Notes from the Monthly Meeting on Friday 2nd October 2026

Again, we were very happy to welcome members new and old, and started our announcements with

Groups:

Our new (second) sessions of fixed term groups for **Family History** and the **4-week Flower Arranging Course** are successfully off the starting blocks, as is the new **Introduction to German course** – comprising six fortnightly sessions. Apparently during the first meeting last week there was a fair amount of laughter as well as learning!

We've completed the first part of our **Beginners' Spanish** course and members will be reconvening later in October to enhance their knowledge with a further set of weekly sessions.

Being fixed duration courses, it isn't possible to join these courses part way through, but if you'd like to join in a new session in 2027 please contact the Group Leaders – some are already planning new intakes and others may or may not be open to persuasion to run another course, but it's worth expressing your interest.

Please note that **Hand Bells** are actively seeking new members, so if you'd like to give it a go, get in touch with their point of contact Bette Dobson via the website.

Lunch Club - Next month we're back at the Freemasons' Hall. The **Menu is attached**; please note that Booking and Payment (by BACS if possible) is essential by Wednesday, 28th October.
Catherine Basa spoke to us about her planned **Spanish Conversation**group and members were asked to express interest. If you'd like to contact Catherine, reply to this message in the first instance and we'll forward it to her.

And finally, we are exploring organising a **Chair Yoga** group. Please let us know if you're interested so we have an idea of potential numbers. **Reply to this email to book a place or express interest**.

Events

Kynren We had a hugely enjoyable visit to Kynren on 12th September – it was the last of the season and was truly spectacular.

Our **One Hour Workshop.** From Kites to Big Bombers – Martin Peagam gave an excellent talk about the history of the Airfields of the Tees Valley on Thursday, 24th September. Nine people had booked to attend but on the day only 2 turned up. Luckily I'd sent out a last minute reminder/invitation by email and a further 2 people arrived. So Martin's bespoke talk created at our request had a grand audience of 7, including his wife, his hearing dog Inca and me!

If you book for an event please a) write it in your calendar and b) let us know if you can no longer attend.

Historic Stockton Talk and Walk Tuesday, 6th October. Keith Pratt of Stockton u3a will give us an illustrated talk to tell us of the Places, Events and People who all shaped Stockton in the past, and then will lead a walk around central Historic Stockton – The Old and the New – ending at the new Urban Park on the site of the the Castlegate Shopping Centre and Swallow Hotel.
There are a couple of places left, so please let us know if you wish to join us. **Reply to this email to book a place**.

One Hour Workshop. Going to Law as a Layperson – Alan Bradshaw will give some tips about Procedures, Winning and Survival on **Thursday, 29th October**. Again Booking is essential. NB: The content is provided for general interest and educational purposes only, and does not constitute professional advice. **Reply to this email to book a place**.

One Hour Workshop. Christmas Wreath Making demonstrated by Sylvia Keeney on Thursday, 26th November. Booking is essential –
Reply to this email to book a place

We need to know what topics you'd like covered at next year's One Hour Workshops – or even better tell us if you could present a session. All the workshops so far have been very well received, and the relaxed atmosphere has made the sessions enjoyable by presenters and participants alike.
Please reply to suggest topics or volunteer your services.

Bury Market We're fully booked for our visit to Bury Market on **Wednesday, 2nd December**.

Christmas Lunch at the Freemasons' Hall on Wednesday, 16thDecember. Everybody who asked us to save them a place has paid their deposit by Friday's deadline, and we are in the process of offering

the last seven places to those first on the waiting list. **We're very sorry to have to disappoint those to whom we can't offer a place.**

Finally, for events this year …
We have our **Help us Brighten up Dull December (or BUDD) event on THE MORNING OF Friday, 4th December. Ticket only event.**
We're hoping to join together for a relaxed and happy event to banish the blues and Brighten Up Dull December.
Doors open at 9:45 for a 10:00 start:
Firstly we will have 60 minutes of the best 50s and 60s music performed live by **The Lipsticks** vintage duo!
We'll then take a refreshment break
And then … u3a member and former dance teacher Susan Walker will encourage us onto the dance floor for some **light-hearted festive dancing.**

To enhance the fun Susan is offering sessions to introduce us to some of the dances she's prepared, so even those of us with two left feet will enjoy the session and not be totally lost on the day!

These sessions are each Thursday in November – that's 5th, 12th, 19thand 26th – 11:00 – 11:30 at the Friends' Meeting House, cost £1 per person per session.

Booking is essential as this is a ticket only event. We hope we will be able to welcome everybody who wants to book, but reserve the right to close bookings if capacity is reached.

Fill out the booking form attached to the next email or reply asap and tell us whether
***you want to attend the Event on 4th December, and also whether**
***you want to attend the classes on each Thursday in November.**
If you aren't specific we won't be able to produce your ticket.

Turning to next year, we have two holidays to contemplate:
Our 7 day / 6 night holiday to the **Loire Valley** is finally organised to depart 16th June 2027. We have received lots of interest and we're heading towards full capacity, but if you're interested please fill out a booking form and we'll keep you informed. **More information and a booking form will be attached to a separate email.**

And finally, our friends at Teesdale u3a are planning a 5 day / 4 nights holiday to **The Historic Houses, Heritage & Gardens of Oxfordshire**

and the Cotswolds. This is departing on 11th June 2027 and will end on the 15th – so if you're mad keen you could go on this visit and then go to France the next day!!

Our former member Kate Keen is heading up this trip and was available to provide more information.
Contact Kate Keen directly for more information: katekeen21@gmail.com

Today's speaker was **Phil Coady** with his talk entitled **Aphasia Impact**: Aphasia is a language disorder caused by damage to the parts of the brain that control speech and language comprehension. The talk was very well received.

Finally, one of our new Committee Members Norman Pigden made a presentation about how we might replace the Group Diary sheets given out at each Monthly Meeting. The majority of members present agreed that core information listing Groups, Speakers and Committee members could be presented on a printed card annually and new information could be displayed on the TV screens prior to the meeting each month. Members were also reminded that we work hard to ensure our Website is always up to date with information about Groups, Events and Contacts plus much more. https://darlington.u3asite.uk/