

The GAZETTE



Issue No 94

May 2025

A resounding success

The embroiderers who'd embroidered the 28 embroideries knew they were proud of their work, and liked what they'd produced, but the reception our embroideries have received has exceeded our wildest imaginings. We all enjoyed the official opening of the exhibition at the Information Centre in Bakewell, on Friday, 14 February, and seeing all 28 panels together, in their beautiful frames, was a delight.

What was also a delight was the response of our guests, and the written comments of visitors in the weeks since the opening. And the future "home" of the embroideries, which had been a bit of a concern back in February, has now been settled. Bakewell's Mayor and staff at the Town Hall admired our work and felt that a "permanent" home could be found for the embroideries in

Bakewell Town Hall. They will be split between the hallways of the two floors, and available for visitors to enjoy.

In the meantime, if you haven't visited yet, there's still time, as they will remain at the Information Centre till early May.





CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Thirty six members attended the AGM on Thursday March 28 - a number which easily exceeded the quorum required. It is always comforting to know that such events are well supported. Perhaps the most important business was to confirm

committee members in their new roles: Kath Hopkins moves from her role as Membership Secretary to become our Treasurer whilst David Thornton takes over from Kath as Membership Secretary. Well established committee members Pam Walker, Sam Lewis and Ainslie Kelly were re-elected and we welcomed David Hardman as a new committee member.

However, we failed to uncover anyone who wishes to become our secretary - a job which can, within reason, be designed to meet the skills and experience of anyone who wishes to join us. Nor have we found a volunteer to become vice chair. If you fancy

either of these jobs then please do get in touch. You will be made extremely welcome.



This is a good opportunity to say

thank you to two members who have left the committee. Neil Sharples has been our treasurer for three years and played an important role in our deliberations. Thank you Neil for your commitment to the Bu3a. It is good to know that you remain very active in the Photography and Walking Groups. Additionally, I wish to extend a personal, as well as an official thank you to Jonathan Wicksteed who, with his wife Carole, is leaving the area to move closer to their family. Jonathan has been hugely

supportive to me and of Bu3a. In particular, he played an enormous role in organising and promoting last year's successful Open Day. His Bu3a "number" is 215, which makes him one of our longest serving members. Jonathan was a founder member of the Cooking By Men group, and has been active in many other groups. What I have valued most is his optimism, enthusiasm and reliability in getting things done. Thank you Jonathan - you will be missed. *(I've particularly enjoyed Jonathan's liking for holding meetings over coffee and cake in local cafes. The cafes will miss him too, Ed.)*

Following our AGM, member Ian Johnston spoke on the topic, "Is Parliamentary Democracy broken?" It is such a topical and very relevant subject and may well have accounted for the number of people attending the AGM. Thank you, Ian, for your support and for delivering such a stimulating review of the state of British politics.



Without an Open Day this year there will be no focused stimulus to recruit new members. I reckon we need to recruit about one person each week simply to maintain our existing membership. Of course, larger numbers is not the over-riding objective. We need self-sufficient vibrant groups - but this often means accommodating new members with fresh ideas. Please, do spread the word about our activities and bring along guests to our events.

You never know - they may become members and provide the additional energy and commitment which all successful organisations need.

Peter Holt
Chair Bu3a
May 2025



Editor's Ponderings

Just back from a week in a French gîte, I'm now doing some serious catching up on Gazette stuff. But some thoughts still linger over the channel, such as, "How DO the French keep their roads so immaculate?" They're a delight to drive on - we played "spot the pothole" and failed miserably. Quite a shock returning to England. Another thought - "How do the French avoid litter?" Almost ALL litter? We played "spot the litter," and DID find about 5 pieces on the week. And why is their patisserie such a delight to behold, and usually to eat? Custard slices to die for. We have some quite nice cakes and pastries, but NOTHING to rival those custard slices.

However, I don't want you to run away with the idea that I think the French are perfect in everything. There's one area where we have them beaten, hands down. And that's PUBLIC LAVATORIES. IF you can find one, it is 88% likely to be absolutely disgusting. We played "spot the most smelly, filthy lavatory," and we kept thinking we'd found it, and then we found another, and then another. They just got worse as the week went by.

There must be French travellers, just returned home from a trip here, saying "nous avons joué à esquiver les nids-de-poule". But also, "comment les Anglais ont-ils de si belles toilettes?"

And just a note about the poetry pages - most of the poems are chosen by Annes Goold and Peller of our Poetry Group. But I found I had two little gaps to fill and googled "short poems about Spring". Interestingly, the ones titled "A short poem, Spring" and "Another short poem, Spring" have apparently been generated by AI. Perhaps AI could have a go at doing the Gazette in August? **Ed**

And the bit of French? "We have been playing dodge the potholes," and "How do the English have such lovely toilets".

