

Links 216: December 2024



Snow at Whirlow Brook Park

Contact us

Our website is at: <https://su3a.org.uk>

Here you will find all the latest news and information about Su3a, including items that do not appear in *Links*.

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***Links* no. 217 April 2025, last date for copy: February 28, 2025**

All news and correspondence to the editors: email: links@su3a.org.uk

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The *Links* team is not responsible for the content of any articles. For any queries please contact the author of the article.

Facebook group

To join our Facebook group, please go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sheffieldu3a/> and hit Join. You will be asked to answer two questions and will need your Su3a membership number.

Well here we are again! Christmas is nearly upon us and it seems like no time at all since the last one. It's been a busy couple of months for Su3a. We had a New Members' Meeting in September and our Group Coordinators' Meeting in October; both were well attended. Our Treasurer Les, and I also attended the Annual General Meeting of our umbrella organisation, the Third Age Trust (TAT). TAT supports the 1,000-plus u3as in the country and £4 of your £8 Su3a membership fee goes to it. In return it provides third party insurance cover for our members taking part in u3a activities. It also keeps us up-to-date on legal issues and offers advice and guidance. Additionally it has a programme of activities for all u3a members, in particular the Zoom lectures and short courses which we publicise weekly on Facebook and monthly in the e-newsletter. If you haven't tried any of them yet, they come highly recommended. As a marketing exercise, TAT is now offering a 'Friends' membership which is open not just to u3a members but to non-members too. It is free to join so take a look at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/get-involved/u3a-friends>.

For me, the highlight of the past two months and indeed of this year's lecture programme, was attending the October Friday Lecture presented by our Polish Culture & Heritage group. It told the incredibly moving story of how their own families escaped persecution and embarked on long, perilous journeys to find some resolution and start new lives in the UK. A report of the lecture is included in this edition of *Links*.

On a lighter note, we hope to once more greet you with a mince pie at our December lecture on Friday, December 13. Neil Hanson, who last Christmas talked to us about his trials and tribulations running the Tan Hill Inn, England's most remote pub, returns to talk about his life as ghostwriter to the stars. It promises to be the perfect start to the festive season. In conclusion I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful but active new year.

Maureen Cave

Activities of Open Groups, such as the European Travel Group, UK Travel Group and Lunch and Lecture, are open to all members of Su3a.

Travel Group merger

In the October *Links*, I announced that the Travel Group and Weekenders will be merging on January 1, 2025 to form the UK Travel Group. Here are more details of what will be happening.

The new committee will be made up of Samina Aslam (coordinator), Brian Cave (treasurer), Dawn Hodgkinson (secretary), Val Wiley, Lynne Blake, Julia Daine, Jo Fox and Olga Lidbury.

They are currently working on plans to hopefully visit the following places during 2025.

- March – JCB Factory.
- April – Beningborough Hall.
- May– Southwell Minster.
- June – Leicester (Richard III Centre).
- July – Three churches and possibly the Great Yorkshire Show.
- August – Stamford Open Air Theatre.

Please note: No plans are finalised yet but when they are, the details and accompanying application form will be in the appropriate copy of *Links*, Open Group Supplement or the monthly e-newsletter. This is the only way to apply for places. All Su3a members can apply but must be able to manage the day independently or with the aid of a nominated carer who must pay for the event.

A short break holiday to Northumbria is also planned for May and the details and application form are in this edition of *Links*.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Margaret Bullivant most sincerely for her 20 years' serving on the Travel Group committee. She has organised numerous day trips and short break holidays which have given untold pleasure to a vast number of Su3a members. Her extensive knowledge of most parts of the British Isles has also been very helpful to other committee members when planning their outings. So, on behalf of the whole Travel Group committee, a huge thank you Margaret.

