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## EVENTS, VIEWS AND REPORTS

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### UPCOMING MONTHLY MEETINGS

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#### FEBRUARY MEETING - SUNBEAMS TRUST - Annie Mawson

**2.15 pm Thursday 19th February at Penrith Rugby Club**

Annie Mawson is a name synonymous with The Sunbeams. She set up this group to engage with a wide variety of individuals who might benefit from the healing power of music either by listening to, or, more often, by participating in music. Visiting their lovely, thoughtfully designed building near Rheged can open one's eyes to the wonderful work Annie and others are doing. Each week they engage with a substantial number and range of people, mostly but by no means exclusively youngsters. Through words, music and pictures we will find out more.




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#### MARCH MEETING - BEATRIX POTTER, 1864 to 1943 - Faye Morrissey

**2.15 pm Thursday 19th March at Penrith Rugby Club**

Faye Morrissey is the Manager and Curator of The Armit, a museum and library in Ambleside that holds collections related to Beatrix Potter, the well-known author and illustrator of the Peter Rabbit series who was also an accomplished mycologist and a conservationist. As a strong supporter of the organisation, she left most of her large estate to the National Trust. Faye Morrissey has been involved in planning exhibitions to showcase Beatrix Potter's history and relevance, suggesting that her principles are still relevant today.



Illustration by Beatrix Potter

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#### APRIL MEETING - CHILDREN'S LITERATURE David Milner

**2.15 pm Thursday 16th April at Penrith Rugby Club**



David Milner was a local Methodist minister who became the District Superintendent. Still living in Penrith, he is now retired and able to pursue his personal interests and enthusiasms. These include a strong interest in children's literature so he has elected to give a talk on books for young people. This promises to be an interesting talk with helpful advice on what we might like to recommend to those youngsters we know.

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## CHAIR'S PIECE

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We naturally tend to concentrate our newsletter on what we are doing here in Penrith and North Lakes. However, we are also part of a much larger organisation i.e the Third Age Trust, who provide us with lots of helpful guidance in running our u3a and the North West Region u3a, who provide support to u3as across Cumbria and the rest of the region..

There are 2 events currently being planned. The North West Region are promoting their Summer School 2026 - 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> August at Manchester Metropolitan University. Further details about this are available in their newsletter which can be found at <https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/summer-school-2026/> . We also have a copy on our website. Another national event is the u3a Festival 2026 which is being held at York University 1<sup>st</sup> to 3rd July. More details about this later in the newsletter

However, returning to our own local u3a, I want to say a big thank-you to Denise Walker who, as you know, was our treasurer for nearly 8 years (since I was able to pass it on!). Recently, Gordon Reid took on the role and Denise stayed as Assistant Treasurer. However Gordon has got into the role very quickly, so Denise has decided she no longer needs to stay on as Assistant Treasurer and has resigned from the role and also from the committee. We are so grateful for her hard work and support over the years and will miss her at committee meetings, but I am sure she will remain very active in Table Tennis!

**Margaret Irving (Chair)**

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## u3a Festival 2026 - 1st-3rd July - The University of York

This is a chance for members from across the UK to gather and share the joy of being involved with the u3a movement. There will be talks on a wide range of topics, hands -on art and craft workshops, fitness workshops, sports tournaments and live performance by u3a musical groups. Tickets are £18 a day, or £50 for a three-day ticket. Accommodation will also be available on site for anyone wishing to stay for the 3 days. For further details and to book tickets etc.: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/festival-2026> or if you'd like to be involved in volunteering then email [festival@u3a.org.uk](mailto:festival@u3a.org.uk)."

**Margaret Irving**

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## JANUARY MEETING

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### CUMBRIA CLOCKS - Callum Scobie-Youngs

With a record audience of over 100, and a very interesting local focus, the meeting was especially popular. Callum Scobie-Youngs gave a very good talk accompanied by excellent illustrative slides describing the history, the development and the varied work undertaken by his family's business: the Cumbria Clocks company. Callum's father, Keith, studied Horology in Birmingham and in 1997 moved from his original base in London with his wife, Lynn, to establish his clock business in Dacre. The firm is serving clocks of many types from all over the world. The company has thrived and grown, now comprising a work force of 26, many of whom are young, local and are being trained on the job. Further expansion is planned in a new, but still local, site.

