

The GAZETTE



Issue No 97 February 2026

Our raison d'être

noun

the most important reason or purpose for someone or something's existence

As Bakewell u3a members, all of us, I'm sure, know why it's good for us all that Bakewell u3a exists. The two articles I review in my ponderings seem to shout it out, loud and clear. I hope you'll agree, after reading them.





CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

FEBRUARY 2026

I became Chair of Bu3a at the July 2023 AGM. After three years it is time to seek a successor. It has been a very rewarding and enjoyable experience. I have made many new friends and seen how active groups can stimulate and challenge members by providing tremendous learning and social opportunities. But age creeps on, personal priorities change and I know it is time to hand over leadership. Ideally, this should take place at the forthcoming AGM on 26th March. You will find the Agenda and our voting protocol on other pages.

The AGM also provides an opportunity for you to provide the support your committee needs to manage the Bu3a and move forward. Do come along. To add to the occasion, after the business has been conducted, member, John Hopkins, will give an account of his time as a schools inspector in Dubai. From personal experience I know this will be an illuminating, entertaining and informative presentation.

It is great to be able to draw attention to successful group activity. I lost count of the number of lunches that were organised over the Christmas period. I went to three and am still suffering the effects. Additionally, the newly formed Theatre Group had a very successful visit to "Christmas Carol" which included preparatory and follow-up discussions and our Meg Laird group has just held our Bu3a annual

charity fund-raising event. They sold tea and cakes, raffle tickets, books and other attractive bargains and will soon make a generous donation to Cancer Research UK on our behalf. Well done Meg Laird and well done Bu3a members.

Also in this edition you will find Ian Johnston's piece relating to select wildlife in "Chatsworth Park". The murmuration of jackdaws may now be over but there is still much to enjoy in the park, even in these winter months. Moreover, the Chatsworth Group 2026 programme can be seen on the Bu3a web site with three of our meetings relating to some of the topics Ian mentions.

I do hope that you continue to enjoy and support the many activities which our groups will provide throughout 2026.

Peter Holt, Bu3a Chair



Calling all bridge players

The Bu3a Bridge Club meets on Thursday afternoons in the Medway Centre. We play duplicate bridge and we're a very friendly group. All levels of players are most welcome.

If you might be interested in joining us, please contact
Trish Simmonds on 01629 814533



Editor's Ponderings

I'm a Guardian reader and a Radio 4 listener, and sometimes an article appears and I think, "THAT'S why I read this newspaper," or I hear a programme, and I think, "THAT'S why I listen to Radio 4". *Recently, they joined forces and told me the same thing - that being involved with "the arts and culture" in any or all of its many forms, is good for us.* And you might say, "well, of course it is, it's common sense," but now there is an increasing scientific evidence base for this claim, showing that



involvement in regular singing or dancing or reading or crafts, reduces symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress. Visiting the theatre, music events, museums, galleries, the cinema, taking up a craft hobby, make it less likely we'll develop such symptoms.

Engaging with the arts can improve immune activity, lower inflammation levels, improving physical and mental health. It can reduce the risk of developing chronic pain, physical impairment and frailty. And the article states that the scientific evidence is there to prove it.

Well, I thought: that all sounds very positive and encouraging, just as well I was going to the Crucible Theatre with the Theatre Group, in a few days' time.

Five days later, another article appeared, reviewing a book written by Ben Rein, neuroscientist and teacher at Stanford University, titled "*Why Brains Need Friends, the Neuroscience of Social Connection*". The author wants to give his readers responsible and accurate science about how our brains work, what makes us tick at

a biochemical level, with clear, approachable language, and “no big words”. And if the article is anything to go on, he’s succeeded.



His main, central claim is that “isolation is bad for us.” and evidence for his claim is presented relentlessly throughout the article, and, no doubt, throughout the book. As I understand it, isolation causes stress which releases cortisol, because the brain DOESN’T like the isolation. Cortisol suppresses inflammation in the short term, but if isolation is long term, inflammation takes over and, as one of the serious consequences of chronic stress, it makes our organs less healthy and prevents

healing. So a build up of inflammation is bad news and it’s one result of isolation or what we’d probably call loneliness.

The converse is a much better story - when we’re socialising and around others, our brains DO like it and they release oxytocin (an MVP, most valuable player) which is anti-inflammatory, suppresses stress and promotes wound healing - so, three cheers for oxytocin. At the same time oxytocin triggers the release of “two very powerful neurotransmitters, serotonin and dopamine”. Mr Rein tells us that “dopamine is the brain’s way of saying that what you’re doing right now is good for you, and you should keep doing it; serotonin is linked to mood.” The two together are “incredibly powerful at making us feel good,” he says.

So - do we have members who’d value a weekly meet up in a nice Bakewell cafe?

Do we have anyone who could lead a singing group?

Could anyone lead a dance group, of some sort? Ed

PS - Must look out for the oxytocin boost after Bu3a Committee meetings.



Our next Meg Laird talk
Thursday, 30 April at
the Friends Meeting House
2.00 for 2.15 pm start.

Sheffield Support Dogs

MY NAME IS PEGGY

My Job: Autism Assistance Dog

Breed: Labrador Retriever

Location: West Midlands

My super power: giving my human the confidence to try new things

I love: muddy puddles and my special pig toy

I don't like: toys that don't squeak.



Support Dogs is a national charity dedicated to saving and improving the lives of children and adults with various challenging medical conditions. We provide, train and support specialist assistance dogs to achieve this. We specialise in three specific programmes: autism assistance dogs for autistic children, seizure alert dogs for people with epilepsy, and disability assistance dogs for people with physical disabilities. We support families across the UK, but all of our training is based at our training centre in Sheffield. We have recently moved into a new building in Hillsborough which we will be turning into a national specialist centre for training support dogs.



£3 entrance.
Non-members are most welcome, bring a friend.
And there's CAKE.



