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Furness u3a Newsletter January 2025



Monthly Meeting

January 14th 2025

10.15am - 11.30am

The Coronation Hall, Ulverston

Titanic, a Seamen's Perspective - by
Julian Blatchley

Drop-in

January 28th 2025

2pm – 3.30pm

the Methodist Rooms, Neville Street,
Ulverston LA12 0BL

*Items for the newsletter to newsletter@furnessu3a.org
by the 27th of the month*

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings and Welcome to our January Newsletter

The u3a Christmas Social was a great success attended by 85 members, with the magician, Chris Cook, going around the tables, a feast of a buffet and completed with a quiz by Tim Melville. Very special thanks to Chris Butler and her team for organising the food and tables.

Many thanks to all those who completed the Drop-In Questionnaire. The feed-back suggested that members would like to try a slightly modified format. It is suggested that the Monthly Speaker meeting would be extended a little to include the IT Help Desk, and Groups would display their activities at the rear of the hall. Thus, they would have a greater attention of over 150 members. New Groups would also benefit. Accordingly, all aspects of any change will be duly considered by the Committee. More details in the New Year!

And speaking of New Year and resolutions, why not consider joining the committee? See you all in January,

Richard Lewis [Chair](#) **Furness u3a**

COMMITTEE NEWS

The Christmas Social, the Magician, the Card and the Crunchie



Eighty-five Furness u3a members had an enjoyable Christmas Social on the 3rd December, with a buffet, drinks and entertainment. We had a wonderful range of magic tricks from Chris Cook, and a mind-blowing finale, when somehow, a randomly selected torn playing card managed to get inside a Crunchie bar. We also had a mind taxing quiz from Tim Melville. Our thanks go to Chris Butler and her small team who organised and set up another great Christmas Social. Incidentally if any member knows how the playing card /Crunchie bar trick was done, please let your committee know as we are baffled.

GROUP NEWS

LOCAL HISTORY

Stan Aspinall, a well-known local speaker, entertained us at the December meeting with an account of the intrigues of the Strickland family of Sizergh Castle. He became interested in them through other research of a portrait at the Castle entitled Cecilia Strickland, which was found to be false. This was a copy, the real one was sold and it was found in the National Gallery in Cuba. She married Jarrard Strickland after her first husband Charles died while she was pregnant and inherited Sizergh. In 1784, her son Thomas inherited Sizergh and the parents moved to a part of Kendal which became Stricklandgate.

It was Cecilia's daughter, Mary Cecilia who caused gossip and intrigue in the Strickland family. As she had no occupation, she was obliged to marry. She met Edward Stephenson who had a fortune and was very attracted to Mary. However, he had poor relations and was also a Protestant while she was Catholic. There was some anxiety when she decided to back out of the relationship, as she felt she could meet someone else. However, some weeks later, they married but not happily. She had quite a temper and caused problems enjoying the company of other men. Eventually, she moved to London. From letters, Stan found Edward suffered from the disgrace and banished Mary to Lisbon. She did agree to return, with strict rules of being confined to the house for six months. She decided to move out and they were finally divorced in 1800, after only communicating three times in months. Naturally, the family tried to conceal the affair as it became so acrimonious, and she died in 1815 in Paris.

There is no meeting in January so our next meeting will be February 10th. Dan Elsworth is coming to talk to us about the industries of Ulverston.

Have a lovely Christmas and a healthy 2025

[Sue Lydon](#)

QUESTERS

Fifty-one of us enjoyed a lovely Christmas meal at Abbey House yesterday. It was good to dress up and catch up, and to have the event in the beautifully presented Great Hall, was a bonus. Our thanks go to Sheila Slack for making all the arrangements to create another special Christmas event, and to Jan Procter who helped Sheila to do this. I think all of us enjoyed the occasion very much.