The work undertaken by the firm is unexpectedly varied. Repairing and maintaining clocks is their main focus but, additionally, time balls, mechanical devices such as the famed Swan at Barnard Castle, and zodiacal clocks are also included in their remit. Perhaps surprisingly, too, Callum outlined how the Dacre company operates on a great variety of clocks and other mechanical devices from all over the world.

The audience was given many interesting examples of the company's diverse work ranging from the ancient cathedral clocks at Salisbury, dating from 1386, and the clock at Wells which chimes the quarters as well as the hours, to other ancient church clocks including Rye Church's with a mechanism possibly dating back to the 1390s. Hampton Court's astronomical or zodiacal clock goes back to 1540 and also indicates the phases of the moon and many other regular events.

More recently, in 2012, to mark the start of the London Olympics, Cumbria Clocks were involved in the construction of the internal hammer to strike the 24 tonne opening bell. With its quite different electrical movement, Cumbria Clocks worked in 2021 on the famed Liverpool clock and even on Stockport's Wine Bar's iconic public clock whose animated figures strike the hour. Luton's clock brightly lights up the town thanks to Cumbria Clocks when, in 2023, they carried out a key modernisation of its old lighting system.

Palace clocks are another area of Cumbria Clocks' involvement. All those of the royal household at Buckingham Palace, for example, are maintained or mended by them, as are the clocks at Windsor Palace. The leaders of both Fiji and Hong Kong also depend on Cumbria Clocks for the care of their clocks, some of which are very valuable. Again, the company has done very specialist work at the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle on the renowned mechanical swan made in 1774 by James Cox. The device cleverly swims, catches a fish and 'eats' it, to the delight of visitors. Less prestigious musical clocks and even domestic clocks are also kept going thanks to the company.



Bowes Museum's mechanical swan.

Saving the best until last, Callum finally revealed some of the secrets of the 'Big One: London's iconic clock at Westminster keeping the nation on time. This was Cumbria Clocks' biggest project so far. Finished in 1854 and installed in 1859, 'Big Ben' needed a new set of clock faces to be made whilst the work was undertaken over a period of several years. The overhaul of the clock required dry ice blasting, aqua blasting and manual cleaning. New parts had to be made and the chime barrel was also fully restored. It was secretly tested at Dacre where a 3D teaching model was made and over 3000 photos of components were taken. The 13.5 ton bell was kept in London, however. Regulation of the clock is done with metal weights, again a highly specialised task. Finally, the clock was wound up again and the job was complete.

Eager to know more, the talk generated a series of questions, each answered thoughtfully by Callum, who was thanked and very warmly applauded by a most appreciative audience.

**Sue Tomlinson**

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## SIGNS OF SPRING IN THE EDEN VALLEY!



The first of the season's lambs with a snowy Cross Fell in the background.

(Taken 28/01/2026)

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## PNLu3a Groups

### NORDIC WALKING

Recently a small number of members met with the intention of starting a Nordic Walking group. This was in response to an article one of our members had read in TAM where a group had been established in a southern u3a. This would require learning new techniques and hopefully result in enhanced fitness levels to combat the general decline that comes with ageing. If you think this is something that may appeal to you please contact the Groups coordinator to add your name to the list. [janestables@icloud.com](mailto:janestables@icloud.com)

## NEW GROUPS

### Is there a subject you would like to explore which isn't on our group list, or do you have an interest which you could share with others?

The philosophy of u3a is to enjoy shared learning in social groups. As a committee we are here to help produce a wide and exciting program of activities. Initially we can email out information regarding your idea and then help to set up a meeting with interested parties.

Advice is always available from the committee, and group convenors are happy to pass on their experience. Often groups start off with a small number and grow to fit the activity. There's plenty of advice available so if you think you can help start the ball rolling on a new group please don't hesitate to contact me at [janestables@icloud.com](mailto:janestables@icloud.com).

For further information please see the articles "How groups are organised" and "The role of the group convenor" at <https://penrith-n-lakes.u3asite.uk/documentation/>.