Our Charity Coffee Afternoon

SO how did we do?

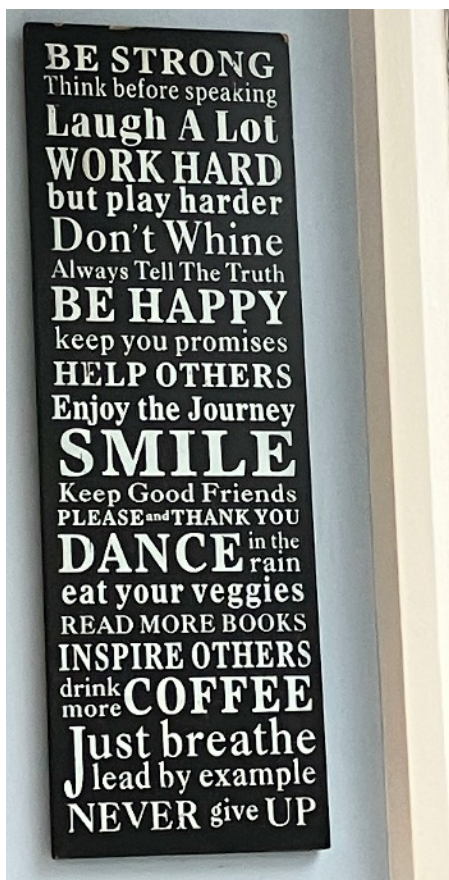
Not badly,



thank you. It was a lovely occasion, 50 members came, drank tea and coffee and ate good quality biscuits, bought from a very well-stocked sale table, took part in an excellent raffle, and had a good chat with friends. And we raised £520 to send off to Cancer Research.

The Meg Laird team is sorry that this is the last event when Alisoun Cunningham will be involved. Sadly for the rest of us, she's decided we must do without her. Thank you to Alisoun for all her efforts on our social side over a number of years. And, of course, she was our Bu3a Secretary for a long time, too.

A sign worth pondering on, perhaps?



I don't usually have much time for the little signs telling me to "Live, laugh, love" or that "Home is where the heart is," but this one, by the window in a



lovely cafe in Coniston, The Green Housekeeper, (very good coffee, if a little strong, and delicious cake) made me think, and I realised I agreed with all its maxims. So out came the camera, and I offer it to Bu3a members.

completed form. The Chairman can be appointed as a proxy, as can any other member of Bu3a who will attend the AGM.

A member who appoints a proxy can instruct their proxy how to vote or can give the proxy discretion to vote as the proxy thinks fit. There will be votes on acceptance of the minutes of the last AGM, the accounts for 2024 and elections. These votes are important to the running of Bu3a. A member who appoints a proxy, who does attend, will count towards the quorum for the meeting. It is important that a quorum is achieved. If you do not expect to attend, please appoint a proxy, in order that we can achieve a quorum.

Bakewell Area u3a

Appointment of proxy

This form (completed and signed) must be received by the committee of Bu3a more than 24 hours before the relevant meeting

I ----- of -----

appoint the Chair of the Meeting or -----
(Name) (delete as necessary), to attend and vote on my behalf at the
general meeting of Bu3a, on (date) -----
and at any adjournment of that meeting

I wish my proxy to make the following comment to the meeting -----

----- ***Continues overleaf***

Bakewell Area u3a - Nomination form

I ----- am a member of BU3A, and agree to

be nominated for election to the position of ----- at
the AGM on Thursday, 26 March 2026.

Signature of nominated member -----

Continues overleaf

And following the AGM - a presentation

Working in Dubai Education - John Hopkins

In this presentation, Bu3a member John Hopkins, will talk about his experience as a schools inspector in Dubai. Having retired as a headteacher John spent 12 years in the United Arab Emirates, mainly Dubai, as a schools inspector. John will explain how the multicultural nature of Dubai provided significant challenges to meet the wide ranging educational needs of Dubai's highly mobile workforce. John's talk will also give his impressions of living and working in Dubai.

Proxy form continued. My instructions to my proxy concerning voting at the meeting are:

Signature ----- Date -----

Note: Your proxy must be a member of Bu3a. Both your and their membership payment must be up to date on the day of the meeting.

Your proxy must attend the relevant meeting, in order to vote on your behalf. Even after sending this form to the committee, you can choose to attend the meeting and vote yourself, thereby terminating your appointment of a proxy.

You can instruct your proxy how to vote on your behalf on any matter or you can instruct your proxy to vote on your behalf as they think fit or to abstain or any combination of such instructions. There is, above, space to include your instructions. Alternatively, you can instruct your proxy privately, leaving these parts of the form blank.

Nomination Form continued

Proposed by ----- Bu3a member

Seconded by ----- Bu3a member

Please return to Richard Tucker, 2 Hopton Cottages,
Main Street, Youlgrave DE14 1UW
by Thursday, 12 March 2026

News from the Environment Group



• Bu3a Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC) Loan Scheme

As we descend into another cold spell of weather, now is the best time to find out how energy efficient your home is. We loan our TIC for 48 hours and ask a donation of £10 if you have found the results useful. We supply simple and detailed instructions on using the camera and interpreting its results.

To book the camera, please email environment@bakewellu3a.org.uk

• Local Energy Efficiency Events

On Saturday 7 February, Darley Dale Town Council will be holding its **Big Green Energy Event** at the Whitworth, with talks from local accredited installers of domestic and commercial insulation, glazing, heat pumps and solar panels.



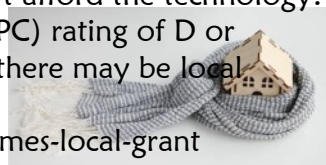
<https://darleydale.gov.uk/the-big-green-energy-event-2026>

On Wednesday, 25 February, 7.30 - 9.00 pm – join a Zoom talk hosted by **Hope Valley Climate Action** with advice on retro-fitting hard-to-heat older homes. It's free to join in by registering in advance at <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/hvcaenergygroup1/1984650>

• Government announces its Warm Homes Plan

Want to improve your home's efficiency but can't afford the technology? If you have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or below and a household income under £36,000, there may be local authority grants to help cover the costs:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-warm-homes-local-grant>



• Hate the amount of single use plastic that you buy with your shopping?

