

Spring is sprung

It's official; spring is here. Yes I know that we can still have snow at Easter and only a fool would ignore the adage '*ne'er cast a clout till May be out*'. However March 21st has been and gone. Walking along the Highway, the air is full of the plaintive bleat of lambs convinced they have been abandoned by seemingly indifferent mothers. There are buds on the trees with just a hint of green from leaves that are ready to unfurl. Above all with the clocks going forward it is light until well into the evening and walking the dog no longer calls for a head torch. Autumn may be '*the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness*', but more than anything spring seems to be a time of hope and optimism.



Nowhere is this more evident than in the garden and allotment. Three months ago there was nothing to be seen in a grey and seemingly lifeless space behind the house. The soil was cold and damp, the walls bare. Now there are shoots everywhere and anything seems possible. The potatoes are chitting, the broad beans have been planted and trays of tomatoes decorate the bedroom window sills.

Of course this is England so disappointment is inevitable. By mid-June hopes of a long hot summer will be just a distant memory and the travel agents will be busy with people looking to chase some summer sun in the Mediterranean. Watery Lane will be living up to its name and the allotment will once again present the appearance of a paddy field. The slugs will have eaten everything that has dared to show itself above ground. French beans are a particular favourite but they are not particularly fussy. In the greenhouse seed trays full of nothing more than soil are evidence of flowers that have failed to germinate and weeds have taken over beds that were supposed to be full of beautifully coloured blooms. As for the perfectly manicured lawn that was to be the envy of the bowls club.....



However for the moment all this is in the future. It is only April and hope springs eternal. So let's make the most of it and enjoy every day without worrying about what might be waiting round the corner. **Robert Jackson**, sdu3a.chair@gmail.com

Website news — we are pleased to announce that a new website for Settle District u3a is under preparation using a system developed by u3a and being used by over 600 other individual u3as. It's expected to be live within the next few weeks. Watch this space!

u3a
Settle District

MONTHLY MEETING

2nd Thursday of the month, 10 for 10.30am at St John's and by Zoom

Thurs 10 April
The Witches of Lancashire



by **Loren Cafferty**

exploring the Jacobean obsessive aversion to witchcraft, in line with the opinions of King James I

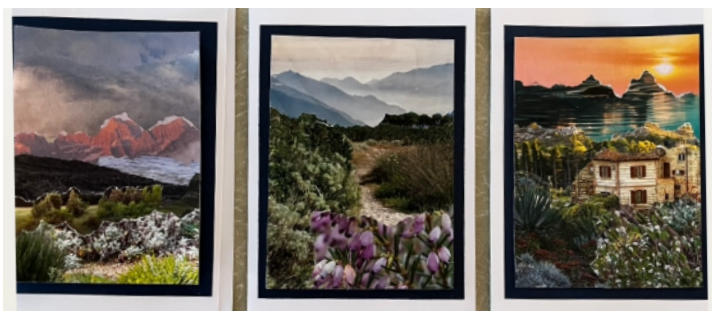
Thursday 8 May
Pilgrimage to Santiago



by **Joanne Aston**

GROUP NEWS —CARDMAKING

The card making group have been busy again. They tore pieces from magazine pictures, layered them up, then glued them down. It was a new technique for them and their little pieces of art work are wonderful. I'm sure anyone would be so happy to receive a card like this. Group leader **Wendy Newby**.



SPORT — WALKING CRICKET

Having spent the last six months darting about and snookering ourselves, we've finally reached the start of the 2025 cricket season, our first session being at Settle Cricket Club at 3pm on Monday, April 7th. Squad members will now be

gradually winding down from a heavy schedule of winter net practice, or not. Any new members are most welcome to join us for a taster, though full involvement does require membership of Settle Cricket Club for insurance purposes, and of Settle District u3a.

All equipment is provided. You don't need to buy a crash-helmet, as we play with a soft ball. Our games are intended to be mirth-inducing, as we witness ourselves and team-mates failing admirably to regain the glories of youth. We are non-competitive, all-inclusive and totally mutually supportive. So, if you want a good laugh and a bit of exercise, give it a go! **Ian Gray**, ianandmargaretgray@hotmail.com

SCIENCE

For our March meeting, Howard Crumpton gave a talk on the science behind recreational and commercial scuba diving. We found out why breathing oxygen at the elevated pressure of the deep sea can kill you, how nitrogen under pressure can make you drunk and give you 'the bends', and 'saturation diving'. Anita Lee is photographed diving in a wreck in the Red Sea.



For our next meeting, Nigel Fisher will talk about 'The Current War'; who was right and who won? Based on the events portrayed on the 2017 film *The Current War*, we will be finding out about the novel science and engineering that triggered the bitter conflict between Edison, Westinghouse and Tesla.