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## SPACES AVAILABLE IN BOOK GROUP 3

There are spaces in this group. For further details contact Pam Head: [pamhead25@gmail.com](mailto:pamhead25@gmail.com)

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## RECKLESS RECORDERS CELEBRATE BURNS MELODIES

The Reckless Recorder Group enjoyed a very happy playing session in January, celebrating the famous and enduring melodies of Robert Burns. These tunes might be from the 18th century but live on! From a great new book of 4 part recorder arrangements, our music librarian Penny Poole, selected some of the finest including the well-known Ae Fond Kiss, A Red Red Rose, and Auld Lang Syne. With a tartan and shortbread theme (no whisky!) we had a lovely time playing the descant, alto, tenor and bass parts.

Reckless Recorders now meets fortnightly at the Quaker Meeting House on Monday mornings 10 – 12. This group suits people who can read music. Some folks play other instruments elsewhere and are returning to the recorder after many years. For each session, Penny sends out the music for suggested tunes before the session for us to play when we meet. We have a wide range of music - early, dance, folk, classical, show tunes etc. We have enough space to take in some more players for any of the parts. It is a supportive group of friends playing together.



We are also considering holding some short sessions for people at a more introductory level if there is a demand. Please get in touch with the Convenor, Margaret Bancroft at [mb1952@btinternet.com](mailto:mb1952@btinternet.com) if you are interested in the Reckless sessions.

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## A GOOD READ - Recommendations from various members of Book Circle 1

The late Pat Winn, a founder member of P&NL U3A, started this book circle in 1997. Meeting once a month, the group has read and discussed hundreds of books. The library provides sets of books and each member of the group chooses one to present. Pat had extensive literary tastes and welcomed the chance to read new novels as well as old favourites. The last book Pat chose for the group was **"Diary of a Bookseller" by Shaun Bythell**. She enjoyed his worldview, his witty observations of the customers and Wigtown locals.

**"Summer in February" by Jonathan Smith**. A work of *Faction* featuring the Newlyn school of artists in the late 1930s. A local young woman, Florence Carter-Wood who lived in Skinburness Hall on the Cumbrian West Coast, travelled down to Cornwall to study art. She met and married

the irascible, flamboyant Alfred Munnings but entered into a fateful affair with Major Gilbert Evans, the land agent. Other famous artists, e.g. Laura and Harold Knight and Lamorna Birch etc., have "walk on" parts in this intriguing, tragic true story.

**David Mitchell's "Unruly"** is an informative and amusing romp through all the kings and queens of England in chronological order. His voice and quirky humour jumps off the page so if you don't like him in the flesh this might not be for you!

**"The Summer Book" by Tove Jansson** This is fiction but based on the summers Tove spent on a small island in the Gulf of Finland, with her mother, brother Lars and his young Daughter, Sophia. It is a charming book with descriptions of the relationship between Sophia and her grandmother, the games they played and the scenery. It is beautifully written, with a quiet humour, and is regarded as a modern classic throughout Scandinavia.

**"The Lost Lights of St. Kilda" by Elizabeth Gifford.** The book begins with vivid descriptions of life on St. Kilda and moves through to the situation that led to the request from the last islanders to be evacuated. Intertwined with this is the story of the abandonment of Scottish regiments in St. Valery Sur Somme when other troops were being rescued from Dunkirk and which led to their internment in camps for the remainder of the war. Linking these strands is a poignant love story. Especially good if the story of St. Kilda has held a fascination for the reader.

**"Pandora's Jar". By Natalie Haynes.** This is an interesting delve into the place of women in Greek myths. From Pandora, who's Jar - ancient Greeks didn't use boxes! - was often misquoted in later works, to Medea, the much maligned wife of Jason, Natalie Haynes exposes the misogynistic interpretations of male spinners of the stories. Women are constantly seen as devious, wicked or stupid, when in the original tale they are the pivotal mover in the plot. She manages to find a better way to see the story, and to make the whole book wryly amusing. Well worth reading for her insight into the way stories can be twisted over many retellings to suit a male interpretation.