Contribute to some citizen science that provides data on how bad our plastics problem is – data that could persuade our politicians to act. Thousands of individuals and schools will be counting their plastic use for one week between 9 and 15 March. It's easy to do and you can join in by registering at <https://thebigplasticcount.com>

Helen Parker

Excellent news on the “New Groups” front

You may remember that two new groups were suggested in the November 25 Gazette - a **Theatre Group** and a **Sharing my Garden Group**. The excellent news is that enough interest was shown in both these ideas for both Groups to be up and running.



The **Theatre Group** has had one meeting at the Friends Meeting House, as well as an excellent theatre visit - more on this visit is to be found on Page 14. Future meetings will be on the 2nd Monday of each month, at the Friends MH, 2.00 - 4.00 pm.

The **Sharing my Garden** group has had a convivial get together to iron out details, and its first proper garden visiting meeting will be in March. And, in fact, the level of interest has grown, so that a second group might be a possibility if more members express an interest. More of this on Page 18.



I just don't buy temporary insanity as a murder defence.

Breaking into someone's house and doing the ironing - now **that's** temporary insanity.

Sue Kolinsky

You realise you're no longer in government when you get into the back of your car and it doesn't go anywhere.

Malcolm Rifkind

The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter.

George Bernard Shaw

And "Old Groups"?

I came across a list of the groups Bu3a had in April 1998, its launch date. The list makes interesting reading and may even provoke some more ideas for new groups -

Antiques and Fine Arts

Computing

International Folk Dancing

Renaissance Music

Walking

Art Appreciation

Gardening

Investing in Stocks and Shares

Embroidery, Patchwork and Quilting

Roman Studies

Cathedrals of Britain

History

Philosophy and Belief (2)

Theatre

Opera

Bowling

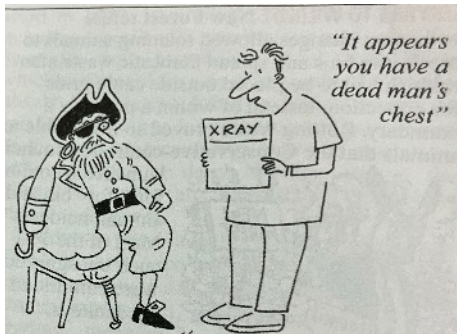
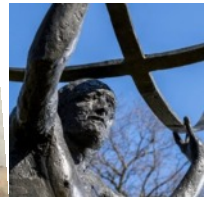
Art and Drawing

Recorder

Makaton Singing



Only the ones in *italics* have survived, or we have something similar.



I intend to live forever. So far, so good. **Steven Wright**

The people in hell - where do they tell people to go?

Red Skelton

Does Magna Carta mean nothing to you? Did she die in vain?

Tony Hancock

The Theatre Group visits the big city

We all really enjoyed our first theatre visit. However, this new group isn't intended to be just for theatre visits. Over the months, we'll be learning about different aspects of theatre at our monthly meetings - second Mondays at the Friends Meeting House.

Joan says: As a member of the new Theatre Group, I had a great time on our recent trip to the Crucible in Sheffield to see "A Christmas Carol". It was a cracking production, with lots of audience participation and some brilliant young performers.

Just as enjoyable was the company. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming, and the whole trip felt relaxed and well organised. Many thanks to those who sorted the transport - it all ran like clockwork.

A special thank you to Lindsay for all the hard work she's put into bringing the Theatre Group back to life. If

you enjoy good theatre, learning more about it, good company, and easy-going outings, do consider joining us. I'm certainly looking forward to our future group meetings and trips!

Bernard says: A story so well known to many of us and particularly to me, I have read the story every year for over 60 years.

The production captured all the essence of Dickens' wonderful story yet it added some delightful new dimensions to it. The set was remarkable, and the Sheffield Carols gave extra life to the performances of such a hardworking cast of players. Scrooge was especially convincing, and the change in his life, brought about by ghostly encounters, was spellbinding.

All round, a moving show which I confess caused me to shed a few tears. Wonderful.



SO WHAT WILL THE NEW THEATRE GROUP BE GETTING UP TO?

We'll be reading plays before we see them and reviewing them after, and having presentations about how a play gets from the page to the stage. Plus presentations and workshops on key playwrights, such as Shakespeare and Oscar Wilde.



Barbara says: It was wonderful to reconnect with the Crucible, after many years' absence, and what an enjoyable performance it was. I admired the set and the way it adapted to so many situations. I particularly enjoyed the acting, dancing and singing of the very young, and young actors. Their energy and liveliness made them great fun to watch. In spite of having hearing difficulties, there was much to enjoy. And I really liked being in such good company, the kindness of our drivers was heart-warming and much appreciated, as was Lindsay's efficient organising of us all. Altogether, a most enjoyable experience. Thank you.



Margaret says: *On Saturday, 10th January, our new Theatre Group enjoyed an outing to The Crucible in Sheffield. We all thoroughly enjoyed the performance of "A Christmas Carol". Dickensian London was brought to life by the company of professional actors, which included many children, who entertained us with music, dancing and choral work.*

It is interesting to note that Scrooge's phrase, 'Bah Humbug,' has entered the English Language to personify a miser: and we all watched as Scrooge changed from miser to philanthropist.

What a heart warming performance it was. Thank you Bu3a.