MLT

Another Meg Laird gathering
Wednesday, 30 July, 2 for 2.15 pm
Medway Centre, Bakewell

Richard Chaplin - A twisted Yarn

Richard Chaplin is giving a talk entitled "A twisted Yarn – the world of ropes". He will describe the challenges and risks of how rope (both steel wire and plastic fibre) has been a critical element in overcoming some of the most demanding challenges of engineering. He will illustrate this in the context of two areas of application: mine hoisting in the ultra-deep gold mines of South Africa, and the mooring and lifting operations conducted in deep water oil and gas production, where British engineering was once a leading force. He will explain how these applications share a common risk associated with the tendency of all types of rope to untwist under tension. *(Richard gave a Meg Laird talk 8 or 9 years ago - it was fascinating. Ed)*



Non-members are most welcome

And, of course, there's cake



A complete unknown

Friday, 9 May, 7.30 pm
Youlgrave Village Hall



New York, 1961. Against the backdrop of a vibrant music scene and tumultuous cultural upheaval, an enigmatic 19-year-old from Minnesota arrives with his guitar and revolutionary talent, destined to change the course of American music. Timothée Chalamet stars and sings as Bob Dylan in James Mangold's **A COMPLETE UNKNOWN**, the electric true story behind the rise of one of the most iconic singer-songwriters in history. **Youlgrave Cinema starts again in September.**

Phone [REDACTED] for more information.



It was great fun while it lasted - thank you

I thought it was time to let everyone know that the Theatre Group run by Diana MacBain and Jan Chappell has now ceased. The bank account has been closed and the surplus paid into the u3a main account.

We began running it with the wonderful Jean Elliott but when Jean sadly died in 2014 we were on our own. Since then, we've been to 68 performances in Sheffield, Manchester, Salford, Derby, Nottingham and Stratford. We have seen serious plays, comedies, musicals and ballets. We also experienced back stage tours of Manchester Royal Exchange, the Crucible Sheffield, and Buxton Opera House.

Like so many groups, lockdown was our undoing and trips to Geisha and Westside Story were cancelled. Money was returned by the theatres which must have been a huge blow to them.

Another setback was when our favourite (and cheapest) coach company, Hulley's, stopped their coach hire service. But we carried on with Andrews, Slacks and the community bus. We even stepped up to on line banking and ticketless theatre bookings. So, the SAEs we held were no longer



needed. When it came to possibly returning these, the stamps were then out of date. These were carefully cut off and donated to the Institute for the Blind who can make money from them. The envelopes with addresses will all be shredded.

The end finally came with the lack of decent productions in Manchester and Sheffield. Even Stratford's programme was lack lustre. Nothing seemed appealing enough to face the hugely



Royal Shakespeare Theatre, across River Avon

increased traffic in any of these cities.

Trips could be eventful, as when the community bus arrived late in Manchester. Members had to run to the Royal Exchange arriving breathless but just in time for curtain up.

Again in Manchester, a missing passenger was brought to St

Ann's Square by a kindly traffic warden. He'd rung Hulley's to find out where she should be! Huge relief all round.

Alls well that ends well (we've seen that too).

Jan Chappell



Bu3a Group Coordinators don't come much better than Diana and Jan, as I know dozens and dozens of Bu3a members will testify. So many of us have benefited hugely over the years from their generous commitment to the Theatre Group. Some of us know the effort it takes to organise ONE trip - organising 68 with such efficiency almost beggars belief. Grateful thanks to Diana and Jan from so many of us.



Titles for this article about ringing curtains down were very tempting - I'm not sure how I managed to resist. Ed

Cookery Corner

APRICOT CLAFOUTIS



Serves 6. Preparation time 10 minutes, cooking time 30 minutes. Freezing NOT recommended. **A traditional French pudding** and a way of using up apples or cherries which are past their prime, or any firm fruit – bananas, pears or, in this recipe, apricots. Serve with low-fat plain yogurt.

1 lb ripe apricots, stoned and quartered.

3 tablespoons plain flour

A pinch of salt

3 eggs, beaten

4 tablespoons caster sugar

450 ml (16 fl oz) skimmed milk

25 g (1 oz) half-fat butter

1 teaspoon ground allspice or cinnamon

Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 7, 220

degrees C or 425 degrees F. Lightly spray a

large, shallow, ovenproof dish. Scatter in the apricot quarters.

Sift the flour and salt into a bowl and then beat in the eggs and 3 tablespoons of sugar.

Heat the milk in a small saucepan until almost boiling and then beat into the egg mixture.

