



DONCASTER u3a

Aug-Sept 2026

Registered Charity No. 1074577

Message from The Chair

Hello everyone.

I hope everyone enjoyed our recent record-breaking spring bank holiday weekend and took the chance to venture outdoors whilst we all enjoyed the “Mediterranean” climate. With the start of meteorological summer, June 1st, we can now look forward to the warmest three-month period of the year in the hope that there are more sunny days than not, and that, for the gardeners amongst us, a hosepipe ban is not around the corner.



As a charitable organisation, which is run by members for the benefit of members, I have quickly learned that one of my most important functions is to encourage members to become trustees and help to ensure the continuing future of Doncaster u3a through having a functioning and effective committee.

To ensure that this is the case, we need enough trustees, the ideal number being about 12, to fulfil the roles required within the committee. This is to make sure that we do not end up with a small number of people having to do everything. At the moment we have 9, which is just about doable.

As a result of life happening, during the next couple of months we are losing some of our trustees. These trustees at present fulfil significant roles within Doncaster u3a. As a result, we are in serious need of additional volunteers to become trustees who will be willing to increase our numbers and fulfil certain roles - Business Secretary, Membership Secretary, and Group Co-coordinator.

Becoming a Trustee and joining the Committee gives you an opportunity to contribute to how we develop and progress as a ‘Members for members’ group. So, if you are interested in

becoming a Trustee, and would like find out more please contact a member of the Committee, we could even arrange for you to attend a committee meeting, as a guest, and experience how the 'engine room' works.

I would like to remind everyone of the coffee mornings that are held every Tuesday, from 10.30 am (ish) to 1.00pm (ish) at the Powerhouse. Newer Members are urged to drop in and give it a try. It is a great place to have a chat and learn more about your Doncaster u3a.

I know that people enjoy this newsletter and the information that it contains. I thank Nancy, our editor, for working hard to put this Newsletter together, which is reliant on contributions from members, so in this upcoming season of day trips, siesta and BBQ's, I hope that you might find yourself submitting an article to Nancy that provides information and interest to others.

Finally, I hope that everyone stays well and has an enjoyable summer.

Michael

Welcome to our new members

Jane Connor

Zoe Jones

Katherine Pringle

Ian Rogers

'Anthony Crosby: Historian,

Artist and Advocate of Practical Design'.

Gillian Cable is one of our own; a Doncaster u3a member. Gill is a Professional Genealogist, Secretary of AGRA (the official association for genealogy) and holds a PgCert in her subject..

Gill's 3x great grandfather was Anthony Crosby, who lived from 1792 to 1857 and rose from relative obscurity to become a solicitor living in the Inns of Chancery, London, progressing to become a barrister, money scrivener (early money/mortgage broker), an attorney in her Majesty's Court of the King's Bench and a gentleman.

Two interesting facts merged upon investigation. Firstly Anthony's father was also named Anthony Crosby and that Anthony junior was a prolific pen and ink artist creating impressions of contemporary London, notably the River Fleet.

Gill's research took a major step forward after she had written to the archivist at Christ's Hospital School and found that in 1768 two letters of petition had been sent by both Anthony senior, a weaver from Barnard Castle and by a Timothy Cloudsley, a Darlington surgeon.

Christ's Hospital operated a structured system reliant on philanthropy to give a free education to the poor.

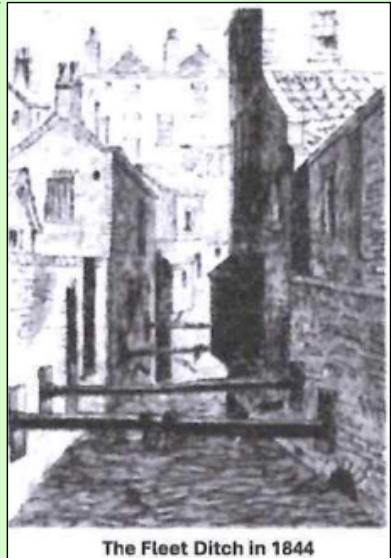
Anthony senior's children started their lives totally differently from that of their father and Anthony junior reaped the rewards.

