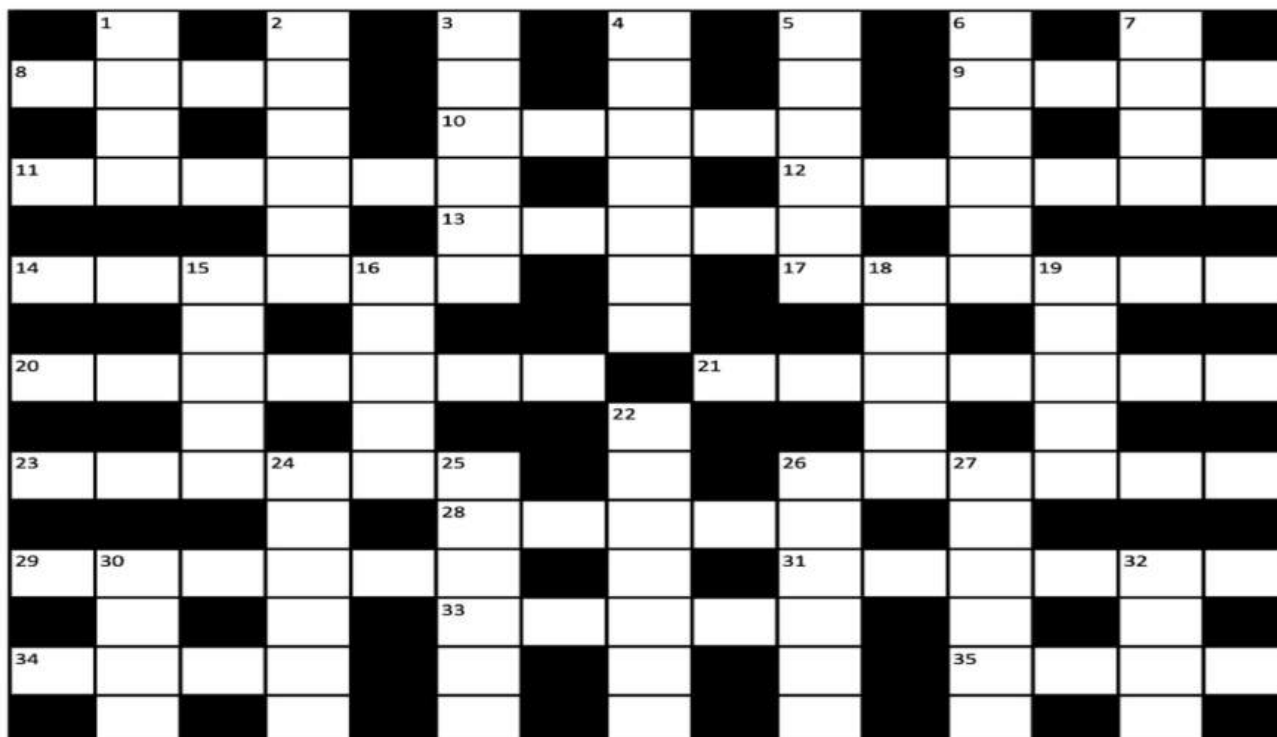
We have collaborated to offer you this very special gift – a puzzle with which to while away those delightful days of dawdling once the frantic festivities have finished. There are two sets of clues: cryptic and quick. Both sets lead to the same solution, so you can choose which to use, or mix and match as you go along. Hidden in the solution is a slogan encouraging commitment to a well-known local charity. The solution will be published next month.

Should our offering tickle your fancy and spur you to tackle a new challenge, you will be delighted to know that there is one vacant space in each group. Meeting details are on the website. Give it a go - first come, first served!

The atmosphere of both groups is quite definitely collaborative, not competitive. We tackle a puzzle brought by a member, working individually to begin with (very quiet), and then sharing wisdom, bafflement and enlightenment in roughly equal measure, as we learn from one another and clock up another subtlety of the compiler's art and twisted mind (groans, laughter and cries of "Eureka!")

Bragging rights: last year one group created a puzzle which was published in the u3a national magazine.