Pour the batter over the apricots.

Dot with small knobs of butter.

Bake for 25-30 minutes until the batter is set and golden brown.

Mix together the remaining sugar and spice and sprinkle over the top. Serve warm, with plain yoghurt.

Cook's note: This pudding reheats well, although it's best eaten fresh. If there are any leftovers, wrap in individual foil parcels and reheat in a hot oven for 10 minutes, opening the foil for the last few minutes.



Thank you, Irene

News of a newish group

The **Ancient Trackways group** was formed in September 2024 with the intention of holding both indoor meetings and related walks, whilst encouraging members to do bits of research into the old tracks and roads in their locality. There are about 15 active members, some

of whom are more interested in studying old maps and archive documents at the indoor sessions and some who prefer to join us for walks. Amongst the group, there are a couple of people who have a lot of knowledge and resources about old trackways, another



couple who have a lot of knowledge of Bakewell Historical Society and the Old House Museum, one with Chatsworth knowledge and a further two who have volunteer responsibilities for footpath upkeep and ranger duties on the Eastern Moors. The rest are interested amateurs.

Our latest three meetings have been: a guided introduction to Derbyshire Records Office, a guided walk above the Burton Closes area of Bakewell, along part of the Portway/Derby Gate looking for evidence of the Portway and field systems and a session on using LiDAR elevation data and digital mapping.

Our **usual meeting date** is the third Monday morning in the month, 10 am. Indoor meetings are held at Bakewell Friends Meeting House (FMH) in Wyn's Room, upstairs.

Next month's meeting on Monday, 19th May will be a walk on Stanton Moor looking for tracks.

John White

For further information contact coordinator John White (ancient.tracks@bakewellu3a.org.uk).

BU3A ENVIRONMENT GROUP

What has the Bu3a Environment Group been up to?

*** Thermal Imaging Camera**

You may remember we now have a thermal imaging camera to help you find cold spots in your home, places where warm air is leaking out and cold air coming in. Twelve members have requested to use the camera which is very encouraging. We are putting together a user guide to help people interpret the images. To book the camera contact environment@bakewellu3a.org.uk. Please be aware that there is little point in using the camera in summer months – it is most effective in colder weather – but we can still put your name on the waiting list for the Autumn.

We are getting related requests about how to fix heat loss problems. Every home is different and we do not have the expertise to give specific advice but we are hoping to create a list of websites and organisations that can help. We hope to compile a list of Bu3a members who have experience of use of solar panels, storage batteries, heat pumps, use of electric cars, who are willing to share their experience with other members. Please email environment@bakewellu3a.org.uk if you think you can help.



What else have we been up to?

*** River Wye**

In February Ainslie Kelly, as a representative of the fly fishing community, came to talk to us about water quality in the River Wye. Did you know that our river has an excellent rating for biological diversity, but is poor in terms of chemical quality. This is

due to pollution from our use of insecticides and pesticides, nitrogen and phosphate run off from fields, quarrying waste, and SEWAGE! What

can we do to protect the food chain for the wildlife in the river?

If you have any containers of unused chemicals, such as weedkillers or toxic chemicals, please take them to the recycling centre



rather than pouring down the drain. Ainslie gave us a slide show on river quality monitoring and we hope to do our own survey on the Wye in May.

* **Fuel Poverty**

Did you know there are up to 1,000 households experiencing fuel poverty in the six wards around Tideswell? Sheelagh Handy from Hope Valley Community Energy came to talk to us about how this charitable organisation is working with Citizens' Advice and the NHS to identify vulnerable households, obtain grants, arrange surveys of houses and carry out work using reputable local tradespeople.

Many people in the Bakewell area must have similar issues. Grants are available through the Government Community Energy Fund, and are available for anybody on a low income. Google ECO4 Eligibility Check for more information.

* **Climate and Nature Notice Board**

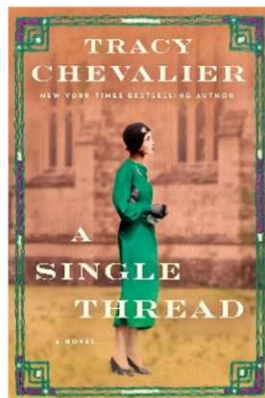
Look out for our new notice board in the Coop where you will find details and information about upcoming events.

Denise Wills

A Single Thread by Tracy Chevalier

I found this book, both times I read it, a warm and gentle story which begins and ends in Winchester Cathedral.