**"The Marriage Portrait" by Maggie O'Farrell.** Maggie O'Farrell chose sixteenth century Italy as the background for this novel. It is loosely based on Robert Browning's poem, My First Duchess. Before unification, Italy was ruled by individual city states or Dukedoms, controlled by a powerful family..The women of the family were primarily valued for arranged marriages. Earlier historical evidence proved the First Duchess to be a daughter of the Medici family in Florence. There are many instances in this book of how the Renaissance was changing Italy. Wealthy rulers could afford to employ talented craftsmen to rebuild and decorate their cities in the new style, but for renaissance women, the book demonstrates how nothing changed. When death preempted an arranged marriage between a Medici daughter and the Duke of Ferrara, her younger sister, Lucretia, already knew she must replace her. Once married, isolated in a remote castle, she soon became aware of her husband's attempts to murder her, but escape seemed impossible . Finally unexpected events provided an opportunity she could not afford to ignore. **Carol Mitchell**

**Copy Deadline for next issue - TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> April**

Please send all contributions ASAP PLEASE (don't wait till the deadline!) to [penrithu3newsletter@btinternet.com](mailto:penrithu3newsletter@btinternet.com). Please send contribution text in MS Word or .pdf and pictures as attachments, such as .jpeg etc., if possible, rather than in the body of the email - it makes transcribing much easier.....Thanks, Ron Lyon. (Editor)

## GROUP CONTACTS

For the most up to date information on a group between issues of the newsletter, see the applicable website page at <https://penrith-n-lakes.u3asite.uk/groups/>. Several groups are operating at capacity, but convenors still need contact from you, even if you've heard that your choice is one of them. We try to establish further groups where there's a clear call for them.

We don't normally give email addresses below, unless the Convenor has requested it, as the address would be in the public domain on the U3A website. However, if you would prefer to make your first approach by email, please contact [janestables@icloud.com](mailto:janestables@icloud.com), who will pass your email to the Convenor.

<b>Archaeology</b>	2nd Mondays 10.00 - 12.00	Linda Davis 07855 926465
<b>Architecture 1</b>	1st Fridays 10.00-12.00	Gillian Stoddart 01768 862501
<b>Architecture 2</b>	3rd Mondays 2.00-4.00	Sue Tomlinson 01768 865622
<b>Art Discussion</b>	1st Tuesdays 10.00-12.00	Angela Davies 016974 75217
<b>Ballroom Dancing</b>	Wed 1.15-2:15 Stainton village hall	<a href="mailto:mb1952@btinternet.com">Margaret Bancroft mb1952@btinternet.com</a> 07855662068
<b>Birdwatching</b>	4th Fridays Dave Neale - 0752 1295454	Jill Saunders - 01228 530267
<b>Book Circle 1</b>	3rd Wednesdays 2.00-4.00	Jackie Bramwell 01768 867208 Carol Mitchell 01768 890443
<b>Book Circle 2</b>	1st Thursdays 2.00-4.00	Judith Markey 01768 863742
<b>Book Circle 3</b>	3rd Wednesdays 10.30-12.30	Pam Head 01768 201572
<b>Book Circle 4</b>	2nd Fridays 10.00 - 12.00	Angela Power 07811 084500
<b>Bridge</b>	Thursdays 9.30-12.30	Nick Evans 07967647028 Janet Evans 07717 833089
<b>Bus Pass Adventurers</b>	Where, Days, Time - all * tba	Jim Sellars 07400920940
<b>Camper Van</b>	Ad Hoc	Brian Hodgson 07788 510194 <a href="mailto:dak195955@gmail.com">dak195955@gmail.com</a>
<b>Cinema Club</b>		Angela Stretton 07766 935854
<b>Cycling</b>	*Rides on Tuesdays March to October (*see u3a website)	David Luckhurst 07739 189421
<b>Folk Dancing</b>	2nd & 4th Thurs 2.00-4.15pm	Tirril Village Hall Rose Johnson 07894 260580 Roger Burgin 01768 894107
<b>Folk Music</b>	1st and 3rd Thurs 10.00-12.00	Cliburn village hall Martin Fagan 07771 665923 Neil Stretton 07986 214541
<b>French 4 beginners</b>	Where, Days, Time – all * tba	Deborah Wilson <a href="mailto:deborahkay1961@gmail.com">deborahkay1961@gmail.com</a>
<b>French Intermediate</b>	2nd & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesdays 10am	Alastair Keelas 07929968648
<b>Gardening</b>	Ad-Hoc	Anne Jackson 07802 253413
<b>Bits &amp; Bobs</b>		Christine Nicholson 07733 474083
<b>German</b>	Alternate Tuesdays 10.30-12.00	Kath Lawless 07788420156 <a href="mailto:kathlawless@googlemail.com">kathlawless@googlemail.com</a>
<b>Geology</b>	Last Tuesday 10am Tirril Village Hall	Phil Newall 07976 711545
<b>Handicrafts</b>	2nd & 4th Friday 10.30am	Carol Mitchell 07718 144509 <a href="mailto:wollaton@gmail.com">wollaton@gmail.com</a>
<b>Indoor Bowls</b>	Thursday 2.00-4.00	Andrew Frazer 01768 428814
<b>Industrial History</b>	4th Fridays 2.00	Ian Hoose 07961 322948
<b>Italian</b>	2nd & 4th Thursdays 2.00-4.00pm	Pam Head 01768 201572
<b>Literature 1</b>	1st Wednesdays 10 00 to noon	Robin Acland 01768 779672
<b>Literature 2</b>	1st Fridays 10.00-12.00	Katharine Cooke 01931 712429 <a href="mailto:kallycooke@gmail.com">kallycooke@gmail.com</a>
<b>Local History</b>	Where, Days, Time – all * tba	Lydia Gray <a href="mailto:lydiachapel@gmail.com">lydiachapel@gmail.com</a>