Cookery Corner

WELSH RAREBIT WITH LEEKS



Ingredients:

50 g butter

1 medium leek, thinly sliced

125 g mature Cheddar cheese, grated

3 tbsp ale, stout or milk if you would prefer an alcohol-free version

½ tsp mustard, preferably English

Dash of Worcestershire sauce, or a

Vegetarian alternative such as

Henderson's Relish

1 egg, beaten

2 slices of bread

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method

1 Melt half the butter in a saucepan over a medium-low heat, add the leek and a pinch of salt and cook for about 10 minutes until very soft.

2 Put the remaining butter into a small, heavy-based saucepan over a low heat, add the cheese, ale, mustard and Worcestershire sauce, and cook, stirring occasionally until the ingredients are combined – don't let the mixture boil. Beat in the egg and stir in the softened leek. Taste and adjust the seasoning, adding more sauce or mustard if you like.

3 Meanwhile, preheat the grill to high and toast the bread on both sides. Spread the cheese mixture on the toast and grill until browned and bubbling.

Serve immediately with a crisp, green salad to cut through the richness.



Continuing thanks to Irene Yarnell for her cookery ideas

Calling all Crafters



Don't forget that the Bakewell Timeline Embroidery Project, all 28 panels, is now on permanent display in the Town Hall, so do visit if you haven't already seen it, and visit again if you have. There always seems to be something new to catch the attention. It's something special to show to our visitors,

as well.

The group always meet on the **second Wednesday of the month** and our next meeting will be on Wednesday, 11 February at **2.00 pm in the Friends Meeting House**. If any of you would like to join us, and perhaps have ideas for a craft project, do get in touch, email craft@bakewellu3a.org.uk.

At the moment we're doing some Bargello work with the plan to make phone or glasses cases. This will help use up some of our surplus wool from the embroidery project.

Gill Roberts



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 to try out a Group meeting. Email email.the.gazette@googlemail.com

Below is the article which appeared in the August 2025 issue of the Gazette. As mentioned on Page 8, interest in this idea was sufficient to fill places available, with a little more interest on top. So, read on, and if you might be interested in a second Group being formed, please get in touch - details below:

THE DELIGHTS OF SHARING



We recently exchanged visits to each other's gardens, and found great pleasure in sharing the delight we each feel in our gardens. And chatting about them over coffee and a biscuit. Particularly when one lives alone, it's possible not to have anyone (on a regular basis) to do the sharing with.

And that led us to wondering whether there are other members who don't have the chance to share their gardens as often as they'd like. And whether there are some members who'd like to.

If so, we might be able to create a new Bu3a Group, "Sharing our gardens". We thought -

- * That group size would have to be limited.
- * That it might meet late Spring to early Autumn
- * That it will simply be about sharing gardening joy in all its forms.
- * That those interested could meet to iron out other details.



If you might be interested in being involved in a second group, do email your interest to email.the.gazette@gmail.com, or phone 01629 636477

Alison Stuart and Glenys Moore

See above for why this article is being repeated.



Walking Programme February - June 2026

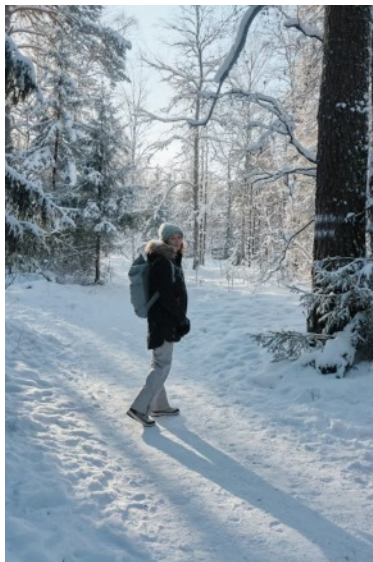
All Walkers: please read -

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 essential 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. Please check your emails on the day of the walk in case of change of plans.**

MONDAY WALK

Week 2 – Monday. A walk of 3 to 4 miles at a gentle pace. Picnic lunch in summer and cafe or pub lunch in winter.



**Organiser:
Sue Fordyce**

Dates: Mondays -
9 February, 9 March,
13 April, 11 May,
8 June



Details of our Group Activities - February 2026

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

Subject	Co-ordinator	Phone	Meeting day	Time	Location
A sense of history	Vicki Clements				history@bakewellu3a.org.uk
Ancient Trackways	Helen Parker		3 rd Monday	10 - 12 noon	ancient.tracks@bakewellu3a.org.uk Great Longstone Village Hall
Art	Linda Fussey		2 nd Thursday	2 - 4 pm	art@bakewellu3a.org.uk Youlgrave Reading Room
Big Issues	John Hooper		3 rd Thursday	10 - 12 noon	bigissues@bakewellu3a.org.uk Various homes
Birding Short Walks	Jane Burgess		1 st Tuesday	Am	birding@bakewellu3a.org.uk
Bowling	Mary Creswell		Tuesdays April - Sept	10 - 12 noon	bowling@bakewellu3a.org.uk Bakewell Bowling Club
Book group	Jane Kayley-Burgess		2 nd Tuesday	2 - 4 pm	book.group@bakewellu3a.org.uk Friends' Meeting House, Bakewell
Bridge	Trish Simmonds		Every Thursday	1.30 - 4.30 pm	bridge@bakewellu3a.org.uk Medway Centre
Chatsworth Group	Peter Holt				chatsworth@bakewellu3a.org
Cooking by Men	Ainslie Kelly		2 nd Tuesday	5.30 - 7.30 pm	Lady Manners School cooking.by.men@bakewellu3a.org.uk
Craft	Gill Roberts		2 nd Wednesday	2 - 4 pm	craft@bakewellu3a.org.uk Friends' Meeting House
Environment Group	Helen Parker				environment@bakewellu3a.org.uk

Phone numbers removed due to GDPR privacy issues.