It is 1932 and we are immediately introduced to Violet Speedwell and drawn into her life. Her elder brother and her fiance were both casualties of the war and her father died two years ago. She is one of the many “surplus” women, destined to remain a spinster, one who, the mores of the time dictate, will continue to live at home caring for her widowed mother. But Violet finds this situation suffocating and takes a bold step for independence by gaining a transfer from the typing pool of an insurance firm in Southampton to the Winchester branch of the same firm.



Nothing is easy, there is no support of any kind from her mother, but she is soon drawn into the “broderers”, the group of women charged with working on embroidered kneelers, seat cushions and other items, which add colour and beauty to the already magnificent building. Here she learns a new and engrossing skill, makes new friends and becomes involved with the lives and secrets of other broderers.



As the book draws to a close the Second World War is threatening. Violet has her own secrets, and her life is about to change yet again.

I understand the title, “A Single Thread” though, like the embroidery she works

Seat cushions in Winchester Cathedral

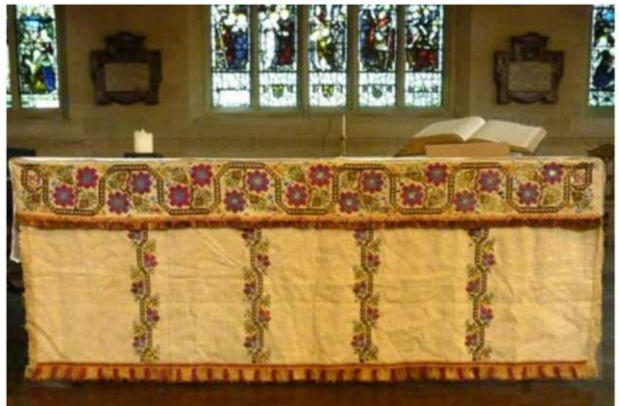


on, many threads are involved in Violet's life. In my opinion, one of these threads is misplaced, not necessary to the overall picture and could well have been omitted. It sticks out like a badly worked stitch or a piece worked in the wrong colour. Miss Pesel and Mrs Biggins, the ladies who oversee the work of the broderers, would certainly demand it be unpicked. You will form your own opinions about that, should you choose to read this engaging book.

PS My enjoyment of this book was enhanced by the fact that my son and his family now live in Winchester. I recognise many of the places mentioned, Violet often passes my son's front door. I have been in and around the Cathedral on a number of occasions, in fact, on my first visit the volunteer guide turned out to be from the Derbyshire Dales. He would have chosen to return in retirement but his wife, a soft southerner (his words), refused to contemplate the cold winters we experience!

Anne Peller

PPS The "Miss Pesel" mentioned above really existed. Very active in the First World War effort via the Red Cross, she also worked, through the Bradford Khaki Club, from 1915-19, with traumatised and injured soldiers, teaching embroidery skills as a means of therapeutic distraction. With her help, they designed and worked the Khaki Altar Cloth, now part of the Bradford Cathedral embroidery collection.



Keep an eye open for new neighbours?



Watch out for new people moving in, who might be interested in joining our Bu3a. If you let me know of new residents, I'll send them a Gazette with an explanatory note. Or you could invite them to a Meg Laird talk, or our Coffee Morning. Phone me

Sorry this keeps popping up, but I think it's important that we all spread the word when we get the chance.

Ed

Amusingly, Val Cartwright received the joke below from a friend, in exchange for the one on Page 25 of the February Gazette, about the 4 men in a plane. Fair swap, I think. Ed



A teacher gave her class an assignment to ask their parents to tell them a story with a moral to it. Next day, the children returned and one by one began to tell their stories.

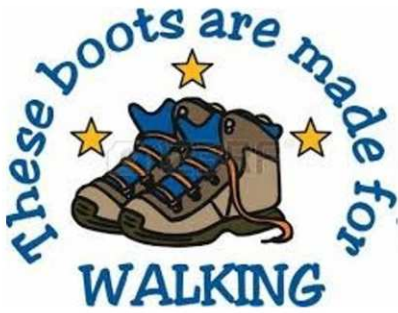
"Johnnie, do you have a story to share?" asked the teacher

"Yes, miss. My daddy told me about Auntie Karen. She was a pilot in Desert Storm and her plane was hit and she had to bail out over enemy territory. All she had was a flask of whisky, a pistol and a survival knife. She drank the whisky on the way down so it wouldn't break and be wasted, and then her parachute landed right in the middle of about twenty enemy troops. She shot many of them until the gun ran out of bullets, killed four more with the knife until the blade broke, then killed the remaining soldiers with her bare hands."

"Good heavens," said the horrified teacher, "and what moral did your father draw from this story?"

"Don't mess with Auntie Karen when she's been drinking."