<b>Lunch Group</b>	Last Fridays 12.30	Sandra Barton 01768 840410
<b>Motorcycling</b>	Fortnightly Fridays April to October (weather permitting)	Kevin Lodge 07914 679507
<b>Music Appreciation</b>	Fortnightly Mondays 10 till noon, Sept- May	John Upson 01768 863538
<b>Philosophy</b>	1st Thursdays 2.00-4.00	Alan Green 07812 059575
<b>Photography</b>	meeting times to be decided	Alan Beale 07414 656268
<b>Play Reading</b>	4th Tuesdays 2.00-4.30	Peter Bowles 01768 881222
<b>Pottery 1</b>	Tuesdays 10.00-1.00	David Neale 0752 129 5454
<b>Pottery 2</b>	Tuesdays 1.00-4.00	Anna Bartrum 07876 572836
<b>Reckless Recorders</b>	Monday mornings 10.00 -12.00 fortnightly	Margaret Bancroft <a href="mailto:b1952@btinternet.com">b1952@btinternet.com</a> The Quaker Meeting House 07855 662068
<b>Science Discussion</b>	2nd Thursdays 2.00-4.00	Roger Leech 07841378121
<b>Sketching 1</b>	1st Thurs 2.00-4.30	Rosemary Koch-Osborne 01768 881274 Diana Smith 01768 862196
<b>Sketching 2</b>	1st Tuesdays 2.00 to 4.30	Steve Atkinson 07989 565023 <a href="mailto:Steve_atkinson@hotmail.com">Steve_atkinson@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Scrabble</b>	1st Tuesdays 2.00-4.00	Mary Lund 01768 428312
<b>Spanish</b>	every Tuesday 10.30 -12 noon	Maggie Neale 01768 868123 Joy Davies 07521 754003
<b>WALKING GROUPS</b>		
<b>Short Walks</b>	2nd and 4th Thursdays in the month	10am David Miller 07810521479 <a href="mailto:djtmiller@icloud.com">djtmiller@icloud.com</a>
<b>Moderate Walks</b>	2nd & 4th Weds	Brian Hodgson <a href="mailto:Dak195955@gmail.com">Dak195955@gmail.com</a>
<b>Fell Walking</b>	Second Tuesday	John Day <a href="mailto:johnday100@gmail.com">johnday100@gmail.com</a>
<b>Table Tennis</b>	Tuesdays - 2.00-4.00	Denise Walker 01768 865096 Thursdays - Alan Beale 07414 656268
<b>Wine tasting</b>	2nd Fridays 3.00-5.00 October to April	Peter Edwards 07957866856 <a href="mailto:wineofcourse@pm.me">wineofcourse@pm.me</a>
<b>Writing for Pleasure</b>	Last Wednesdays 2.00	Angela Power 07811084500

### FOR GROUPS JUST GETTING ESTABLISHED

Tba.= To be advised