

## News and Views

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

2.15pm Thursday 15th March  
Players Theatre, Penrith

#### **IRAN: TEHRAN TO PERSEPOLIS AND BACK** An illustrated talk by Ron Kenyon

*Persepolis*

Well known locally as a great supporter of Penrith, and as a climber, Ron also enjoys journeying to some of the more remote parts of the world. His enthusiasm for Iran will be evidenced in the talk he has offered to give our group following a cultural visit he made last year. Only recently has Iran begun to open up rather more readily to visitors, so Ron's insights will be a very helpful way of getting to know this intriguing country a little more.



2.15pm Thursday 19th April  
Players Theatre, Penrith

#### **CARLISLE CANAL** An illustrated talk by David Ramshaw

*Carlisle Canal, Cumberland Scarrow*

David Ramshaw has lived in Cumbria for a number of years and has a particular interest in local history. One of his special topics of expertise is the fascinating origin and development of the Carlisle Canal, once of great significance to the local economy, by transporting timber, coal and bricks. An expert speaker, we are sure that David will offer a most interesting, lively and informative talk, with plenty of illustration.



---

# ONE-OFF AND SHORT- RUN PROGRAMMES

---

## ST ANDREW'S SATURDAYS

All St Andrew's Saturday meetings have the same basic arrangements:

Downstairs meeting room, St Andrew's Parish Centre, Penrith

10.00 to noon, with break for coffee (own arrangements)

Cost, no booking required, £2 at the door (visitors welcome £3), pamphlets free

Further information, contact Robin Acland, 017687 79672 or rtacland@gmail.com

Saturday 17th February

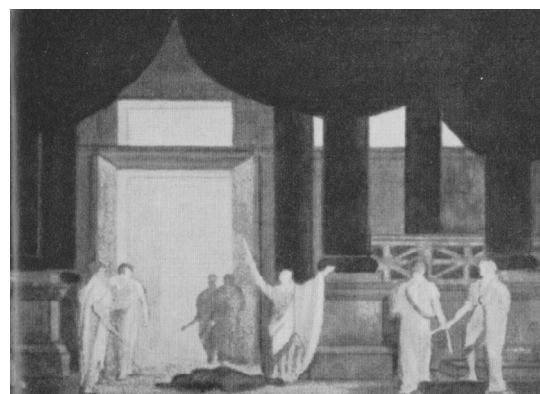
### WOMEN POETS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Details in December/January newsletter or contact Robin, as above.

Saturday 17th March

### SHAKESPEARE'S *JULIUS CAESAR*

A live transmission of the National Theatre production of this play is screened at Rheged and other cinemas on 22nd March with a repeat showing on the 30th. Our session just beforehand will prepare for this, but will much more be our own forum for sharing and enlarging responses to this splendid play. An outline of the unfolding story will be given as we go along. So even if you did not study the play for O-level, you will be kept well in touch with the enthusiasms of those who have relished this play for a long time. The pamphlet will include highlight sections, but bring your copy of the play if there are special moments you hope to refer to.



*Design for Stratford production, 1919*

Saturday 21st April

### BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S *WAR REQUIEM*

Britten's *War Requiem* interleaves the Latin setting with poems of Wilfred Owen, all in memorably dramatic musical settings. Richard Deakin joins Robin Acland in an introduction to this justly famous piece. Richard was leader of a university orchestra in an early performance of the *Requiem*, with Britten conducting. He is a freelance classical violinist who has played as a soloist and chamber musician throughout his life. He has performed in many countries, most recently in Japan, from where a number of Japanese students are now included in his international class at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he is a Fellow and Professor of violin. Recordings of sections of the *Requiem* will be played, with relevant text provided in a pamphlet.



*Benjamin Britten*

---

## OPEN EVENT: 'POETRY WORKS'

We are fortunate to have the opportunity of hearing a local poet from Sedbergh, John Rice, discuss his poetry and his working life with us in an event to be held on Thursday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> in the Quaker Meeting Room in Meeting House Lane, Penrith, between 2.00 and 4.00 pm. He is a lively speaker and an excellent poet who will tell us about his work, illustrating his talk with anecdotes, and he will be ready to hear any comments or other offerings from the audience. The meeting is open to all U3A members and prospective members, at the cost of £3 which will include refreshments. No booking necessary, pay at the door.