Walking Programme May - August 2025

All Walkers: please read -

If you don't receive an email before the walk, or you are unsure whether it will be suitable for you, please contact the walk organiser for details. **It is**

vital to get agreement before bringing a dog. You need to tell the walk leader if you intend to walk, and **if you change your mind.**

MONDAY WALKS

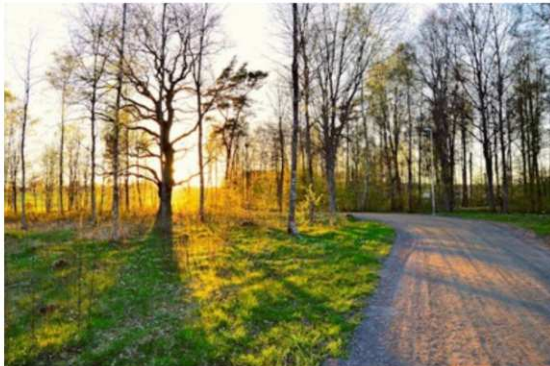
Week 2 – Monday. A walk of 4 to 5 miles, occasional ascents and a few stiles, but much topical interest and variety.

Organiser: John Anderson



Dates: Mondays: 12 May, 9 June, 14 July, 11 August

Week 4 - Monday. Around 3 to 4 miles at a gentle pace. Picnic lunch in summer and cafe or pub lunch in winter.



Organisers: Malcolm

Dates: Mondays:
(May and August, no walk, bank holidays). 23 June, 28 July

Details of our Group Activities - May 2025

Please refer to Group web pages for more information, bakewell.u3asite.uk

Subject	Co-ordinator	Telephone	Meeting day	Time
A sense of history	Vicki Clements			
Ancient Trackways	Helen Parker		3 rd Monday	10 - 12 noon
Art	Linda Fussey		2 nd Thursday	2 - 4 pm
Big Issues	John Hooper			
Birding Short Walks	Jane Burgess		1 st Tuesday	Am
Bowling	Mary Creswell		Tuesdays April - Sept	10 - 12 noon
Book group	Jane Kayley- Burgess		2 nd Tuesday	2 - 4 pm
Bridge	Trish Simmonds		Every Thursday	1.30 - 4.30 pm
Chatsworth Group	Peter Holt			
Cooking by Men	Ainslie Kelly		2 nd Tuesday	5.30 - 7.30 pm
Craft	Gill Roberts		2 nd Wednesday	2 - 4 pm
Environment Group	Helen Parker			

Subject	Co-ordinator	Telephone	Meeting day	Time	Location
Gardens & Houses	Sheila Sidebottom Vivien Stephenson		Various Tuesday visits	Varies	Contact Co-ordinators
History Through Art	Helen Parker				
Luncheon Club	Anne Peller		1st Wednesday	Need you ask?	
Nomadic 12/12 lunch	Angus Stokes		12 th of month		
Philosophy	Sam Lewis		2 nd Wednesday	10.00 - 12 noon	
Photography	Neil Sharples Allen Flatman		1 st Friday	10.00 - 12 noon	
Poetry	Anne Gould		2 nd Tuesday	2.00 pm	
Keep using your French	Liz Gelanos		4 th Monday	2.30 - 4.30 pm	
Scrabble	Anne Peller		4 th Wednesday	2.00 - 4.00 pm	
Sketching	John Hooper				
Social team and Meg Laird team			01629 813591	01629 636477	
Spanish	Jayne Northcott		Alternate Tuesdays	2.30 pm	
Walking	Jane Burgess		See programme in the Gazette	Email: walking@bakewellu3a.org.uk	
Writing for Pleasure	Pip Young		3 rd Wednesday	2.00 - 4.00 pm	Phone co-ordinator

LONGER WALKS - Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

Week 1 - Wednesday, 7 or 8 miles. A moderately paced walk over a variety of terrains. Picnic all year round, unless very inclement.

Organiser: Neil Sharples

Dates: 7 May, 4 June,
2 July, 6 August,

**Week 2 - Thursdays:
7 - 8 miles,** at a moderate
pace. Picnic all year round.

**Organiser:
David Thornton**



Dates: Thursdays: 15 May, 12 June, 10 July, 14 August

Week 3 - Friday, 5 to 6 miles at a moderate pace. Pub or cafe lunch.

Organiser: Rosemary Wolfe

Dates: Fridays: 23 May, 20 June, 18 July, 22 August

Week 4 - Wednesday, 7 to 8 miles moderately paced, over a variety of terrains. Picnic all year round, unless very inclement.