Subject	Co-ordinator	Phone	Meeting day	Time	Location	
Gardens & Houses	Sheila Sidebottom Viv Stephenson	Phone numbers removed due to GDPR privacy issues.	Various Tuesday visits	Winter, 3 rd Tues, 3pm	gardens.and.houses@bakewellu3a.org.uk	
History Through Art	Helen Parker				historythroughart@bakewellu3a.org.uk	
Luncheon Club	Anne Peller			1st Wednesday	Need you ask?	Various restaurants
Nomadic 12/12 lunch	Angus Stokes			12 th of month	12 noon	nomaadiclunches@bakewellu3a.org.uk
Philosophy	Sam Lewis			2 nd Wednesday	10.00 - 12 noon	philosophy@bakewellu3a.org.uk
Photography	Neil Sharples Allen Flatman			1 st Friday	10.00 - 12 noon	photography@bakewellu3a.org.uk Bakewell Parish Church
Poetry	Anne Gould			2 nd Tuesday	2.00 pm	poetry@bakewellu3a.org.uk 3 Brookside, Bakewell
Keep using your French	Liz Gelanos			4 th Monday	2.30 - 4.30 pm	french@bakewellu3a.org.uk
Scrabble	Ros Stokes			4 th Friday	2.00 - 4.00 pm	Friends' Meeting House
Sharing my Garden	Glenys Moore			3 rd Tuesday		Various gardens 01629 636477
Sketching for fun	John Hooper			1 st Thursday	1.45 - 4.00 pm	sketching@bakewellu3a.org.uk, Rowsley Village Hall
Social team and Meg Laird team				01629 636477		social.team@bakewellu3a.org.uk
Spanish	Jayne Northcott			Alternate Tuesdays	0.604167	Upstairs at Chakra Lounge, Bakewell
Theatre	Lindsay Jackson			2 nd Monday	2pm	Friends' Meeting House
Walking	Rosemary Wolfe		See programme in the Gazette	Email: walking@bakewellu3a.org.uk		
Writing for Pleasure	Pip Young		3 rd Wednesday	2.00 - 4.00 pm	writing.for.pleasure@bakewellu3a.org.uk	

LONGER WALKS - Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

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

Organiser: Neil Sharples

Dates: Wednesdays - 4 February, 4 March, 1 April, 6 May, 3 June

Week 2 - Thursday, 7 to 8 miles, at a moderate pace. Picnic all year round.

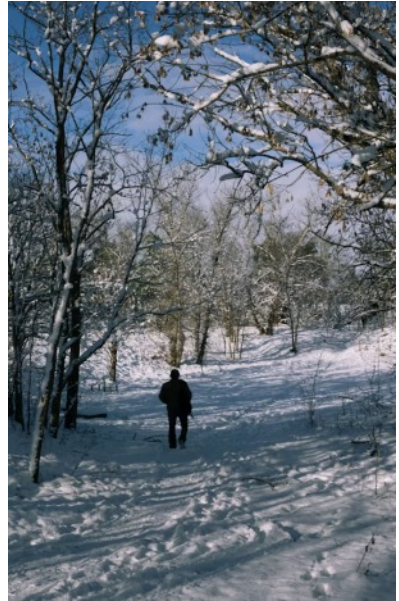
Organiser: David Thornton

Dates: Thursdays: 12 February, 12 March, 9 April, 14 May, 11 June

Week 3 - Friday, 4 miles at a gentle pace. Pub or cafe lunch.

Organiser: Rosemary Wolfe

Dates: Fridays: 20 February, 20 March, 17 April, 22 May, 19 June

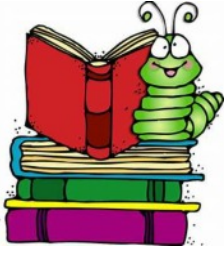


Week 4 Wednesday, 7 to 8 miles moderately paced, over a variety of terrains. Picnic all year round, unless very inclement.

Organiser: Neil Sharples

Dates: Wednesdays - 25 February, 25 March, 22 April, 27 May, 24 June



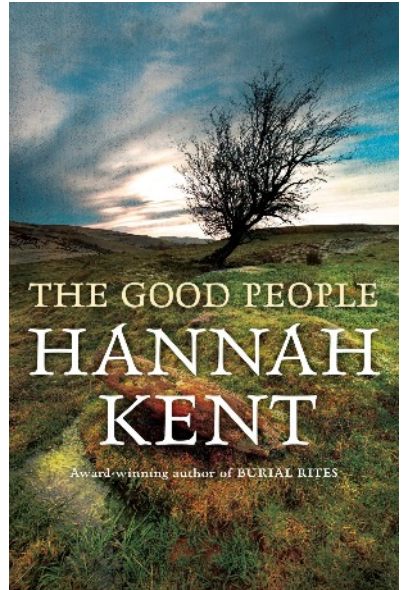


Bu3a Book Group

What have we been reading?

A book which recently gave rise to a lot of discussion in the Book Group was “The Good People” by Hannah Kent. It's a disturbing tale set in rural Ireland in the years before the famine. The community is living in abject poverty - their homes hovels, their clothes little better than rags and their diet not much more than potatoes.

A widow is left to care for her severely disabled grandson who, although he was a seemingly healthy toddler, is now racked by pain, and helpless. Neither a local priest nor a doctor can offer her help or comfort, so she turns to a 'wise woman' who is thought to be in touch with the 'good people', i.e. the fairy folk. She becomes convinced that her grandson was a 'changeling', with tragic and distressing consequences.



One of our members objected to the anachronism of a priest in rural Ireland at that time when the practice of catholicism was forbidden but it was probably necessary to show that when conventional beliefs fail to offer answers, people can turn to superstition and belief in the supernatural.

It's a challenging read but a rewarding one, if you can bear it.

Diana Watson



I can't see the point of making me a Commander of the British Empire. They might as well make me a Commander of Milton Keynes - at least that exists.

Spike Milligan



Bu3a had a lovely Christmas Tree again

Many thanks from all of us must go to Pru Kirby, Margaret Lewis and Gill Roberts, for designing and creating our lovely decorated tree, so that Bu3a again took part in the Festival at All Saints, Bakewell. And it was the second attempt as the first effort fell over! (We're sure someone must have pushed it!)