It is also timely to extend our gratitude to Val Wiley, who has served on the Travel Group committee for almost 19 years. Val has also organised numerous day trips, including the ever-popular churches trips, with Pat McLaughlin as the guide. Val will continue on the committee with the sole purpose of continuing to arrange these churches trips.

Sheila Harris. (retiring coordinator)

I take this opportunity to thank Sheila for stepping into the breach and taking on the role as coordinator despite some heavy personal commitments. She held the team together magnificently through some difficult times, many of which the membership remains unaware.

Samina Aslam

An Exploration of the History of Northumbria May 19-23, 2025

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Join the UK Travel Group on a trip exploring some of the history of Northumbria.

This five-day trip includes private executive coach throughout our journey and four nights half-board accommodation at the 3* Gibside Hotel at Wickham. (www.gibside-hotel.com). All our allocated standard rooms are ensuite and have a TV, hair dryer and tea and coffee making facilities.

On our way to Northumbria we will visit Auckland Palace and the Faith Museum. The palace was once home to the Prince Bishops of Durham,

who were given exceptional powers by the Norman kings of England, as well as the Church, and governed vast swathes of North East England. The Faith Museum is the first museum in England to contemplate the ideas, implications, and impact of faith in Britain. The poignant and intimate museum explores how faith, belief, and religion have shaped lives and communities, and examine how they have been a driving force throughout British history.



Throne Room, Auckland Palace

The itinerary for the following days is:

Day 2 - A guided walking tour of Durham with our Blue Badge guide, a guided tour at Durham Cathedral, a renowned masterpiece of Norman architecture, and a guided tour of the Bowes Museum. This purpose-built public art gallery was created by John and Josephine Bowes between 1862 and 1875 and is home to a large collection of fine and decorative paintings from around Europe.



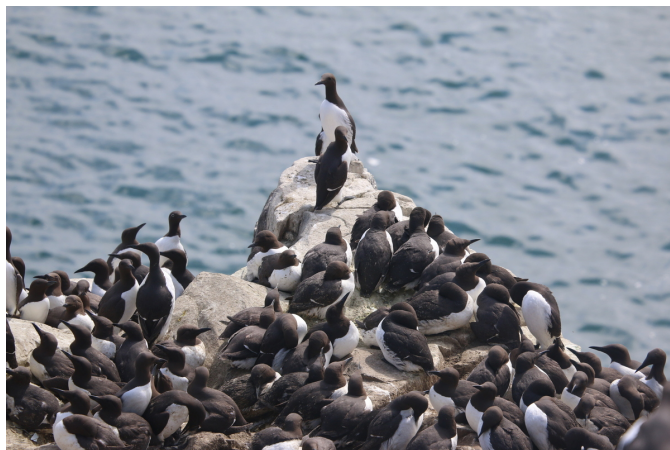
Bowes Museum, Day 2



Cragside House, Day 3

Day 3 - Alnwick Castle, the second largest inhabited castle in England, (the first being Windsor Castle), and home of the Percys, Earls and Dukes of Northumberland since 1309. We continue to the National Trust's Cragside House and Gardens for something a little different. The house is a wonderful Victorian mansion described as 'the palace of a modern magician'. Its interior features state-of-the-art hydraulics, powering a revolutionary lift system, and internal telephones which mesmerised visitors in its time.

Day 4 - We explore the remains of English Heritage's Lindisfarne Priory on Holy Island this morning. The ancient monks built the priory nearly 1,400 years ago and this is the site where St Aidan and St Cuthbert founded the great powerhouse of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, and where the famous Lindisfarne Gospels were created in the early 700s. The Priory's museum focuses on a grisly Viking raid, the cult of St Cuthbert, and the beautiful medieval manuscript, the Lindisfarne Gospels. Later we have an included boat trip to Farne Islands, one of Britain's most important bird sanctuaries.