Gill showed us a drawing of a building that Anthony junior had penned when he was about 17. The legal life may have been his bread and butter, but art was certainly one of his prime passions..

Gill next showed us an image of the lost rivers of London and mentioned the history of the River Fleet, declining from an important trade route (connecting to the Thames), becoming polluted and between 1780 and 1820 transforming to a subterranean waterway.

This meant buildings were demolished and bridges built – in short huge changes to the area.

Anthony decided that these changes should be recorded and he set about producing a series of drawings complete with measurements and notes.



By 1841 Anthony was an inaugural member of the 'Society for Promoting Design and Diffusing a Knowledge and Love of Arts Amongst the People'. The Society believed that art could be beneficial to industry and trade for example, promoting goods etc., as well as bringing culture to the wider population.

Gill showed us more of Anthony's drawings. Before photography these accurate ink drawings were vital as a record of what London looked like.

Like many men of his social standing Anthony was also involved in a Museum Club, surrounded by successful people.

Did Anthony leave a legacy? Perhaps not a financial one, but he remains recognised for the work he did because it was unique and historians, students and authors regularly use his work as a valuable historic source. So the answer is yes!

Gill Cable & Simon Hughes

Hemsley Garden Visit

Members of the DU3a gardening Group visited Helmsley on the 13th of May. 23 members, some from other DU3a groups boarded a coach in Doncaster for a one hour 20 minute journey to Helmsley. Alan our coach driver did a great job.



Set in the north York Moors National Park, the walled garden had vibrant borders, glasshouses, and apple orchards. The garden was just coming out of springtime into summer flowers. I'm sure the garden will look spectacular with all its varieties of perennials, fruit trees and more by mid summer.



We had lunch in the Vine house café all home made from clotted cream scones to delicious soups to various sandwiches and salads.

The garden was established in 1759 and the garden sits beneath the ruins of Helmsley Castle which some of the photographs will show.



The highlight of the afternoon was that the rain stopped and we were able to enjoy a one hour walled garden tour which was extremely interesting and informative.

We returned to our coach at 4 o'clock to head out back to Doncaster, with time to reminisce about our lovely day at Helmsley.

The photos of the group were taken by the Head Gardener Chris. The remaining photos were taken by my husband Peter.

Would we personally return to this garden, yes!

Thank you to everyone who joined the trip, making the day out at Helmsley Walled Garden most enjoyable.

Anona Hermes

Lynn Dobie - Obituary

It is with great sadness for family and friends that I am informing you that Lynn passed away recently in hospital.



Lynn's health deteriorated she belonged to the Love of Nature Group, the Lit 2 Group, and regularly attended the monthly u3a members meetings. Lynn was always a cheerful and enthusiastic member of the Groups she attended, befriending all the participants.

I particularly remember Lynn being extremely helpful and kind to one of the members of the Love of Nature Group who was dependent on a motorised scooter. If someone appeared vulnerable Lynn was always there to offer a friendly word or helping hand.

Wherever Lynn went, rain or shine and despite ill health, she was always stylish and elegantly dressed. Lynn will leave behind many cherished memories and lifelong friendships.

Diane Williams

UPCOMING MEMBERS

MEETINGS

July 20 Jackie Gladden

The Mansion House, Doncaster. Dominating Doncaster's High Street for over two and a half centuries, the elegant Mansion House is a landmark of historic significance. It is one of just three Mansion Houses remaining in the country, the others being located in London and York. We are delighted to have with us Jackie Gladden, of the Friends of The Mansion House, who will provide an illustrated introduction to Doncaster Mansion House, covering its functions, its wonderful Georgian architecture, and its place in the history of Doncaster.

Please note there are no Members' Meetings in August.

September 21 Elizabeth Hallett BEM

Life as a District Nurse. An entertaining and humorous talk by Liz Hallett about her life working as a district nursing sister for thirty years in the East Riding of Yorkshire and who was awarded the British Empire Medal in 2022 for her services to the community.

