

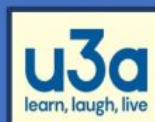
Welcome Membership Newsletter Groups
Events Committee Links Information
Documents



News

SEE THE [EVENTS](#) PAGE FOR 'DATES FOR YOUR DIARY'

Furness u3a Newsletter June 2025



MONTHLY SPEAKER MEETING

June 10th 2025 - 10:15 am-12:30 pm

(Doors open at 09.30)

The Coronation Hall, Ulverston

Our Speaker this month is **Mick Shaw** who will give a talk on

[Wartime Walney](#)

Plus – Computer Helpdesk, Group Displays and much more

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

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings and Welcome to your June Newsletter

It is so heartening to see so many membership renewals and a special welcome to all our new members.

A big thanks to Adrian Swenson for his presentation of "The NW Air Ambulance" at our May Speaker Meeting. An even bigger thanks to our members who donated so generously. A massive £759 was raised. I reckon that this amount is about equal to providing two units of

blood, i.e. we could have saved at least TWO lives! This is extraordinary and everyone should feel justifiably proud. WELL DONE!

See you all soon,

Richard Lewis [Chair](#) Furness u3a

MAY SPEAKER – NORTH WEST AMBULANCE

Members who came to the excellent talk given by Adrian on the North West Air Ambulance, will be very interested in the feedback from him which he has asked me to share with you. I think it speaks highly of Furness u3a members that they were so generous in giving to such a worthy charity

"I was very pleased to have met members when you kindly invited me to talk to you about the charity, North West Air Ambulance. You were a lovely audience and I really appreciated the interest and the questions. I was absolutely amazed to find that £759.00 had been place into the collecting bucket, an incredibly generous gift the the charity. To translate that into objects, then imagine that you have provided 4 units of life saving blood which will be given to casualties on site.

Several people expressed an interest in my giving talks to other groups, others wanted more information about the charity and fund raising. Please feel free to email me at swensonadrian@gmail.com

My thanks to you all, Adrian Swenson on behalf of North West Air Ambulance."

Harry Knowles Interim Speaker Finder

GROUP NEWS

ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

The Environment Group had a return visit to Colin Smith's 'nature reserve' at Canal Foot in May. We had previously visited in October 2024 and saw the site in all its autumn glory, one of the many memories being the bags of apples we took away with us from the heritage orchard!

No apples this time, but seeing the site in Spring was a joy.

We began our tour by walking to Nance, the restored skeleton of a historic prawnier. Colin told of how it had arrived on site in pieces, a jigsaw of a puzzle. With the help of apprentices from Siemens, it's reconstruction was completed, working without plans and only photographs to guide them. It now has a new home on it's plinth next to the road leading to the Canal Foot.

We moved on to a more recent project – establishing a stand of aspens. We had seen the young trees last October and weren't surprised to see how well they were doing. Trees are a key element of the planting and looking around, it is hard to believe that just over a decade ago, this area was field and all the trees have been introduced.

The lack of rain in recent weeks had seen the level of the pond drop, but plenty of water remained for the wildlife that had made it their home and at this time of year, the area is flanked by a horseshoe of yellow irises.

We continued up a gentle slope, passing the meadow, a real source of pride as the last couple of years have seen it flourish, the variety of wild flowers and grasses increasing with each season.

Stopping by the holly grove, we enjoyed wonderful views across the bay before accepting an invitation to enjoy refreshments and chat by the orchard.

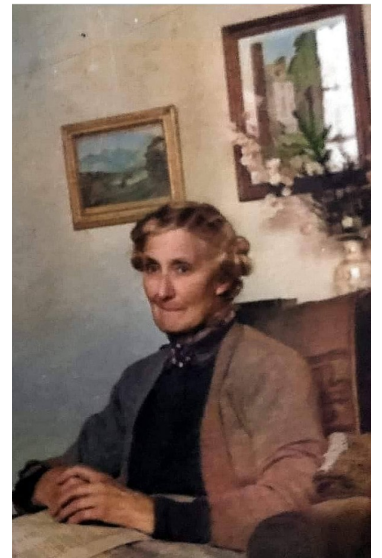
The perfect way to spend a sunny afternoon in Spring!



