

UPDATE



Members' newsletter

Next meeting KS Masonic Hall, 10am, Tues 11 Nov.

Deadly living for the 'Canary girls'

A MUNITIONS crisis at the start of World War One, led to Gretna – just across the Scottish border from Carlisle - becoming the site of a hastily erected and enormous cordite factory.

Women workers came from all over the UK to help make "Devil's Porridge", a mixture of gun cotton and nitro-glycerine which was used to produce cordite as a shell propellant.

Young, working class women, known as the "Canary girls" came from every part of Britain and the empire.

Their efforts, in a highly hazardous environment, would not only change the course of the war but have lasting and transformational social impact.

UE u3a member Val Welti will explore with us the fascinating story of the "*Canary Girls - Forgotten Heroines of WW1 and WW2*" at our next members' meeting on Tuesday 11 November in Kirkby Stephen Masonic Hall at 10am.



WAR WORK: An image of the Canary Girls in the WWI factory.

The experience of the women and its impact can be further explored by visiting the excellent 'Devil's Porridge' Museum between Gretna and Annan.

See: <https://www.devilsporridge.org.uk/>

upperedenu3a@gmail.com

upperedenu3a.org

Facebook: <https://tinyurl.com/3dj6ct>

Call or text 07396 736 625

An appeal for volunteers

U3A MEMBER Joan Lennox, a member of the Stainmore Railway Trust, who also features in *Railway Women*, see below, is looking for volunteers.

She writes: "Many of you will have heard Mike Thompson's talk about Stainmore Railway at our monthly meeting in July last year.

"In addition to the ongoing restoration work we hold a wide variety of community events at Kirkby Stephen East station.

"We have regular visits from local primary and junior school groups who are studying

STEM subjects for KS1 and 2 and the railway provides a perfect environment for their learning.

"We are now looking for a few more volunteers who would be interested in coming along in the first instance to see the sort of practical exercises we do with the children.

"As well as their teacher and an assistant a few parents also come along to help. Our next sessions are on Monday mornings on 3 and 10 November."

If you are interested in helping, please contact lennoxjoan@gmail.com

Anne is on track with new railway book featuring women pioneers

ARCHAEOLOGIST-turned-historian Anne Taylor is celebrating the publication of her latest book.

UE u3a member Anne has written *Railway Women Across the Northern Pennines* with Jackie Wedd of Ravenstonedale Parish History Group,

It was published in summer 2025 to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway – the first public railway in the world.

Anne, chair of Upper Eden History Society, was also the instigator of the music, song, poetry and prose show *Once Upon A Railway* – presented for u3a members in concert form in



June and, in a full show, at The Club, Kirkby Stephen, in August.

Other UE u3a members were among the cast.

In recent years Anne has also helped mark the anniversary of Kirkby

Stephen being granted its medieval market charter.

This year, on October 25, Anne, pictured left in railway navy dress, was joined in the market place and under the church cloisters by singers, musicians, members of Kirkby Community Choir, fellow "navvies" and about two dozen townsfolk to mark the anniversary.

The *Railway Women* book, is richly illustrated with photographs, maps, diagrams and sketches and has been produced with National Lottery Fund support.

It is available, at £10, from Anne who plans to have copies with her at our meeting on 11 November.

New faces needed to keep u3a on its toes

OUR CURRENT membership is 142 plus 11 associate members. Sixty-five of us take the TAM (Third Age Matters) magazine.

Refreshing an u3a committee is an important part of ensuring the u3a thrives.

But getting involved as a new committee member can feel a bit daunting.

So, we have identified an induction package of the things that will help new committee members to participate fully.

We hope that in due course this support will encourage others to come forward.

Our web site:

www.upperedenu3a.org

is a great way to help other people to find out what we do and why they might enjoy getting involved.

We are always keen to emphasise that we want to be open to anyone who is no longer in full time employment. So, we have added this to the web site:

“At Upper Eden u3a we are committed to promoting an inclusive environment, treating people fairly and



News from your UE committee

ensuring that no one experiences discrimination for whatever reason.

To this end we have adopted an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy full details of which can be found via this link [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).

This includes a code of conduct which members must abide by and under which members are required to treat each other with dignity and respect.”

An invitation to showcase our groups

HAVE YOU ever wondered what all the u3a groups you are not involved in do and whether some of them might be for you?

Well, December’s meeting will be your chance to find out. A bit like a careers fair – or freshers’ week for new university students - we will have all our groups represented with the opportunity to talk to co-ordinators and members about what they enjoy.