Quick Crossword



ACROSS

- 8 Gain by effort (4)
- 9 Departure from the stage (4)
- 10 Indigenous inhabitant of North America (5)
- 11 Country officially consisting of United States in central America (6)
- 12 Low grade, obedient servant (6)
- 13 Lines between the centre and the circumference (5)
- 14 Twenty-four hours (3,3)
- 17 Deposit article in return for cash loan (6)
- 20 Long-gone mural creator (7)
- 21 Form of composition favoured by J. S. Bach and others (7)
- 23 Unpleasant fly (6)
- 26 Crept up surreptitiously (6)
- 28 Ray, or third Greek character, or poor exam mark (5)
- 29 Temporarily occupying a position (6)
- 31 Stylish headgear from central America (6)
- 33 Childish inflammation of the larynx and trachea (5)
- 34 Alternative name for the Irish Republic (4)
- 35 Dispose by trading (4)

DOWN

- 1 Provide what is needed, and more (4)
- 2 Relax (6)
- 3 Monastic foundation (6)
- 4 Ill-gotten goods, and how to get them (7)
- 5 Be located far from the centre (6)
- 6 Scottish goblin with blood-stained headgear, Derbyshire chicken and MP in the forces (6)
- 7 Exhaust (also found on the wheel of an American automobile) (4)
- 15 Provide with quality or power (5)
- 16 Not entirely right (5)
- 18 Indigenous antipodean (5)
- 19 Take advantage, oneself, of an opportunity (5)
- 22 Powerful House which sometimes experiences dissolution (7)
- 24 Capital of the other Chinese Republic (6)
- 25 Oval container (6)
- 26 Lyric poet from Lesbos (6)
- 27 Persian name meaning wisdom (6)
- 30 Stylish (4)
- 32 Underground spy (4)

The solutions will be in the January 2026 Newsletter.

We hope the font is not too small, but it had to be used to fit all the clues in.

Group News

A Second German Language group?

We have had a number of enquiries from people wishing to join a second German Language group.

As yet, we have not found a willing volunteer to convene a new German Language group.

If you think this could be you please contact Steve Rozario, Group Liaison, at tyneu3agroupliaison@gmail.com.

Wenn du Schmetterlingen nachjagst, fliegen sie davon. Aber wenn du einen wunderschönen Garten anlegst, werden die Schmetterlinge zu dir kommen. Ein Gärtner für den Deutschkurs 2 wäre sehr willkommen.

Putting the World Right - Time to Reactivate your grey cells?

The Putting the World Right meetings provide a safe, friendly space to share our values and beliefs based on our own experiences, reading and personalities. Members will hopefully see themselves in a different light as others offer alternative views.

The only 'rule' is that we treat each other with dignity and respect. There is no homework as we bring our age and wisdom to the meeting, but some of us do background reading where our knowledge is out of date and we continue to be curious about life.

There are two separate group meetings a month on a Wednesday afternoon and Friday morning. Please let the convenor, Mike Foster, know if you plan to come along which you can do by contacting him through the website.

Hadrian's Wall Group

After a Spring and Summer, of indulgence in all manner of field visits, we moved indoors for our Winter programme of presentations. Topics we are enjoying are; The Iron Age community, present at the invasion of the Romans and during their occupation, the IMP stamped items at the Carlisle 'Baths Complex', and the workings of the organisations who have the overall task to oversee the implementation of the Policies and Actions in the Management Plan for the World Heritage Site of Hadrian's Wall and its Buffer Zone, ensuring coordinated and collaborative activity to safeguard World Heritage status.

On the Groups page of the Tynedale u3a website you will see our status as "Waiting List" but this refers only to Field Trip period of April to September inclusive, and not to our indoor meetings throughout the winter months. So, if you would enjoy joining us part time, you are very welcome. Just contact me via the Hadrian's Wall Groups enquiry on the website

During the winter months we meet on the 1st Thursday of the month at 2.30pm, at The County Hotel, Hexham, Our next meeting will be February 5, 2026. Please do contact me first though, through the website.'

Carole Soulsby, Convenor of Hadrian's Wall Group

Dawdling With or Without Dogs Group

At an enjoyable planning session in the Muro Lounge it was agreed that sessions on the third Tuesday of each month was the arrangement that best suited most members.

The next get together will be on Tuesday 16th December, meeting at 1:00pm in the car park at Allen Banks, Bardon Mill, for a gentle stroll. If you are interested in joining the group, with or without a dog, please contact us through the Tynedale u3a website or just come along on the day. Our outings are very relaxed and full of banter, laughter and sharing of stories and experiences. The dog also rather enjoy the company.

Mon Richards

Group News

Walking Group

On 12th November, 11 walkers started from the Brocolitia Car Park on the Military Road. After a short walk through fields of sheep, we crossed the Military Road via a stile on each side and joined the Hadrian's Wall Path. We were glad to see that a herd of cows were well in the distance as we enjoyed spectacular views to the North and South. Passing the misnamed Limestone Corner, where huge slabs of incredibly hard whinstone, (not in fact limestone), had defeated even the Romans, we continued along a section of the Wall and then down to a minor road. We headed north along this towards Sharpley Farm, stopping for the traditional sweetie break, before turning again into fields. This time we were less fortunate as another herd of cows were blocking the path, but obligingly they shifted out of our way and let us safely through. A short steep climb led us to the top of Teppermoor Hill and another left hand turn towards High Teppermoor Farm and it's access lane back to the Military Road and the car park. We were extraordinarily lucky with the weather. It was a bright, fine day sandwiched between two awful ones. Going was generally dry underfoot. Although a few stiles were unavoidable, some were easy to go around. Everyone lunched at the Crown in Humshaugh. where Chris joined us. The staff were most helpful and efficient and served us with an excellent meal.