LOCAL HISTORY

At our last meeting, Gary Johnston came to talk to us all the way from Carlisle, about a lady from this area he had discovered while ratching. You may ask what is ratching. To 'ratch' is local dialect meaning to search for something (e.g. in a drawer) and finding more questions to search for along the way.

He told us he had gone to an auction and bid for, and bought, a scrapbook of paintings he was intrigued by. This scrapbook was compiled by a Victorian lady, Minnie Pratt, who lived for her last 37 years in Ulverston. To find out more about her he went to specialist sites on Facebook, where he discovered Minnie was an art teacher and traveller, and she painted scenes wherever she went. She lived for 100 years from 1880 to 1980 and painted and taught all over Britain, parts of Europe, Canada, Mombasa etc. Gary launched the scrapbook on Facebook and relatives of Minnie contacted him from all over the world. And an Olive Walker, (aged 102) contacted Gary to say Minnie taught her to paint and she was very strict. All this time Gary had been unable to find a photo of Minnie until a relative sent a family picture from 1905 and Minnie was at last identified.



Gary contacted the Dock Museum where they set up an exhibition a few years ago which some of you may have seen. Both Minnie and Gary had been on an incredible journey of discovery.

Our last meeting this season is on Monday June 9th. Dr Rob David is coming to talk to us about Wartime Secrets at Muncaster. We will then start again in September and we welcome new members.

INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

On Thursday 22nd of May, nine members of the Industrial History Group spent a pleasant morning following the route of the Town Beck mill race. This channel carries water from Gill Banks Beck down into Ulverston, where it rejoins Town Beck just below Town Mill, now The Mill public house. Town Beck then continues underground to Buxton Street carpark, under Tank Square carpark, before splitting into two branches, one for either side of The Ellers (once the turnpike road carrying traffic in and out of Ulverston).

In the past, the water turned the wheels of several mills in the town. Much of the mill race and Town Beck is now culverted, but there are still some places where the water is visible. Most of the old mills have gone, but High Ure Mill (now a private house), Lower Ure Mill, Town Mill (now the pub), Low Ellers Low Mill and Low Ellers High Mill (now Rachael's Court) are still standing.

Using a very informative, hand-drawn map of Mike Davies Shiel we were able to find out where and when many different products were manufactured. During a discussion about shutters, Kath told us of a shop in Union Street that still has a very old, wooden rolling shutter. The owner was happy to allow us in for a closer look, and we were delighted to discover that it had been made in Lower Ure Mill, probably in the 1880s.

Our meeting on 26th June will be a tour around the Craven Limestone Works at Settle, with further details to follow.

In July Neil and Julia will be leading us around Fairfield Mill and in August we will be visiting Oxleys. Again further details to follow but do put the dates in your diary.

[Jo White](#)

QUESTERS

THE RUM STORY AT WHITEHAVEN

Twenty members enjoyed a grand day out in Whitehaven. The weather was perfect, the train ride up there, a pleasure and we had a very interesting tour round The Rum Story, where we learned about the Jefferson family who imported rum into Whitehaven and sold it on throughout the country. Their sugar plantation in Antigua was worked by slaves, and we learned a little of the appalling conditions they suffered. We saw how rum is made these days, the effects of drinking too much of the stuff, the navy's long association with rum and finally prohibition in America. At the end of the tour, we all got a taste (or two) and some members were seen to be leaving carrying heavy bottles with them! I think everyone who went would join me in a huge thank you to Margaret Helm for all the hard work she put in arranging the trip for us.

Please see the [Questers](#) Group page for details, or contact [Tim Evans](#) or [Sue Whibley](#)

VISITING GARDENS

We all had a fabulous day out last month when thirty of us went to visit the Hidden Gardens of Grange. Four very different but lovely gardens on a beautiful day, and the cake was delicious too!!

This month on Tuesday 17th June, we are going to 'The Yews at Bowness', just north of Blackwell. This private 7 acre garden is opening especially for us.

We will be meeting on Victoria Road at 9.45am for car sharing and payment and leaving about 10am. The costs are £6.50 for the garden, extra for refreshments and £3 for a lift. I will be collecting money at the June monthly meeting. Please book your place and let me know whether you are prepared to be a driver or if you need a lift by emailing [Diane Hill](#)

WORLD HISTORY

You may remember the blockbuster film starring Charlton Heston, Ava Gardner and David Niven – '55 Days at Peking'. If so, you will know all about the Boxer Rebellion, or at least the Hollywood version of it. Suffice to say, that the actual Boxer Rebellion or Uprising was much more complex.