Looking further ahead, we'll have 'The history and science of steel' by Mark Foulds and how to build an interactive 3D DNA model and extract DNA from strawberries with Simon Chapman. Group leader **Anita Lee**

ART APPRECIATION

Our first talk was by myself ably assisted by Roger Taylor. In recognition of the date, 1 April, the subject was *trompe-l'oeil*, which translates as 'fool the eye'. We looked at various ways in which marks on a flat surface can give impression of 3D reality. Roger told of his collaboration with Brian May looking at 19 century stereo images — a link on our group's website. Ultimately a work of art is about producing impressions in the viewer's brain. We ranged from perspective to Picasso, Canaletto to cubism, and Holbein to Hockney, with generous reference to the latter's Secret Knowledge. Sue Cariss then raised questions about ownership of works of art. Two works by the Spanish impressionist Joachim Sorolla disappeared over 100 years ago, thought lost, but reappeared in an exhibition in Madrid in December 2024. It closes later this month, when the works will return to obscurity. Group leader **David Holdsworth**, david.holdsworth@bcs.org

BIRDWATCHING

The group enjoyed a visit to RSPB Leighton Moss for its March meeting, spotting 39 species in the day. A highlight was the elegant Pintails dabbling and showing off their distinctive tails, photographed by Chris Chandler. A climb up the



Skytower to see the view was followed by a gentle stroll to the hides spotting Marsh, Blue and Great Tits and Water Rail along the way. Lunch was taken in the hide while watching Marsh Harriers and Little Egret, then back to the centre to use the facilities and on to the Causeway to try for an Otter (fail) and Bittern (heard).

Next month, on 6 May, we're keeping it local with a trip to Malham Tarn and Tarn Moss, a great site for wetland and woodland species, as well as waterbirds. For more information about this trip and the Birdwatching Group in general contact group leader **Les Chandler** on email sdu3a.enquiries@gmail.com.

GREAT LIVES

At March's meeting John Parry gave his long anticipated talk on George Canning, whose Premiership ended prematurely with his death in 1827 after just 119 days. He had previously held the post of Foreign Secretary in two different administrations — first in 1807-1809 during the Napoleonic Wars when he initiated the naval bombardment of Copenhagen and the seizure of the Danish navy to pre-empt Napoleon. Then in 1822-1827 he supported the Greeks in their fight for independence from the Ottoman Empire, this liberal attitude contrasting with his belief in the institution of slavery. In an eventful life he fought a duel with Castlereagh in 1809 despite having never before handled a pistol and was lucky to escape with a flesh wound! The next meeting will be on Wednesday April 16th at the Catholic Church Hall 10.45 for 11am start when Bob Young will give an account of the life of Catherine the Great. **John Jebson**

CRIME BOOKS

We've had two great meetings recently. *The Shape of Darkness* by Laura Purcell, a gothic mystery book, generated very mixed reviews and one of the best discussions we've had. We even disagreed about who the murderer was! However, we all agreed on a good, very clever twist. It was quite a Marmite book with some members looking to read more of her books and others unable to finish it.

Before I Sleep by Cynthia Harrod Smith received the highest scores of the whole season so far, despite some feeling the plot was weak. It was an easy read and some members will read more of the DCI Slider series. Our next book is *The It Girl* by Ruth Ware. Group leader **Elaine Sargeson**, elaine.sargeson@btinternet.com

CRAFT

The March craft group meeting saw us doing some more collage, this time making labels and recycling scrap envelopes. Some members also stitched little birds and chickens, a nod to spring! Group leader **Charlotte Treglown**, charlottetreglown@googlemail.com



OLD BUILDINGS

The group kept it local this month with a guided tour of three of Settle's most iconic buildings: Dr Buck's House, Zion Chapel and The Folly, photos in order L - R. Dr Caitlin Greenwood, Heritage



Development Officer with the North Craven Building Preservation Trust, highlighted the key historical features of all three properties and set out the Trust's plans for ensuring their future. Next month's group meeting is a tour of Leighton Hall, a magnificent Georgian mansion near Yealand Conyers. The site's history can be traced back to 1246 but the current building was constructed between 1759 and 1761 for George Towneley of Towneley Hall in Burnley. Since 1822 the Hall has been home to the Gillow family, famed for its fine furniture. For more information about the Group contact **Les Chandler** on sdu3a.enquiries@gmail.com.

WALKING

On a stunning sunny day we set off on a lovely 7 mile walk with spectacular views. From Helwith Bridge up Long Lane with Pen-y-Ghent in view all the way. Turning left we made our way to the River Ribble via Brackenbottom and Crooks Farm and wandered down the river side back to our cars.

We had a good walk from Airton to Otterburn over dry fields, an easy stile and by the side of a wood to the track leading to Otterburn with some beautiful skies, spring sunshine and new lambs. On another foggy day near Ingleton we walked along Westgate Lane, looking into Toby's Fold to see the sandstone arch brought down the Drovers Road from Scotland. We reached Turbary Lane from Tow Scar Lane, both good tracks, then a path across the hilltop to Cheese Press stones where we admired the views of Kingsdale, Whernside and Ingleborough. **Annette Lindsell**, annettelinsdell@yahoo.com



Thank you for your newsletter contributions. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the committee. The deadline for the next edition, 150 words max, is **5pm on Monday 21 April**. We may need to edit articles without consultation.

Send to sdu3a.newsletter@gmail.com