Please do support this event and encourage your friends to come along as well.

---

## EVENT REPORTS

---

### CHRISTMAS EVENT

It now seems a long time since our Christmas meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2017. Writing that reminds me also that we are now into a New Year so may I first take this opportunity of wishing you all a very Happy New Year.

Christmas, of course, is always a busy time of year and the third Thursday of December fell rather close to Christmas which did influence attendance. Those who did venture out however had an enjoyable afternoon, being entertained by Morris Dancing & a Magician, with time to socialise and enjoy the Christmas nibbles at the end.

Solway Morris is based in Wigton, and three of their number came and demonstrated a typical Morris dance, then taught volunteers from the audience two more dances, so it was also a learning experience.

Stuart Bowie from our own U3A has hidden talents: he is a member of the Magic Circle and treated us to a Magic Show of professional standard. Hidden is the word when it came to some of his tricks, but luckily money was restored, ropes magically returned to their former state, and no sleight of hand could be detected in the card tricks.

**Josie Dunlop**

We hope to have a report on John Skelton's January illustrated talk on Forensic Investigation in the April/May newsletter.

---

### RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP - VERY IMPORTANT

In March I shall be sending out Renewal forms inviting you to renew your membership of Penrith and North Lakes U3A. These forms will be emailed to you where we email you the link to our Newsletter, otherwise they will be posted.

Even if you pay by Standing Order you need to return this Renewal form to me. Your U3A has a new Privacy policy, to keep your information safe, so we shall be asking you each year, to confirm that you are happy with how we keep and use your data.

If you plan to attend the monthly meeting in March, April or May, you could save yourself postage by bringing your completed Renewals form with you, and giving it to me.

I hope you are continuing to enjoy your U3A membership and look forward to you renewing it.

**Richard Hall**  
**Renewals Secretary**

Email: [revrichardhall45@gmail.com](mailto:revrichardhall45@gmail.com)  
Telephone: 017684 83394

## Penrith Remembers 1914-1918

As part of the **We Will Remember** commemorations a visit has been arranged to The Devil's Porridge Museum at Eastriggs, near Annan.



*The Devil's Porridge Museum, Eastriggs, Dumfries and Galloway*

In 1915, soon after the start of World War 1, the area around Gretna was changed beyond recognition with the building of the world's largest munitions factory. It covered an area nine miles in length. The factory produced cordite, a new type of munitions propellant. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, when a war correspondent, visited the factory in 1916, saw the women mixing by hand the dangerous combination of nitro-glycerine and gun cotton and described the product as 'a sort of Devil's Porridge'. By 1917 the factory was producing 1100 tons of cordite per week - more than all the other munition factories in Britain combined.

However, the museum is much more than that. It covers the vital role of women to the war effort. In 1916 60% of the factory's workforce was aged under 19. The building of the factory by some 11,000 navvies, and the social problems which ensued, leading to the State Management Scheme controlling the sale of liquor was another facet. There is also a section on the Second World War. As museums go, the Devil's Porridge Museum is relatively small but has received many accolades for its interactive presentations and visitor friendly approach. Well worth seeing.

The visit will take place on Wednesday 2nd May with the coach leaving Penrith at 9.30 am and back into Penrith around 1.30 pm. The cost will be £20 which includes the entry fee and an initial introduction by members of the museum's volunteer staff.

If you are interested in attending, contact Stewart Simpson on 01768.864230 or [mail@stewval.plus.com](mailto:mail@stewval.plus.com). That will give the organiser some idea of numbers and help in arranging the bookings. An email will be sent in mid March with additional details - including methods of payment - to those who have expressed interest.



## Mainly for Men

There may be some narrowing of eyes and puzzled frowns at the suggestion of a group devoted solely to men, so perhaps an explanation is needed. In this I am indebted to Trevor Keith and Jim Sellars who provided background information.