Author Event Thursday 26th February at 2pm in the Great Hall in Hexham Abbey - A Talk on: Writing Crime Fiction Given by Mari Hannah

Mari Hannah is a multi-award winning bestselling author and screenwriter. She is the creator of three different crime series: Ryan & O'Neil, Stone & Oliver, and Kate Daniels. All of these are set in and around Newcastle and Northumberland. She lives in a small Northumberland village with her partner, who is a former murder detective. Mari will tell us about her experience of writing crime fiction. This will cover how she got into it and where it's taken her. She will lead up to the inspiration behind her latest book, which is 'Her Sisters Killer'. This was chosen by The Times as one of the best crime fiction books in 2025. There will be a Q and A session following her talk. 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 Mari's books.

We will be asking for a small contribution from attendees of around £3-4, at the end, to help to cover costs.
Julia Madgwick

Group News

Showtime! November films at The Forum

Caravaggio (Joint Directors: David Bickerstaff and Phil Grabsky)

This is another film in the 'Exhibition on Screen' series, which presents an exploration of a single artist's life and works each time – and it was a sell out at the Forum. This time, the approach was to use an actor, Jack Bannall, to give a monologue in relating Caravaggio's (1571 – 1610) life story, as he took what was to be his final journey by boat – and the make-up department certainly produced the spit image of the man, if his cameo appearances in larger works are anything to go by. From the boat journey, the film cut away to commentaries given by experts that examined major works from Caravaggio's prolific output, progressing through the different stages of his life.



We all enjoyed the film, despite the soporific heat in the cinema. Opinion was split, though, on whether more context and biography could have been given, or whether a deeper analysis of some of Caravaggio's works was needed.

For most of his life, after initially serving as an artist's apprentice in Milan, Caravaggio worked in Rome, where, once established, there was a demand for paintings to fill newly built churches and palaces. He worked rapidly, painting directly onto the canvas. His works are distinctive in their use of *chiaroscuro*, bringing strong shafts of light against dark shadows, to capture crowded, dramatic and violent religious scenes (with plenty of severed heads). In his later years, the dark shadows took over from the light, and areas of empty space filled more of the canvas, while human activity was almost incidental, off to the side. His work was shocking to many. The models he used for saints were from the poorer classes and recognisable locally as such – he even had a well-known prostitute as his model for the Virgin Mary. His characters are real, expressing their truth.

His own life was equally as shocking and dramatic to Italian society as the scenes he painted. Even living in such unruly times, he was known to be always ready for a fight. Fleeing from each incident largely directed his travel – first from Milan to Rome, then from Rome – to avoid a sentence for murder – to Naples. Later he travelled to Malta, hoping the Knights would help him secure a papal pardon, but although initially feted by the Grand Master, another brawl where a Knight was wounded landed him in prison. He escaped to Sicily but his behaviour became increasingly paranoid: he carried a sword at all times and he feared for his life. But on his return to Naples, he was actually attacked and his face was left badly scarred. On his return journey to Rome, where he was about to be pardoned, finally, we left him where we had met him at the beginning of the film. He disappeared without trace on the boat making landfall.



Mrs Warren's Profession (Director: Dominic Cooke)

This film is an NT Live Production of the George Bernard Shaw play, which ran at the Garrick Theatre in London earlier this year. The play was originally published in 1898 in Shaw's collection of three Plays Unpleasant, all written to challenge audiences before entertaining them. Indeed, the play was considered so morally challenging as to be denied a licence for many years, and to only have its first public performance in 1925.

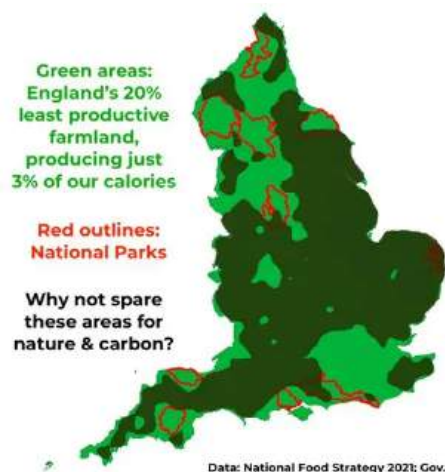
This production brought strong, commanding performances from both Imelda Staunton as Mrs Warren, and her real-life daughter, Bessie Carter, playing Vivie, her estranged daughter in the play -- and this is very much a play about mothers and daughters. It is particularly concerned with the lack of opportunities open to women in as patriarchal society as restrictive as that of Shaw's time, where prostitution paid far better than bar work or factory work, and where, as in marriage, women were required to sell themselves to men. When she learns her mother's profession has funded her education, after the initial shock, Vivie respects her mother's decision to resort to prostitution for survival. But when Vivie discovers her mother is still running profitable brothels (a.k.a. 'hotels'), simply because like Vivie she loves to work for herself, Vivie cuts all ties with her. She is determined to support herself through her own efforts as she embarks on her new, *legal* career.