Helen Wynn

Gertrude Bell

Monday June 18th Paul Kirkwood gave a fascinating talk on Gertrude Margaret Lowthian Bell (1868-1926) a little-known



traveller, archaeologist, diplomat and mountaineer who spent much of her life exploring and mapping the Middle East. She taught herself a number of the local tribal languages and became highly trusted by the British Commission, helping to redraw the political boundaries in the area following the First World War and the British acquisition of territories from the Ottoman Empire.

Gertrude Bell was born in Washington New Hall, Tyne and Wear. Being from a wealthy family she enjoyed a privileged upbringing. Her grandfather was Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell, Ironmaster, industrialist and a Liberal MP and her father was Sir Hugh Bell, a progressive mill owner who cared about the conditions of his workers. Gertrude's mother died when she was just 3 years old and she seems to have developed a very close relationship with her father who became her mentor. Gertrude was shown to be highly intelligent and was sent to the prestigious Queen's College in London. She then went on to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford where she was the first woman to graduate in Modern History with a first class honours degree, although such were the restrictions imposed upon women that she was not awarded the degree until later.

Gertrude seemed to be unlucky in love. She was introduced into London society but didn't find a match. She subsequently travelled to Persia where she fell in love with a British diplomat in Tehran but her father refused to sanction the match as he was deemed not suitable. She had an affair with the married Major Charles Doughty-Wylie but was devastated by his death in the Gallipoli Campaign. She never married

and had no children.

During the First World War Gertrude spent much of her time in the Middle East where she seemed to feel at home with the culture and languages, making friends with many influential nomadic tribal leaders who seemed to accept her, despite her being a woman. Hence she became an invaluable asset and was given an OBE when in 1917 the British troops took Baghdad. At the 1921 Cairo Conference Gertrude was instrumental in helping to determine how the territories taken by the British should be divided up, as few British officials had any experience of Arab or Kurdish affairs. There is a photo of her taken near the pyramids astride a camel, between Winston Churchill and T.E. Lawrence.

Following the War, Gertrude seems to have suffered from ill-health and depression and there is some ambiguity over her death in 1926, which occurred as a result of an overdose of sleeping pills.

A local Sheikh reportedly remarked: "She is only a woman, but she is mighty and valiant. If English women are like her, the men must be like lions in strength and valour." Yet ironically, despite being a strong, outspoken woman herself, she was against the Suffragette movement. She was also a very private woman and refused to give interviews or court publicity of any kind.

Paul then took us on an illustrated tour of a number of prestigious properties in North Yorkshire - and their remains - associated with the Bell family, including Washington New Hall where Gertrude was born and East Rounton Grange, commissioned by the architect Philip Webb in 1872 for Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell and which was sadly demolished in 1953.

Paul gave a very lively and illuminating PowerPoint presentation and his passion for his subject clearly shone through.

Helen Wynn

STROLLERS

Idle Valley - 28th May

Led by Julia Toft and Kate Kirk, 20 walkers set out from the car park on a glorious sunny day. There are several routes which are well sign-posted giving a variety of walks around the nature reserve.

Although it was half-term, there were few other walkers, probably due to the heatwave conditions. The shade in the wooded areas was very welcome.



After a short walk the group split into 2 parts, some chose to follow the longer route and 6 of us opted for the shorter walk.

There was a variety of wild flowers including wild orchids, blackberries and bullrushes. We were able to identify birds by their calls and songs using an app (Merlin). Many birds were audible but were adept at keeping out of sight. We saw Canada geese, moorhens & coots with chicks. A reed warbler was seen and heard in the reed bed and we also identified a Cetti's warbler and reed bunting from their calls.

The larger group continued alongside the river. They were fascinated to see a native hornet on the path, moving slowly on the ground – maybe overcome by the heat. They are not normally aggressive unless their nest is disturbed.



The beautifully carved new route signpost was much admired by all.