Penrith and North Lakes U3A's present membership is 64% women and 36% men and we have to ask ourselves why there is this imbalance; the well-known longevity of women in general does not begin to explain it. What is more, recent articles in Third Age Matters and the national press have drawn attention to loneliness among older men, with the suggestion that men are less likely than women to join social groups. Since providing contexts for social contacts between older people is part of the remit of U3A, it behoves us to do something, or at least to try.

One approach would be to set up groups that might be thought to attract men, but obviously open to women as well. The difficulty lies in knowing what these would be. An analysis of those attending groups shows an even bigger difference: 31% men and 69% women. There are three groups that only have women members and one that only has men, so 46 groups are mixed. Thus there is little evidence that our offers turn men off, at least men already in U3A. The seven most popular groups overall are equally popular with men and women.

A random sample of a quarter of the membership points to 31% of men in PNLU3A not being in any group at all, compared to 26% of women: not such a big difference. An estimated 56 men and 84 women (out of 590 members) are not in any group. They don't have to be, of course, if they don't want to be.

This points to the need to attract men who are not yet in our organisation and the suggestion has been made that at least some might feel more comfortable in the company of other men. One might hope that this would be a stepping stone to building confidence and venturing into the alarming world of mixed company.

Several other U3As have set up such groups. A concrete suggestion has come from Trevor Keith. He has offered to set up a "Mainly Men" group based on monthly activities. These activities would seek to offer men new experiences and visit places they would be unlikely to undertake or go to on their own.

Individual members with particular skills or experience could lead sessions. For example, someone might host a "taster" bowls session as one of the monthly activities. The hope is that such sessions would help members develop interests and pursue them more regularly. The following suggestions have been put forward by potential members: ten pin bowling; clay pigeon shooting; footgolf; watching a local or regional football or rugby match; and visiting Tullie House Museum, York Railway Museum, a Classic Car Museum or Threlkeld Quarry.

Each member would be encouraged to take ownership, with support, of a monthly meeting, proposing an activity for the rest of the group to discuss and agree. Meetings would take place monthly at the venue of the particular activity. More expensive events would be spaced out, in recognition of the fact that not all U3A members have deep pockets.

Expressions of interest are sought in the first place and if this reveals a viable group, a meeting will be organised to discuss a way forward. Please email Trevor Keith on [trevorkeith54@hotmail.com](mailto:trevorkeith54@hotmail.com) or me on [ian.forrest1940@gmail.com](mailto:ian.forrest1940@gmail.com).

On a general note, with 590 members and 50 active groups there is no overall cause for concern. However, the number of members who don't find a group to interest them is surprising. We regularly compile lists of requests but they only sometimes reveal a group of people wanting the same thing. Perhaps we have found one here.

**Ian Forrest**  
**Groups Co-ordinator**

# North West Region Newsletter



The latest North West Regional Newsletter may be of interest to Penrith U3A members. It includes information on forthcoming events and activities in our region, including the North West Regional Summer School 2018 to be held at Newton Rigg Agricultural College 28th to 31st August.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/n/north-west/docs/newsletter50.pdf>

**Copy deadline for the next issue is Monday 9th April**

**If you would like to receive any part of the Newsletter in LARGE PRINT, please contact the Editors.**

## Editorial Team

**Groups** sheet, also the Monthly Meeting and Short-run/One-off Programmes:  
Robin Acland, Chapelside, Mungrisdale, Penrith CA11 0XR, 017687 79672  
[rtacland@googlemail.com](mailto:rtacland@googlemail.com)

Remainder of **News and Views**: Chris Wilkinson, 10 Hall Grange, Bolton,  
Appleby CA16 6WA 01768361819, 07986003551  
[Cwilkins0n@aol.com](mailto:Cwilkins0n@aol.com) (Please note the '0' in Chris's surname is a zero!)  
Or [Chriswilkinson48@gmail.com](mailto:Chriswilkinson48@gmail.com)

Contents	
Monthly Meetings	1
One off and Short Run Programmes	2
Christmas Event, Renewing membership	3
Penrith Remembers 1914-18	4
Mainly for Men	5
NW Region, Contents	6