Organiser: Neil Sharples



Dates: Wednesdays:
28 May, 25 June,
23 July, 27 August





NEW SCRABBLE GROUP

The newly-reformed Scrabble group is up and running! We are meeting monthly, on the **fourth Friday afternoon**, at the Friends' Meeting House. Already, we have

16 keen players, of varying levels of deviousness. Scrabble, like most games, is a mixture of luck and skill. If you do not get any of the good (high scoring) tiles, you will need a lot of skill to win. We play with two, three or four people on a board. There is a dictionary available, but not for looking up a word before you play it. We also have lists of the many two and three letter words to hand. We should manage at least two games in an afternoon, with a short break for tea and chat, and a change of table.

We can't all be winners, so here's a post mortem from a grumpy loser. *Ros Stokes*



Well you had the Z, the X and the Q,

Of good letters I had but so few.

The Ss came out most unfairly.

The Ts and Rs I saw so rarely.

I admit I had all of the Is,

Six at once to my surprise.

I longed and longed for just one E.

I changed and changed - but none for me.

You even had both of the blanks.

Do I want another game? NO THANKS!

POETRY

Today

If ever there were a spring day so perfect,
so uplifted by a warm intermittent breeze

that it made you want to throw
open all the windows in the house

and unlatch the door to the
canary's cage,
indeed, rip the little door from its
jamb,

a day when the cool brick paths
and the garden bursting with
peonies

seemed so etched in sunlight
that you felt like taking

a hammer to the glass paperweight
on the living room end table,

releasing the inhabitants
from their snow-covered cottage

so they could walk out,
holding hands and squinting

into this larger dome of blue and
white,
well, today is just that kind of day.

By Billy Collins

Loveliest of Trees

A. E. Housman, 1859 – 1936

Loveliest of trees, the cherry
now
Is hung with bloom along the
bough,
And stands about the wood-
land ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years
and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs
a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in
bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with
snow.

A short poem, SPRING

Sun's warm kiss on sleepy land,
Nature's gentle, waking hand.
Green shoots rise, birds sing
with glee,
Spring's bright promise, wild
and free.
Oh, to be in England

Home-Thoughts, from Abroad, by Robert Browning

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England - now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops - at the bent spray's edge -
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
- Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!



Another short poem, **SPRING**

First soft rain, earth drinks
deep,
New life stirs from winter's
sleep.
Blossoms bloom, a vibrant hue,
Spring's awakening, fresh and
true.

The Woods and Banks

By W H Davies

The woods and banks of England now,
Late coppered with dead leaves and old,
Have made the early violets grow,
And bulge with knots of primrose gold.
Hear how the blackbird flutes away,
Whose music scorns to sleep at night:
Hear how the cuckoo shouts all day
For echoes -- to the world's delight:
Hallo, you imp of wonder, you --
Where are you now, cuckoo? Cuckoo!



Notes from my Vegetable Garden Spring 2025

Although flowers are my real love I have been growing vegetables for many years. In my previous house I had a large patch dug from a field and grew, with variable success, vegetables to feed a family. In my present home I have a bed no bigger than a tablecloth, plus a greenhouse and soft fruit.

When I moved eleven years ago I resolved to only grow vegetables that you could not buy as nice in the shops, like fresh peas. I have not stuck to this but I still don't try with vegetables like carrots or parsnips which my soil, a heavy clay, is entirely unsuitable for.

During the last year I have had operations for two new knees and have to improvise. This year I knew I would be out of action during March/April and therefore experimented with early planting. Last autumn was very wet and grey and I had no desire to garden. I took the opportunity to dig my vegetable patch when we had a rare glimpse of sun (hurrah), I can use a spade and fork again with a new right knee. In December I used my plastic and polythene polytunnels to cover three edges of my patch. I hoped to dry the soil and hopefully keep off some of the winter frosts. I bought some winter planting onions and planted them under the sturdiest tunnel. I never have tried early onions before. I then went off for a month's holiday in the sun. On my return there was no sign of growth, but soon after the first tip appeared and they are developing normally now. I will only know how this compares with Spring planting at harvesting time. Then in early February I planted a row of broad beans straight into the soil. This time the weather was





on my side and in March a complete row of beans appeared which are now six inches tall.

Before going into hospital in early March I planted tomato seeds and placed them on a warm window ledge. The unusually warm and sunny April helped them to germinate and soon I had healthy looking plants that I repotted into individual pots. Now comes the problem, they have grown long and leggy and desperately need to be planted out. I know that it is too early and that I could lose the lot to a late frost but I need to act.