The evening opening of the Christmas tree Festival was lovely. **Gill Roberts**





Two extremely important friends have had birthdays recently, and I've enjoyed every minute of their celebrations. After all, 250

years, or even 100, are well worth celebrating. And I

haven't been alone in wanting to celebrate. The BBC, in particular, joined in

Jane's birthday good wishes with gusto. We could

hardly move without tripping over reshowings of "Persuasion" or "Mansfield Park" or "Sense and Sensibility", as well as hearing from

famous people why Jane matters to them, and what they admire about her. And everyone wonders what more we MIGHT have had if she'd lived beyond her 41 years.



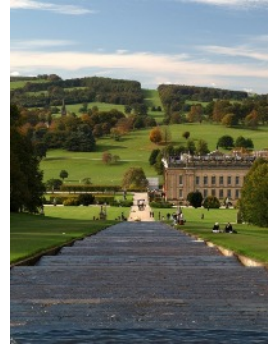
Winchester Cathedral commissioned a statue to commemorate her 250th birthday, created by artist Martin Jennings, unveiled in October 2025. She spent the last 8 weeks of her life in Winchester and is buried in the north nave aisle of the Cathedral.

And then, there's **Pooh Bear**, who made his first appearance on 24 December, 1925 in a story, "The Wrong Sort of Bees," in the London Evening News. Christmas Eve will always be Pooh's birthday for me, from now on. He's been a great friend for over 40 years. We loved sharing the stories, read aloud to my son. I still read them. Pooh and his friends in the 100 Acre Wood all have their "issues", but they're also really loveable characters.



Chatsworth Delights on our doorsteps

We are so lucky to have the nearby free access to Chatsworth Park, so we can enjoy “Capability” Brown’s vision of a naturalistic landscape with open parkland, great Oaks and herds of deer. In fact, the Park provides a home to a wide range of wildlife which changes with the seasons. Perhaps the most dramatic moments are in the autumn when the Park rings with the awesome sound of rutting Red Deer. Every season offers something.



As we start 2026 there has been the unusual sight, at dusk, of a murmuration of Jackdaws near the cricket pitch. Our resident Jackdaws have been supplemented by continental arrivals, in large numbers, in 25/26. These huddle together for warmth at night,

sometimes thousands in one tree. It is truly a sight to behold as they give their aerodynamic, syncopated display, screaming as they go, then all funneling into one tree at great speed.

A more normal winter scene would be loose flocks of Redwings and Fieldfares joining resident Mistle Thrushes looking for worms and berries. And if you look carefully under old Beech trees in winter you might be



lucky enough to see a flock of Bramblings. These are small finches a bit like Chaffinches, but with obvious white rumps as they fly away.

Spring brings lots of summer migrants, mostly “little brown jobs”, which are easier to hear than to see. Bird song walks for U3A in the past 2 years have spotted nearly 50 different species, even including quick glimpses of Kingfishers.

The BU3A Chatsworth Group programme has a repeat bird song walk scheduled for 3 June this year (see their programme). The walk helps you identify special birds by song, including Flycatchers, Warblers and Redstarts, but also how to distinguish the 4 types of Crow and how to pick out Swallows, Swifts and Martins, hawking for flies over the river. In 2026 the Chatsworth Group has two other sessions scheduled, which focus on what is in the Park. On 17 June Mike Woffenden will lead a “Conservation walk” around the



Estate, visiting various sites (lakes, ponds, waterways, Paxton’s boiler house, etc), and before that, on 13 May, Steve Porter will give a talk on “Chatsworth’s Historic Waterways,” so this year there will be ample opportunities to learn about things outside the House itself.

Returning to the natural environment, it is fairly easy to see the two types of Deer, Red and Fallow, all year round. But other truly wild mammals are more difficult, verging on the impossible! Water Voles



used to be common, and can still sometimes be seen if you sit quietly by the river bank. The turf turned over by Badgers is on view everywhere, and there is an active set within yards of the House car park, but, being nocturnal, they are rarely seen by visitors. And as for Otters, please just be content with

the knowledge that they have made a great comeback and are happy to regard the River Derwent as home.

If you would like to learn more about the wildlife in and around Chatsworth and Baslow, the local environment group has published a Natural History Booklet full of pictures and maps, with details of local bugs, birds, butterflies, etc and where to find them, available from the Baslow Spar shop.



Ian Johnston
Baslow Environment Group

Ian is a member of four Bu3a Groups, including the Chatsworth Group. He is an enthusiastic ornithologist and environmentalist and has an extremely keen interest in what is occurring within the Chatsworth Estate. Some of you will have accompanied Ian on his excellent "Bird Walks". There is another planned for 3rd June.

*Thank you to Ian for such an interesting article, and Bernard McMahon and Ian for lovely photographs. **Ed***

Bu3a Chatsworth Group

February and March meetings

Wednesday, 18 February

Memories of War and Peace at Chatsworth

Fiona Clapperton

At the Friends Meeting House

Wednesday, 18 March

The Country House: Decline,

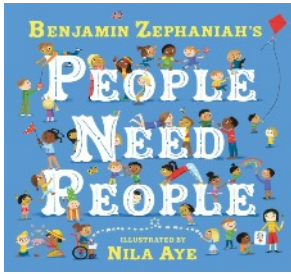
Near Death and Resurrection

Peter Stubbs

At the Friends Meeting

House





People need people,
To walk to,
To talk to,
To cry and rely on,
People will always need people.
To love and to miss.
To hug and to kiss,
It's useful to have other people.
To whom to moan
If you're all alone,
It's so hard to share
When no one is there.
There's not much to do
When there's no one but you.
People will always need people.

To please
To tease
To put you at ease,
People will always need people.
To make life appealing
And give life some meaning,
It's useful to have other people.
If you need a change
To whom will you turn.
If you need a lesson

From whom will you learn.
If you need to play
You'll know why I say
People will always need people.