If you look at the list at the end of each newsletter you will realise what a rich diet u3a offers – so come and join the feast!



David Evans who spoke on efforts to safeguard our unique Upper Eden landscape.



Digging up Eden's past to save future

UPDATE editor Alan Barr looks back on a fascinating talk on valuable conservation and preservation work being carried out on our doorstep.

OUR October speaker was David Evans of Cumbria Geo-Conservation, who played a leading role in the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership - a £3.25 million initiative which brought together organisations such as the *Friends of the Lake District*, *Cumbria Wildlife Trust*, and many dedicated volunteers.

The partnership's aim was to restore, conserve, and celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of the Westmorland Dales, helping more people to enjoy and understand this special corner of Cumbria.

Illustrated with excellent images, David guided us through the area's deep history.

Although the Dales may seem untouched, they have been shaped by people since the Ice Age.

Glaciers carved valleys, left behind limestone pavements and fertile soils, and set the stage for millennia of human adaptation.

Over the centuries, communities built walls, dug fields, and formed the landscapes we recognise today.

Archaeological work at Little Asby Common and Sunbiggin Tarn revealed evidence of human life long before the Neolithic period.

Ancient peat and soil studies show how early farming transformed the environment, while medieval agriculture left its mark in old field systems still visible across the Dales.

Among the Partnership's many

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successes is the restoration of traditional hay meadows and limestone grasslands, particularly around Sunbiggin where volunteers worked with *Cumbria Wildlife Trust* to bring back species-rich wildflower meadows.

Other projects focused on peatland and river restoration — including the re-meandering of the beck at Bowber Head with the *Eden Rivers Trust* — as well as wildlife monitoring of salmon, sea trout, and native crayfish.

Human heritage also received attention. The region's famous dry-stone walls, some dating back to the Bronze Age, were studied and repaired, revealing five distinct walling styles linked to local geology.

Over 220 historic farm buildings, including classic bank barns, were recorded, each one reflecting how people lived and worked here. In the medieval era, monasteries owned a quarter of the land, shaping patterns of settlement which endure today.

Archaeological surveys at Smardale Limekilns, Pendragon Castle, and Great Asby Scar traced the area's history from the Bronze Age through to the Second World War.



Creativity and community engagement were at the heart of the scheme. Local schools took part in art and woodcarving workshops, and farmers hosted open days to share their knowledge and traditions.

Although the partnership has now concluded, its legacy lives on - in restored meadows, improved wildlife habitat and a renewed connection between people and the land.

The project revealed the Dales not just as a beautiful landscape, but as a living record of how people and nature have shaped one another through time.

To find out more, visit:

www.westmorlanddales.org.uk,
www.countryside.co.uk,
 and www.dalesrocks.org.uk



LASTING LEGACY: Upper Eden u3a dry-stone walling convenor John Pratt with group volunteer Alex Hurrell in front of a wall they repaired in Udale in October. The third member of the repair team was Elizabeth White who also took the photograph.



GAME ON: An introduction to bowls is on offer for UE u3a members.

An invitation for all to bowl along

*UPPER Eden bowls enthusiast **Charles Micklewright** gives an introduction to the two types of the game – and explains how local clubs are looking for new members.*

IN THE Upper Eden area, the local lawn bowling club is in Appleby, whilst the local crown bowling club is in Kirkby Stephen.

The difference is that lawn bowling is played on a flat bowling green whilst crown bowling is played on a bowling green with a raised surface at its centre, called “the crown”.

Both these clubs are looking for new members, and bowlers of all ages and abilities are welcome.

Casual bowling usually takes place on most afternoons during the summer (outdoors) for both these clubs, and in the winter (indoors) for the Appleby club as well.

Both clubs have in-club competitions during the summer (and throughout the year for the Appleby club with its indoor facilities) for those players with a competitive flair.

During the summer on Tuesday afternoons and Thursday evenings, the Appleby club also plays in local leagues.

Arrangements can be made for free try-out bowling sessions for any interested u3a member (equipment will be provided).

Contact C. Micklewright at charlesmicklewright@gmail.com for information on these two local clubs and/or about a free try-out bowling session.

New groups planned for winter enjoyment

SADLY, SUMMER is now behind us, but what a season it was. All the u3a groups which focus on the outdoors have had a great year, *writes Update editor Alan Barr.*

While the walkers and cyclists are not daunted by winter weather, croquet has to be seasonal.

Many members have enjoyed learning the game (or is it a sport?) and co-ordinator Bill Sylvester says: "Skills and skulduggery have really developed and I am looking forward to the start of the next season".