My greenhouse is in process of being re-soiled, as last year my yields were down and thistles and nettles crept under the concrete and made themselves at home in the nice warm conditions. I removed half the soil together with what weeds I could, and took a friend's advice and put cardboard sheets down with new unopened sacks of compost on top, watering well. I thought I would have at least till May before I had to tackle this task but my tomatoes need planting. Last week with crutch propped up, I heaved sacks of compost, dugout persistent thistle roots and emptied in new compost. I did about one third of the space, came back the next day and dug more, leaving the last third still be done. I shall plant the tomatoes as deep as I can as Monty Don says that they then grow roots along the stem below ground. Then I will wrap some fleece around them and hope for the best. The growbags I have on a south facing wall are in place and I fear I will have to risk planting my leggy tomatoes in them and then create a fleece and polythene wrapping for them. I don't know if I will lose them all as I know it if far too early.



I planted peas and sugar snap peas indoors and have successfully transferred them outside, removing the
(Continued overleaf)

polytunnel this week. My runner beans are straight in the ground and have yet to appear under their tunnel.



Two weeks ago I planted French beans in pots indoors and today have discovered that they have all rotted, either too wet or not warm enough to germinate! This year it will be pot luck whether I get any crops or not - we can never predict our weather.

However, next year I hope to have two functioning knees and, in the meantime, I have enjoyed sitting in the sun, guilt free, with jobs to be done.

Mrs Blossom

These are Mrs Blossom's tulips, and that could be the chair where she sits in the sun. Thank you again, to Mrs Blossom, for sharing her gardening enthusiasm with us all. Ed

Thank you following our Charity Coffee Morning.

We raised £568 at our January Coffee Morning, and our chosen charity was Parkinsons. The cash was split between our local group which supports people in the area who have Parkinsons, and the national organisation, Parkinsons UK. We received lovely thank you cards acknowledging both donations.





12/12 Nomads

The Nomadic 12/12 Lunch Group is a sociable bunch, welcoming all members to join from all groups within

BU3A. The group is dedicated to enjoying a variety of food in diverse locations at 12 noon on the 12th of every month. The lunch conversation is convivial and lively. You will find friendly faces and a warm seat at the table.

There are 45 group members and monthly attendance for lunch has varied between 16 - 25 so far. We've enjoyed our meals together in Bretton, Calver, Daley Dale, Eyam, Sheldon, Hurdlow, Edensor and Ashford in the Water.

Last month 16 nomads also ventured up to Great Hucklow for a caffeine-infused visit to a coffee roaster. We tasted and learned about aspects of how coffee is grown and prepared for our lunchtime enjoyment.



To receive news of our events join the group.

Angus Stokes

Coordinator is Angus Stokes

GARDENS, HOUSES AND ART

SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAMME

Visit to Doddington Hall, with thanks to Mary Chaplin.

DATE - Tuesday, 1st July 2025.

TIME - 9 am, Bakewell Methodist Church.

Travelling time from Bakewell is estimated as 1 hr 40 mins.

Doddington Hall is an Elizabethan House lived in by descendants



of the original family. There are gardens, estate walks, an Art Gallery, Farm Shop and three cafes! Promises a great day out.

A private guided tour of the house, giving insight into family life over generations is offered. Minimum number 20. There are 64 stairs with chairs to rest on each landing. A virtual tour is available if the stairs are a problem.



COSTS. Coach plus driver's tip £27, entry to the Hall and Gardens £13.50, guided tour £2.50.

TOTAL COST. With tour, £43. Without Tour, £40.50. If you are a member of the Historic Houses Association entry to the Hall and Gardens is free.

PLEASE let me know as soon as possible if you are interested in this visit. I need 25 people to make it viable. I will let you all know if it is to go ahead, then your final bookings can be made. Thank you.



NB - SEPTEMBER. I am in the initial stages of planning a visit to Biddulph Grange when the dahlias should be at their peak.

Thank you to Aileen Cooke for suggesting this.

Sheila Sidebottom

Doctor, Doctor - I keep thinking I'm a pig. How long have you had this feeling? Oh, about a weeeeeeeek.

Doctor, Doctor - I keep thinking I'm a bridge. What's come over you? Two cars, a lorry and a coach, so far.

Doctor, Doctor - I think I'm suffering from deja vu. Hang on a minute, didn't I see you yesterday?

Doctor, Doctor - I've lost my memory. When did this happen? When did what happen?

I'm so unlucky - when my ship finally came in I was at the airport.

Special Plants at Chatsworth

On 19 March the Chatsworth Group gathered in The Potting Shed, to hear an engaging and informative talk, given by Faye Tuffrey, about significant plants at Chatsworth and the people who grew them. This is an account of that event.