As girlfriends
As boyfriends
From Bombay
To Ostend,
People will always need people -
To have friendly fights with
And share tasty bites with,
It's useful to have other people.
People live in families
Gangs, posses and packs,
It seems we need company
Before we relax,
So stop making enemies
And let's face the facts,
People will always need people,
Yes
People will always need people.

Benjamin Zephaniah

I was looking through Michael Rosen's "A - Z of Children's Poems", and thought I'd look at Zs to see if Ben was there. And, of course, he was, but more to the point, his poem "rhymes" so closely with Ben Rein's article, "Why Brains need Friends - the Neuroscience of Social Connection", reviewed in Editor's ponderings and the main point of our front page. I was amazed, and had to include it.

Ed

Wintery



Blizzard

By Linda Pastan

the snow
has forgotten
how to stop
it falls
stuttering
at the glass
a silk windsock
of snow
blowing
under the porch light
tangling trees
which bend
like old women
snarled
in their own
knitting
snow drifts
up to the step
over the doorsill
a pointillist's blur
the wedding
of form and motion
shaping itself
to the wish of
any object it touches
chairs become
laps of snow
the moon could be
breaking apart
and falling
over the eaves
over the roof

The More it Snows

A A Milne

*The more it snows (Tiddely pom),
The more it goes (Tiddely pom),
The more it goes (Tiddely pom),
On snowing.*

*And nobody knows (Tiddely pom),
How cold my toes (Tiddely pom),
How cold my toes (Tiddely pom),
Are growing.*

a white bear
shaking its paw
at the window
splitting the hive
of winter
snow stinging
the air
I pull a comforter
of snow
up to my chin
and tumble
to sleep
as the whole
alphabet
of silence
falls out of the
sky



Piglet was feeling
more snowy
behind the ears
than he had ever
felt before.



The

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The Thought Fox (1957)

by Edward Hughes

Imagine this midnight moment's forest:
 Nothing else is alive
 Save the clock's loneliness
 And this blank page where my fingers
 Move to write you love.

Through the window I see no star:
 Nothing more near
 Than the clock's deeper within darkness
 Entering the loneliness:

And, delicately as the dark snow
 Falls on the fox's nose touches twig, leaf;
 The clock's eyes serve a movement, that now
 Comes again now, and now, and now

Heat prints into the snow
 Between trees, and warily a lame
 Fox lags by stump and in hollow
 To find a body that is bold to come

Through the clearings, an eye,
 Deepening deepening greenness,
 Concentratedly, about its own business

With a sudden sharp hot stink of fox
 Enters the dark hole of the head.
 The window is starless still; the clock ticks,
 The page is printed.



Winter Trees

By William Carlos Williams

All the complicated details
 of the attiring and
 the disattiring are completed.
 A liquid moon
 moves gently among
 the long branches.

Thus having prepared their buds
 against a sure winter
 the wise trees
 stand sleeping in the cold.

What colour IS it?



The trouble is: I'm not right in the head! No, I'm not totally bonkers; the bit that's not right is the bit that differentiates



colours. Yes, I'm colour blind – or, more correctly, I'm colour vision deficient. The condition affects about 8% of males, but far fewer females, and is normally passed down genetically. It really doesn't affect my everyday life at all, and can cause some fascination/amusement when talking to friends about it. They'll say, "What colour is this, or that?" People ask how I get on with traffic lights: well, that's easy – the red one's at the top! (An example of



"green blindness", or deuteranomaly) But actually the green is a very bluey green and is very easy to tell even from a distance. I don't share the same delight in seeing autumn colours as "normal" people, and I have

to look very closely to see bright red holly berries. Manufacturers, particularly of electronic things, cause me problems with little LED lights which may be yellow, orange, red or green, to tell me whether the item is ready or switched on, or not functioning properly; I just have to guess sometimes.

What prompted me to write all this was the results of the survey just published in the Gazette. Well done to the team who compiled it all! However, the coloured pie charts were rather lost on me. I can see that the colours are different and quite bright - but relating the explanatory dots to the charts is hopeless. I'm sure that other members will be sharing this problem, and I sympathise with them.

I know that the illustrious Jonathan Wicksteed is colour blind. We once met in the Co-op by the bananas, and I asked him if he could



tell which ones were green and which ones were ripe and yellow: he said “No, can you??” We laughed – and asked a young lady who was passing for help. We’ve often reminded each other of that incident.

I have a rugby shirt which bears the label on the front, “Racing Green”. That’s the brand. The thing is, it’s purple! (Or I think it is!) I thought when I bought it that it was most appropriate.

Don’t despair - keep smiling! **Rick Naylor**



Of course, Rick’s article sent me off to Google, and how interesting it was - all about reduced sensitivity to red, green or blue (extremely rare), called protanomaly, deuteranomaly and tritanomaly. For example, people with lack of red sensitivity, protanopia, would see:



←
Instead of
→
According to Google



*Thank you, Rick. Articles which arrived unrequested are always a joy to me. And I think it’s the eyes you’re not right in, not the head. **Ed***

What would have happened in 1963 had Khrushchev, and not Kennedy, been assassinated?

With history, one can never be certain, but I think I can safely say that Aristotle Onassis would not have married Mrs Khrushchev.

Gore Vidal

GARDENS, HOUSES AND ART WINTER/SPRING PROGRAMME



The final talk of our Winter Programme will, as usual, be at the Friends' Meeting House, at 2.30 pm for tea/coffee and chat, with a 3.00 pm start.

Tuesday 17th February

James Ellison, an author and organic garden enthusiast, will widen our knowledge of “Apple Trees”. Thank you to Pru Kirby for organising.

Proposed Visit to Arley Hall and Gardens, near Northwich

Monday 25th May 2026

Arley Hall has been a family home since the fifteenth century. It is open to the public on certain days and 25 May is one of them.