After walking beside the river and lake the group returned on the farmyard pathway finishing the walk at the café where the 2 groups rejoined to travel the short distance for a well-earned lunch at the King & Miller pub in Retford.

Margaret Allott & Kate Kirk

Thanks to **David Daniels** for the cover photos used in this issue. If any member would like to send photos for me to use on the cover or in the newsletter they would be most welcome.

Remember that you can read old newsletters and find out more about meetings and groups on our [website](#) and that you can contact group leaders and committee members via the links. Alternatively you can leave a message on 07735436176.

Family History Group

At our March meeting members enjoyed an inspiring blend of technology, storytelling, and shared heritage. The meeting opened with a fascinating presentation on using AI to repair old photos — a topic that sparked plenty of curiosity. We explored how modern tools can remove scratches, restore faded details, and even sharpen long-blurred faces, all while preserving the authenticity of treasured family images.



At the April meeting, two members took turns giving short talks about one of their ancestors. These mini-presentations have quickly become a favourite part of our meetings, and this month was no exception. We heard stories of seafarers, businessmen and even a hint of murder - each tale adding another thread to the rich tapestry of our shared history. What stood out most was the way small details, such as handwritten letters or single surviving photographs, help bring our ancestors vividly to life. As always, the meeting reminded us why family history matters: it connects us not only to the past, but to each other. We look forward to next month's session, where members will continue exploring new tools and sharing the stories that keep our heritage alive.

Dawn Jarvis

Lotherton Hall

We had a lovely day out at Lotherton Hall near Leeds on Tuesday 28th May. As I remember I think the trip was well taken up with only a couple of vacant seats. The weather was



perfect. We started off with a very informed guided tour around this magnificent Edwardian/Victorian house. It was the home of the Gascoigne family from 1825 until it was gifted to Leeds Council in 1968. There was a deer park a fabulous children's adventure playground and a wildlife park. All set in 8 acres. I think people thought I was joking when I informed some of the group that there was a zoo.



There were kangaroos with little Joey's in their pouches or they may have been wallabies I have always mixed them up. The Penguins had a lovely huge lagoon to basque in and some of it had glass partitions where we watched them swimming underwater. We later finished off by having beverages in the large cafe area. We sat out for a while but a breeze forced us indoors. All in all a great day out.

Thanks to Catherine for organising the event a great success

Julie Gill

Heat And Your Health

Although many people enjoy it, hot weather can cause some people to become unwell. Many of the health risks caused by hot weather are preventable. By taking a few simple steps, you can help keep yourself and others safe and healthy.

Hot weather can increase the risk of having a heart attack or stroke. It can cause dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and overheating (simply getting very hot). Increased temperatures and humidity affect our bodies in different ways and can lead to illness and even cause death.

Anyone can be affected in hot weather, but the most vulnerable people are:

- Older people, especially those over 75
- People who have a serious or long -term illness – heart and lung conditions, diabetes, kidney disease, Parkinson's disease or serious mental health problems.
- People who are ill and become dehydrated due to vomiting or diarrhoea.
- Those who find it hard to keep cool and regulate their internal temperature – babies, the very young, those suffering from Alzheimer's disease and the bed bound.
- Those living on their own, live in places with a lot of glass, live in top floor flats or have mobility problems.
- Those who are on multiple medicines, or medicines that may make it more likely that they are affected by the heat.

Here is some advice for helping to deal with hot weather.

- Keep out of the heat if you can. Avoid going out during the hottest part of the day (11am to 3pm), if you have to go out, stay in the shade where possible, apply sunscreen, wear a hat and light coloured, lightweight clothing, take a bottle of water with you, wear sunglasses.
- Avoid hot closed spaces such as stationary cars which can get dangerously hot very quickly.
- Avoid exercise or any activity that would make you hotter such as jogging, cycling or gardening.