Thanks were given to the members who have arranged our events this year. In January, I arranged a visit to Dalton Castle followed by a meal at the Brown Cow. In February, Sue Whibley took us to Cumbria Crystal, and in March, Olwen Medcalfe took us to Lancaster to the Judges' Lodgings Museum. In April, Lynne Sear arranged our visit to Holker Hall and in May, Christine Stuart Woodburn organised a trip to watch a pottery demonstration at the Farmers' Arms, Lowick. In June, Jean Ashworth took us to Heron Corn Mill and in July, Tim Evans took a group to Oxley's company in Bardsea. Maureen Houliston and Moira Fair arranged a tour of Swarthmoor Hall in August, and Tim Evans took us to Shed 1 Gin in September. Because the Heysham Power Station trip fell through, I organised, instead, a trip to Muncaster Castle in October, and in November, Sue Whibley arranged our visit to the Ruskin Museum in Coniston.

There was a calendar for 2025 drawn out to fill with suggestions and leaders for our new year, so our provisional programme is this –

January – Kendal Museum, Netty Garforth and Margaret Helm

February – Laurel and Hardy Museum, Sue Whibley

March – British Transport Museum Leyland, Mike Hopkins

April – Askam Brickworks, Netty Garforth

May – The Rum Story, Margaret Helm

June – Stott Park Bobbin Mill, Tim Evans

July – Carnforth Station, Netty Garforth, Margaret Helm

August

September – To be decided, Janet Kelly and Joan Bush

October – Sizergh Castle, Hazel Smith, Christine Stuart-Woodburn

November

December – Christmas Meal



BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY, PEACEFUL, HEALTHY NEW YEAR OF 2025

[Sheila Bull](#)

VISITING GARDENS

Our planning meeting will be Tuesday 21st January 2025. As usual, it will be at Ulverston Golf Club and starting at 10.30am. Please be early, as then you will have time for coffee, and for those who wish, ordering their lunch. There will also be a slide show of all our trips this year. I have to limit the numbers, so please book your place by contacting me [Diane Hill](#).

Happy New Year, Diane

WORLD HISTORY



Letter from Queen Elizabeth I to Chinese Emperor in 1583 – finally delivered in 1984 to China's National Archive

In the World History December meeting, we studied the difficult relationship between Britain and China from the late 16th Century to the early 19th Century. Queen Elizabeth I tried to establish contact with the Chinese Emperor in 1583 but her letter was never delivered until 1984, having got lost in transit, which still happens today of course. The East India Company set up in 1600 was central to interaction with China over the next 233 years, but in the early years, access to the Chinese market was challenging and like today, there was a large balance of payment deficit in China's favour, with the British having a huge demand for Chinese goods such as tea and porcelain, but the Chinese having little interest in British goods. The only product the Chinese market at that time had a significant demand for, was opium from British controlled India, which of course caused major friction with the Chinese authorities.

British attempts to establish formal diplomatic relations with the Chinese through several embassies particularly the Macartney embassy of 1792, whose secretary was our John Barrow, were not a success. The British delegation perceived that China was a "monument to ossification and worship of tradition for the sake of it" and the Chinese state was like a great old ship, somehow kept afloat, but constantly precarious. The Chinese state view of Britain was very negative, with a view that "if we treat foreigners with courtesy they become more arrogant, if we awe them with power, they naturally fear us". The Chinese state view was to see the West overall as a new form of barbarism and regard the English in particular, as a lying and troublesome people. That ill feeling was not reciprocated in Britain, indeed there

was a fondness for things Chinese, with a tradition of the study of China in depth. Indeed, a Parliamentary Select Committee in 1830 noted that “The People of China are intelligent, industrious and persevering... it is not they who were the problem, but their government, which was anti-commercial.

The subsequent conflict that occurred between Britain and China was not inevitable, but arose from a clash of different views of the world, the Chinese being very traditional and opposed to change and the British focused on trade, expansion of influence and industrialisation.

We will explore this clash between Britain and China in future meetings. An understanding of Chinese history and the Chinese view of its relationship to the West, when China was the weaker entity and considered itself exploited, is critical to understanding the aims and ambitions of modern China. If you want to better understand how China views the West today based on China's history why not join us in this fascinating study

Email [Rosie Kyles](#) if you would like to learn more about the joining the group.

OTHER NEWS

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

North West Region have announced a Photo Competition! It is to initiate a members' photo library for members. There is a range of prizes, so send your entries, a maximum of 2, via jpeg, png or iphone to editor.nwu3a@gmail.com with your name, the name of your u3a, and activity in photo. Closing date is 28th February 2025

NB: To email members of the Furness u3a Committee, go to the [Commitee](#) page