Poetry Reading and Art Appreciation

Each of these groups is thriving with several people involved in both.

They take a similar approach identifying themes around which members select a poem or an art work.

It occurred to me that some of the themes might be interchangeable.

For example, what would the art group make of the recent poetry group theme "growing up and children".

And what would the poetry group make of the art group theme "art that disturbs the soul".

Just a thought.

The image, above right, is John Keats by Joseph Severn in the National Portrait Gallery

Potential New Groups

Two new groups have been proposed and if either of these interests you please contact the co-ordinator. They are:



Jazz and modern music

appreciation: contact Gordon Teasdale at gordonteesdale@aol.com

Model making: contact Ann Sandell ann@annsandell.com

Groups that are ending

Dwindling number mean that Italian and IT/Computing are being discontinued.

Richard Vaughan who has co-ordinated IT/Computing can offer advice to any member who is experiencing difficulties to do with computers.

Contact richard@richardvaughan.email

What's on offer from our activity groups?

Upper Eden u3a offers a wide range of groups open to all members - if we have enough time to fit them in!

Sign-up sheets are always available at the u3a monthly meetings for both active and new groups.

If there is something you would like to do, that we are not yet doing, why not offer to co-ordinate a group and see if there are other interested people.

Below is a list of our groups, contact details for the organisers and meeting information.

Arts Appreciation: Co-ordinator Alan Barr (pandabarr@hotmail.com) third Friday of the month at the Old Forge Kirkby Stephen 1.30pm.

Art Painting (formerly Watercolour Painting): Co-ordinator Lois Wiseman (wizzylois1@btinternet.com) meets 2-4pm last Wednesday afternoon of the month at Great Musgrave Institute.

Botany and Wildflowers: Co-ordinator Ester Sloggett (estersloggett@gmail.com) first Monday of the month 11am.

Bridge for Beginners/Improvers: Co-ordinator Steve Heap (westow57@gmail.com) meets fortnightly on Monday afternoons.

Classical Music Appreciation: Co-ordinator Andrew Quarmby (andrew.quarmby@hotmail.co.uk)

Creative Textiles (two groups): Co-ordinator Joan Lennox (lennoxjoan@gmail.com) meets monthly on a Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning.

Crochet for Beginners and Improvers: Co-ordinator Chris Kirvan (chriskirvan@gmail.com) meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday mornings.

CUP Club (Crafty Unfinished Projects): Co-ordinator Lois Wiseman (wizzylois1@btinternet.com) meets 2pm, 2nd and 4th/last Mondays.

Cycling: Co-ordinator Paul Revell (pgrevell@gmail.com) weather dependent, times irregular, runs are advertised on the group WhatsApp which new members can join.

Dry-stone Walling: Co-ordinator John Pratt (hazel.pratt55@icloud.com) irregular sessions arranged with the group.

Enjoying German: Co-ordinator Pam Barr (pandabarr@hotmail.com) meeting last Thursday of the month at 2pm.

Film Club: Co-ordinator John Anslow (janslow@gmail.com)

French Conversation: Co-ordinator Bill Sylvester (bill.sylvester@sky.com) Not currently active and requires more members

Genealogy: Co-ordinator Bill Sylvester (bill.sylvester@sky.com) meets fourth Monday each month 2pm.



MODEL SUCCESS: Does making things in miniature appeal to you?

Guitar Tuition: Co-ordinator Nigel Harbron (nigelharbron@aol.com) weekly on Monday mornings.

Longer Walks: Co-ordinator Heather Leach (eandhleach@hotmail.com) weather dependent, times irregular, walks notified to group members.

Lynchets group: Co-ordinator Nigel Harbron (nigelharbron@aol.com) contact Nigel for details.

Poetry Reading: Co-ordinator Debbie Ling (debanning@gmail.com) meets 10am last Monday each month.

Scrabble and Board Games: Co-ordinators Maggie Schutt (maggiesreading@ahoo.co.uk) and Anne Cradock (anne.cradock@icloud.com) . Meets alternate Monday afternoons at the Old Forge

Sketching for Beginners: Co-ordinator Elizabeth White (elizabethyemen@gmail.com) meets third Wednesday of the month in Waitby.

Sunday Lunches: Co-ordinator Ges Quarmby (ges789@gmail.com) monthly, contact Ges if you are interested.

Vernacular History: Co-ordinator Ann Sandell (ann@annsandell.com) meets monthly alternately inside and outdoors.

Wood carving: Co-ordinator Alan Barr (pandabarr@hotmail.com) meets monthly on second Friday of month from 10am – 1pm.