- Keep hydrated, have plenty of cool drinks. Avoid alcohol, caffeine containing drinks (tea, coffee, energy drinks and soda's), as these are diuretics which means it increases your production of urine and thereby drains your body of water. Watch out for signs of dehydration, such as confusion, cramps, dark urine and feeling tired. You don't have to feel thirsty to be dehydrated.
- Avoid hot meals, choose cool foods, such as salads - ice cream is allowed. Make sure you eat even though you don't feel hungry.
- Have cool showers or put cool water on a cloth and place it on your skin. A cool damp cloth to the back of the neck can be better than a fan
- You should continue taking all of your prescribed medicines unless you're advised not to by a medical professional. Most medications need to be stored below 25°C or in the fridge. Make sure that you follow the storage instructions on the packaging.
- Keep your home cool. Close curtains or blinds and close windows during the day. At night, when it is cooler, open a window if you feel safe in doing so. An air conditioner, or fan, can help. check that any heating is turned off, turn off lights and electrical equipment that are not in use.
- Check room temperatures, especially where there are vulnerable people staying.
- Keep an eye on the weather forecast and if you know it is going to be particularly hot check on family, friends and neighbours who may be at a higher risk of becoming unwell, and if you are at higher risk, ask them to do the same for you.
- Swimming pools, rivers, lakes, or the sea can be a fun way to cool down when the weather is hot and can be beneficial for your physical and mental health providing a refreshing escape from the heat. However, summer months are also associated with an increase in drowning accidents. It is essential to be aware of the potential risks of open water swimming, such as cold-water shock and strong currents.

Good weather is to be enjoyed. Keeping cool and staying healthy will help you enjoy the hotter periods.

Michael Regan

Brodsworth Hall and the Floristry Students

Many DU3A members and readers of the bi-monthly newsletter will be familiar with Brodsworth Hall, the Victorian mansion, found near to the village of Marr and the Barnsley road. Brodsworth Hall was built in the 1860s for the fabulously wealthy Charles Thellusson and his family.



Charles Thellusson filled his house with a large range of art treasures, ranging from intricately carved marble sculptures to delicately coloured Meissen figurines. Charles Thellusson inherited, or purchased a stunning collection of paintings by English or Dutch artists of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. One of these paintings portrays a complex and tall flower arrangement. This painting is a copy of a still life work by the Dutch artist Jan Van Huysem (1682 to 1749). The original painting, by

Jan Van Huysum, has a place in The National Gallery. Brodsworth's copy is said to have been the favourite painting of Mrs Sylvia Grant Dalton. Mrs Grant Dalton lived in Brodsworth Hall from 1931 until 1988. This still life painting is currently the focus of a very fine exhibition in the Hall's Dining Room and Drawing Room. The exhibition is entitled "A Season of Flowers".



Brodsworth's painting is a later copy of Jan van Huysum's original, which is at the National Gallery, London.

The exhibition's floral arrangements are the creation of Level 3 Floristry students from Doncaster College. The students were invited, by Brodsworth Hall, to create a large scale floral display. In their creation of the display, the College students took, as their inspiration, the painting by Jan Van Huysem. Their finished arrangements have been described as a "sumptuous tablescape". Visitors to the exhibition may wish to take their time in spotting the 14 different flowers that Jan Van Huysum placed in his painting. They may also notice the bird's nest and the butterflies.

The exhibition can be viewed until the end of October. One may rightly say that in this Brodsworth Hall exhibition, the creative genius of Jan Van Huysem meets the creative genius of the College Floristry students.

Alan Brocklehurst

German Beginners

The group continues to grow in confidence, as the mystery of word endings begins to clear.

The group are extending their vocabulary, practising present tense of regular verbs and are meeting sneaky prepositions that can't just make their minds up which case to use.

This group is now not suitable for absolute beginners, but people with a smattering of very basic German would be able to fit in.

If you are that person and fancy increasing your knowledge and understanding of the German language, do get in touch via the website.

Wir üben!