The play was very much ahead of its time, but looking down the lens from a 21st Century standpoint, the questions it raises about the respective positions of men and women in society are not as shocking or challenging to us as they would have been to Shaw's audiences. The central argument of the play is repeatedly thrashed out between Mrs Warren and her daughter, though, through long, wordy tirades, when there really isn't enough substance within the issue to warrant such a protracted treatment. We would have liked more light to shine on the shade; some of that 'entertainment' to be foremost and not secondary.

'AN END TO FEUDALISM'

In October, the Environment Group heard a presentation about Guy Shrubsole's latest book *The Lie of the Land*. The book is a compelling exploration of land ownership and stewardship in England.

Shrubsole reminds us that a disproportionate amount of land in England is still owned by earls, barons, and lords granted vast acreage after the Norman Conquest. This means that "in a country where 1 per cent of the population owns half of all England" decisions about land management are made by a tiny elite. Many of these landowners propagandise about what a great job they do as stewards, suggesting that 'townies' can't be trusted to care for the land. However, Shrubsole gives this elitist claim short shrift providing many examples of how these self-professed 'guardians of the land' in fact cause great damage. This ranges from agricultural run-off, the harmful effects of introducing of non-native, invasive species, and degradation of SSSIs, to the destructive effects of grouse and pheasant hunting. For example, the drainage, controlled burning and intensive management of our grouse moors to provide sport for a privileged few has transformed our upland peat bogs from being a vitally important carbon sink to a habitat that now accounts for 20 million tonnes of CO2 greenhouse gases per annum.



In contrast, Shrubsole highlights the work of individuals and communities, most of whom don't own their local land, yet who are nevertheless actively working to protect it.

He finishes with a ten-point programme for democratisation of landownership and community-led restoration efforts. These include, protecting our upland peat bogs by banning moorland burning and grouse-shooting; instituting a community right to buy land in England; creating a 'right of responsible access'; and requiring landowners in national parks to serve the interests of nature.

Shrubsole's writing is persuasive, and *The Lie of the Land* is a timely and important book on land ownership and environmental stewardship.

Guy Norfolk

Jazz Appreciation

An almost unsung gem of the Tyndale u3a is the Jazz Appreciation group. This meets on the third Thursday of the month, in a room at Core Music.

We are a small group. Given the high interest in jazz across Hexham – Sunday afternoon Jazz at Queen's Hall regularly fills the Library, with 60-70 aficionados attending to hear great music, we think there must be lots of enthusiasts out there. But our group has a core of 6 people, just 1% of the Tyndale u3a membership!

Last week, we had a masterful talk on the history of the Blues from Mike Worthington. He went from the very earliest from New Orleans in the 1920's, through to the more fully instrumented singing in the 1950's and 60's and ending with John Mayall in the 70's. The previous month saw Adrian Woolley take us through the scales, both major and minor, and how they link to the modes – he explained how the Aeolian mode works! Both of these talks were extensively illustrated with excerpts of the music, either from a CD or online, played through our superb desktop system.

Previous meetings had been on John Coltrane, the role of the Trumpet, and Benny Goodman. At Christmas (December 18th) we take music of our favourites – Django Rheinhardt is sure to be there, and Miles Davis. All accompanied with mulled wine. So if there is anyone out there who wants to learn a bit more – and an ability of playing music is absolutely not required, contact the Convenor Geoff Sole via the u3a website or just come along!

John Dark



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Membership

608 Members 15 Associates

<https://tyndale.u3asite.uk/>



A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Annie Evans
Alastair Frazer
Stephen Hedworth
John Kirby
Tom Southern

Renee Siebrand
David Belcher
Lawrence Hogarth
Christopher Keating
Caroline Burns

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

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

**The January 2026 Newsletter deadline
is 18 December 2025**

Forthcoming Monthly Meetings Topics and Speakers

6th January 2026

Radio Nostalgia
Memories of the Light programme from 1945 to 1967

3rd February 2026

The Natural History of the Ploughman's Lunch
given by Chris Pollock

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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