The correct title for the Boxers was the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists, which shows how the Boxers saw themselves. Their rebellion came from the defeat of China in a war with the Japanese, a fear and resentment of foreign influence and expansion, and natural disasters blamed on that foreign influence. The Boxers saw themselves as supporting the Chinese Imperial Government in getting rid of foreign devils. Theirs was a mass popular movement which did have significant support in the Imperial Court, including the Empress Cixi, while other senior

Chinese Government officials
opposed them.

The highwater mark of the Boxer Rebellion came with the besieging of the then Peking (now Beijing) foreign legations of the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Spain, Belgium, Netherlands, USA, Russia and Japan. In all, some 473 foreign civilians, 409 foreign soldiers and 3,000 Chinese Christians were besieged. Leadership of the foreign legations was provided by the British Minister, Claude Maxwell MacDonald, who was well played by David Niven in the film. Attacks by the Boxers were repulsed with difficulty, and eventually an Armistice was agreed on the 17th July 1900. An International Relief Force reached the foreign delegations on the 14th August 1900 and the Imperial Court fled, leaving Peking to be occupied.

During the rebellion, some 33,000 Christian Chinese were killed by the Boxers. Allied forces continued to occupy substantial areas of China, with widespread looting and destruction. Eventually, the Boxers were suppressed by Chinese Forces, with tens of thousands killed. A Peace agreement was agreed between China and an Eight Nation Alliance on the 7th September 1901, with substantial war reparations, as maintaining the Qing Imperial Government was seen as the best way forward. This Imperial Government was eventually overthrown in 1911.

The current view of the Chinese Government of the Boxer Rebellion is that it was an anti-imperialist, patriotic peasant movement failed by lack of leadership. Modern Academics see it as having much in common with the extremism of the 1960s Cultural Revolution.

This concludes our fascinating study of China, and we are now moving on to study the History and Culture of Coffee and subsequently German History. Why not join us? Contact [Rosie Kyles](#) for more information.

OTHER NEWS

VOLUNTEERS MANNING A u3a STAND AT THE ULVERSTON RETRO RENDEZVOUS



U3a AGM NORTH WEST REGION CONFERENCE and AGM

Furness u3a members are invited to attend the 2025 U3a North West Region Conference and AGM, to be held in Liverpool on Tuesday 1st July from 10.00am–3.30pm. Programme as follows:-

- 10.55 Welcome
- 11.00: Speaker: Professor Steve Barrett (topic not yet publicised)
- 12.00: AGM
- 12.45: Lunch (£5.00 in-house, or bring your own or go to local café)
- 13.45: Group Activity 1
- 14.30: Comfort break
- 14.45: Group Activity 2
- 15.30: Close

For the Group Activities, you [choose 2 of the following in advance:

- Network opportunity – Time to talk with other members about their u3as
- Hand Bell Ringing – a chance to sample handbell ringing. Please note, this will be limited

to 8 people for each session

- Japanese Calligraphy – Try writing some of those very confusing Japanese characters
- Interest Groups– an informal chat about the sorts of activities your interest groups organise and different ways they are managed.

For further details, please go to: https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/north-west-region-agm-2025/

Please note that only Committee members can be voting delegates at the AGM, but all members of our u3a are welcome to attend as non-voting delegates. Please let our Secretary, Neil McLaughlin Cook, know if you intend to attend, via [Secretary](#).

STUDY INTO THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF ADULTS WHO GREW UP IN FOSTER OR RESIDENTIAL CARE

Research has shown that care-experienced adults face a greater risk of negative health outcomes compared to the general population.

Researchers, at the University of Oxford, are holding focus groups to understand the health and wellbeing concerns of older care-experienced adults and explore the types of support they would like to receive from health and social care services.

If you, or someone you know, would like to learn more, please contact Jono on Jonathan.Taylor@ndph.ox.ac.uk or 01865 617912.



u3a SUMMER SCHOOL

The NW Region Summer School is arranged for August 12th–15th at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU).

Details from <https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/summer-school-2025>

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