PS Germans love a compound word, so try this for size:

**Donaudampfschiffahrtselektrizitätenhauptbetriebs
werkbauunterbeamtengesellschaft**

(79 letters): A historic and famous, mostly theoretical word that translates as "Association of subordinate officials of the head office for Danube steamship electrical services."

Get your tongue round that!



Paula Harmer

Enjoying Poetry

The group continues to meet and enjoy sharing poems of many kinds. In May we enjoyed the very contemporary poetry of Helen Mort, hearing the poem Barn Owl from her recent collection The Illustrated Woman. Equally we enjoyed hearing Shakespeare's Sonnet 65 and a poem by Vaclav Havel. There were poems from across the ages and all were met with a great deal of enjoyment and understanding.

And of course, we talked, laughed and chatted until suddenly, it was time to stop!

Thanks to all the members and the excellent people at Cafe Prego.

David Harmer

U3A Festival Fringe

Every year the National u3a put on a festival of events in the summer. This year they are extending the festival to include an Online Fringe which will run alongside their usual Online Learning Activities. Events include:

- Wessex Versus the Vikings
- Mrs Charles Dickens tells her story
- Watercolours with Tony
- The History of Shoes

Details of these and many more talks can be found [here](#).

TOO HOT?

During the recent heatwave temperatures in the UK broke records with temperature in Doncaster reaching a high of 33°C on the spring bank holiday weekend, the hottest day in Doncaster in May on record. Whilst most of us enjoyed the sunshine and the general good weather during the latter half of May, especially after the damp start to the year, it seems an opportune time to remind everyone that this is one record that may not last long with the possibility of other records being broken in the months to come.

It was only a few years ago, in July 2022, that Doncaster enjoyed, or endured, its hottest day on record when temperatures topped 40°C.



With weather experts and climate scientists now talking about a 'super El Niño', with a 60% chance of one forming later this year, it means that we should expect a drier summer that is hotter, by a couple of degrees, and a colder and wetter winter to follow into 2027.

What is 'El Niño'

El Niño - "little boy" - and La Niña - "the girl" - are the warm and cool phases of a naturally recurring climate phenomena that occurs across the tropical Pacific. The pattern shifts back and forth irregularly every two to seven years, bringing predictable shifts in ocean surface temperature and disrupting the wind and rainfall patterns across the tropics. These changes have

a cascade of global side effects. El Niño tends to warm global temperatures whilst La Niña tends to cool global temperatures.

The name 'El Niño' was attributed to Equatorian and Peruvian fishermen who noticed that warmer sea temperatures around Christmas, influenced their catches. The fishermen often used this period of lower catches to spend time with their families and carry out maintenance and repairs to boats and equipment. The term was first used in the 1900's although the phenomenon had been known about and referred to by the fishermen since the 1600's.

Although a regular natural occurrence, in recent times the term 'El Niño' has been reserved by international scientists and climatologists to describe the more exceptionally strong warm intervals. These events do not follow a fixed timetable. They can vary in strength and duration, with the gap between each event being irregular with recent events developing every 2 to 7 years. These occurrences not only disrupt the everyday lives of the fishermen and local climate but also disrupt the climate conditions around the world impacting global weather patterns leading to widespread and severe disruption such as flooding, drought, unseasonable temperature extremes, drier summers, wetter winters, and disrupted monsoon season.

El Niño takes place thousands of miles away from the UK, so its influence on our weather is indirect. While there are sometimes links between El Niño events and European weather patterns, these are far from guaranteed, and whilst the UK's weather is shaped by many competing factors that affect the Atlantic jet stream and other large scale atmospheric patterns, there is an increasing possibility that the 2026 El Niño phenomenon will lead to a hotter summer and autumn, with a wetter and cooler winter and spring, although, as always, the British weather is never that straightforward.

Michael Regan

Thanks to:

Prego cafe for the use of their upstairs room

The Hallcross Pub for the use of their room

Chris at CJS Print

Our friends at Powerhouse



Du3a Phone number: 07735436176

**Thanks to all the contributors to this issue. Please
send articles to nraynsford.u3a@gmail.com by**

August 19th

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