Under the headings of Plants, People, Places, Faye Tuffrey led us through the history of some of Chatsworth's more exotic plants. The four special plants, which were the focus of the talk were the Giant Water Lily (*Victoria Amazonica*), the Pride of Burma tree (*Amherstia nobilis*), the Pineapple and the Banana. And while many people were mentioned in the course of describing the plants on their journey to Chatsworth, of particular importance were William, Sixth Duke of Devonshire and



his head gardener, Joseph Paxton. The places were the places of origin and the specific places and conditions constructed by Paxton at Chatsworth for their propagation. It was interesting to note how it was not only long-distance travel (undertaken by the wealthy such as the Duke) and the reach of Empire and the missionary church, but also the role of women (for example, Queen Victoria, Lady Amherst and Mrs Lawrence) which played a part in the sourcing, distributing and propagation of these exotic plants.

Initially the Duke had little interest in gardening – he was more interested in collecting objects on his travels. This changed when he met Paxton. He hired Paxton to be his Head Gardener. It was a time of passion about collecting and propagating such plants. There was great determination and competition to be first and best – with occasionally some collaboration and sharing. With the Duke's wealth and Paxton's talents and dedication, together they created the collection of exotic plants.

What is special about these four plants?

The Giant Water Lily, native to the wet, tropical climate of Guyana, grows to a great width and has a beautiful flower which changes from white to pink and - unusually - comes out at night. For Paxton, its value became not only in creating the conditions – water and heat and protection – for its growth, but also the extraordinary fan-like structure underneath, which gave it strength to bear a child's weight. This structure became part of his plan for the Crystal Palace at the Great Exhibition of 1851.

The Pineapple, a low-growing plant used more for decoration than eating in the 19th century, had been grown before at Chatsworth but the greenhouses had fallen into disuse. Again Paxton was able to create the conditions for them to grow successfully. They fruit all year round. With great economy of heat and space Paxton grew grapes above the pineapple: he invented the coal-fired heating system we know about as a feature (though no longer working) at Chatsworth.



In the 19th century the pineapple was a symbol of wealth and welcome, and was often used as a central dinner-table display and source of conversation. (If you couldn't afford to buy one, you could rent one for a Guinea - two Guineas if you ate it.)*

The Pride of Burma is an extraordinary high-growing tree of the pea family, with brightly coloured orchid-like flowers, dropping pendulant-like from its branches. It was observed growing in the wild originally, but became cultivated and flowered, eventually, in 'captivity'. The Duke wanted to be the first to produce flowers on the tree but was beaten in this endeavour by a Mrs Lawrence.

The Banana. Charles Telfair, who had served in the Royal Navy sent two samples of the banana from Mauritius to his friend, Robert Barclay, in England. Barclay died before he could propagate them, and when his two plants were sold, Paxton acquired one for £10. Bananas, too, are low-growing plants, so were suitable for Paxton's greenhouses. But it was three years before the plant produced fruit.



With its unusual genetic structure - it is reproduced by vegetative cloning - the fruit is always consistent. But the downside is that no mutation means no resistance to infection. Paxton had sent his fruit to friends overseas, where it was cultivated in many places. So when the previous popular variety succumbed to Panama disease last century, the Chatsworth banana, already grown extensively, was distributed worldwide. However, there is the danger that it, too, could become infected. Scientists are working on this, but meantime, every supermarket banana is more than likely to be the Cavendish variety.**

Marie Howes

- * The Pineapple became a symbol of Empire and is included in architectural features on many buildings, especially ironwork additions.
- ** If you still have your November Gazette, you will find a very interesting article by Phil Clarke on the Chatsworth banana.

How can you identify someone from their dental records? If you don't know who they are, you certainly won't know who their dentist is?

Why don't they make the rest of the aeroplane out of whatever they make the black box out of?

If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, what's baby oil made from?

Why is it called Alcoholics Anonymous when the first thing they do is stand up and say, "My name is Bob and I'm an alcoholic."

A man books into a sleazy hotel and the desk clerk tells him it's £20 a night, or £15 if he makes his own bed. "That's fine," says the man, "give me a £15 room." "Here's your key," replies the clerk, "pick up your timber and nails at the top of the stairs."

Bakewell Area U3A - Registered Charity No 1111699

YOUR OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

The members of the committee of the Bakewell Area U3A are ex-officio the Trustees of this Bakewell U3A Trust No 1111699. The Trustees are answerable and accountable for the finances, activities and publications of the Trust.

There is a link to our data protection policy on the members' page of the BU3A website.

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Website: bakewell.u3asite.uk

Bakewell U3A warmly welcomes all new members. Please contact the Membership Secretary for more information. The Membership form can be downloaded from our website. Forms are also held at the Library, the Medway Centre and the Information Centre. Completed membership forms should be sent to D Thornton, 2 Burton Closes Mews, Bakewell DE45 1AG

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