The gardens are some of the finest in Britain - 8 acres of formal garden and 7 acres of woodland. In May we would hope to see early rhododendrons and magnolias and lots of bluebells. There are guided Bluebell walks at this time, in the private wood, not usually open to visitors.

Cost

Coach and driver's tip - £26

Entry to Gardens and Hall - £20

Total Cost £46.



Please let me know if you're INTERESTED in this visit. This does not mean you're booking, just showing interest, so that I can work out whether the visit is likely to be viable.

s.sidebottom2017@gmail.com

07875917336 or 01629 814842

Sheila Sidebottom



Grovelling apologies to all members who attended the last meeting of the Garden Group, expecting a well organised, pre-meeting cuppa. I was on duty, had the "bag" and forgot completely to come. I was at home, happily getting ready for our Charity Coffee Afternoon the following day, and preparing for an imminent visit from my son and partner. I suppose it's a good way of getting out of doing the tea - prove myself totally incompetent.

Glenys Moore

Here's the church, here's the steeple, look inside . . . yeah, not as popular as it used to be, is it?

Harry Hill

The best prayer I ever heard was, "Dear Lord, please make me the kind of person my dog thinks I am."

Rev Warren J Keating

I'm a dyslexic satanist. I worship the drivell. ***Linda Smith***

There is a remote tribe which worships the number zero. Is nothing sacred?

Les Dawson

I don't go to church because I can pray better in a field.

Barbara Woodhouse

- MEMBERS' GARDENS

Alison has visited another member's garden and gives us here her very favourable impressions.

Val Cartwright and her late husband, Cliff, moved to her present home in 1989. It is a detached house on a steep hill in Hackney. It has a small front garden and a largish back garden with a long vista up to the hills.

When Val moved there the garden had nothing in it but a long lawn and a few apple trees. Val loves gardening and has changed all that. She has dug a number of flower beds of different shapes into the lawn and filled them with perennials and if they are happy there, she allows them



to multiply and spread. If she runs out of space she digs another bed into the ample lawn. The look she wants is casual and natural - what



she calls organized chaos. In fact, my first impression was of an immaculate garden, manicured lawns, and apple trees pruned to a beautiful shape. One side of the garden has a beech hedge, also pruned with precision. Val doesn't have help in the garden and says she finds pruning relaxing.

One aim of the garden is to attract wild life. She has a good variety of birds visiting, sometimes rare visitors, attracted by the berries in the hedges. She also has a small tub pond which has frogs, newts and a range of pond insects.

The garden is full of trees and shrubs, there is a huge oak tree and down one side is an evergreen hedge mostly made of rhododendron. She has a large mahonia and a twisted hazel, azalea and magnolia in other places. She has used a damp rocky corner as a “grotty” grotto.

I visited in autumn when most of the summer flowers were finished but the garden was still full of autumn foliage colour, but Val says that the best season is late winter. She has masses of snowdrops, aconites, cyclamen and fritillaries, which carpet the ground. The daffodils follow. It was clear to me from photos that in the summer Val’s garden is full of bright flowers.



Val is a passionate gardener and she says it is her happy place, where she can go and forget everything, including worries. Many of us can identify with that. Thank you for letting us visit, Val. **Alison Stuart**



Youlgrave Cinema

**The film showing on Friday
13 February, 7.30 pm, is**



The Roses (Olivia Coleman and Benedict Cumberbatch)

We meet in the Village Hall, Holywell Lane.

Entrance is £5, ice creams £1.50.

Please bring correct cash.

Phone 01629 636477 for more information.

A journey back in time

I found myself with a spare page when I came to do the proof reading - it was lurking at the back. So - what to fill it with was the question.

I've also become aware that my huge joke books, given to me very kindly by the late Lady Margaret Hardinge, for Gazette jokes, are nearing the end of their usefulness, and I'd thought of revisiting my very first Gazette (May 2016, No 58) to see what jokes had found their way into that early issue, and whether I might try them on you all again. **What became more interesting** was reminding myself what Bu3a was getting up to ten years ago, and I decided to remind you as well. **So here goes:**

Anne Peller was just ceasing to be our Chairman. **AND she had done a survey**, with not a computer in sight. There was agreement about wanting a **monthly meeting**, and we're still working on that one! **David Rance** had taken up the reins from Anne.

Three new groups followed: A Luncheon Club, Conversational French and Gardening, all still going.

Out & About Group was flourishing, with trips to Lincoln Cathedral, Halle Orchestra and Swan Lake at Buxton.

The **Theatre Group** had outings planned to a Harold Pinter play, Northern Ballet, Cats and Annie Get your Gun.

The **Walking Group's Spring holiday** had just taken place with 4 nights spent at the HF House in Sedbergh.

The very first **poetry corner** came from **Terry Severn** with "The Life that I have" by Leo Marks, and Terry was also a leading light in the **Meg Laird Group**, finding many speakers for us. We'd just heard from Christine Robinson, retired Chatsworth Housekeeper, and were looking forward to "My life as a prison officer" in September.

The **Churches Group**, led with such enthusiasm by **John Robinson**, had visited St Giles, Calke, St Peter's, Yoxall and Lichfield Cathedral. I knew I could always rely on John for a double page for the Gazette.

Jane Burgess had just become Groups Secretary - little did she know what that would lead to - **Chairman**.

And I was regaling you with fun anagrams

HMS Pinafore	Name for a ship
Endearments	Tender names
Prosecutor	Court poser
Punishment	Nine thumps
Astronomers	No more stars

A man is in a hurry and asks a farmer if he can take a short cut across his field. He explains that he wants to catch the 4.25 train. The farmer replies, "Sure, by my guest, and if my bull sees you, you might even catch the 3.50."

Gazette No 58, May 2016

So, that's what Bu3a was up to 10 years ago

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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There are vacancies for committee and co-opted members. Please contact the Secretary if you would like more information.

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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