Guillemots on the Farne Islands

Day 5 - We make our way back to Sheffield, stopping for a close look at the Angel of the North. We'll also call at the The Spanish Gallery at

Bishop Auckland, which depicts a story of Golden Age Spanish art during the 16th and 17th centuries, exploring how its artists expressed the tension between man's yearning for eternity and the transience of life.

The cost for this trip is £799pp with a £119 single supplement, subject to minimum numbers being met. All gratuities for coach, hotel and guides are included. Please note that, for non-members of the National Trust, there will be additional entrance costs at all National Trust properties. All applicants should have their own travel insurance. Su3a cannot be responsible for any claims. This tour is arranged by Tailored Travel, which provides travel insurance if needed. Moderate mobility is essential to enjoy this itinerary.

The deadline for registering your interest in this trip is Monday, December 16. Apply by:

1. Emailing sammas1747@gmail.com with your names(s), telephone number and Su3a membership number
2. Or by posting a stamped A5 *Links*-sized envelope with your name(s), telephone number and your Su3a membership number to Samina Aslam, 342 Abbey Lane, Sheffield S8 0BY.

Whichever method you choose, you will be sent more details about the trip, a booking form and the tour operator's T&Cs.

Samina Aslam



European Travel Group

Expressions of Interest - Little Boats of the Mediterranean September 27–October 5, 2025

We travel by Luxuria coach to Roses in Spain for our six-night stay.

During this tour we will cruise to Cadaques, a small fishing village which was a favourite haunt of Picasso, Matisse and Dali. Here we will enjoy a

three-course lunch followed by free time to wander the pretty, cobbled streets at your leisure, before returning to our hotel.



This tour also includes a cruise on the Canal Du Midi where we can relax and take in the views of medieval bridges, delightful villages and lovely countryside while enjoying a typical French lunch, including wine and coffee. We also see the famous 'staircase' lock of Fonseranes and the 17th century Malpas tunnel.



We visit Figueres, birthplace of Dali, and visit the Dali museum. After some free time to explore the quirky streets and Catalan culture, we travel to Besalu in the volcanic region of Garrotxa. Besalu is a wonderfully preserved medieval gem with its churches, stone facades, narrow streets and the 12th century fortified bridges.



Barcelona is also included, with a cruise to see the harbour and Olympic port, allowing you to enjoy the city from a different perspective. We also have a guided tour of the main Barcelona highlights and free time to explore this vibrant city, rich in history, folklore and tradition. It boasts a distinctive architectural style, born from the extraordinary work of Gaudi.



The Luxuria coach is provided by Leger and seats 31. That means there is plenty of room for wide seats and to stretch out. Refreshments are served to your seat and each seat has its own entertainment and information centre. This is luxury at its best, allowing a comfortable, easy drive to Roses.



The cost of this tour is £1,539pp, sharing a double/twin room. A single person supplement is £359. The cost includes all travel from/to Sheffield, hotel accommodation, eight breakfasts, eight dinners, two lunches, all excursions and gratuities.

You can register your interest by emailing bpcave@hotmail.com. An application form and further details will be in the February e-newsletter and the Open Groups Supplement.

Pictures courtesy of Tourist Office of Spain, Voies Navigables de France and Leger Holidays

Brian Cave

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To fill the gap to the centre pages, here is a photo, taken on a recent visit to Barcelona by the editors, of some of Gaudi's extraordinary work referred to in the European Travel Group item. This shows Gaudi's use of wood and glass in Casa Batlló. See also Page 17.



U3a Friends

Our national body, the Third Age Trust, has set up an exciting new initiative which they are calling *u3a Friends*. Anyone can become a 'Friend' whether they are u3a members or not and membership of *u3a Friends* is free. You will get a regular newsletter telling you about what's going on nationally within the u3a movement and you will also have access to the *u3a Friends* Extra benefits programme, featuring discounts and offers across a range of areas, including:

- Health and wellbeing
- Travel and holidays
- Leisure offers, for example, cinema and theatre trips
- Shopping savings on major brands and retail discounts.

To find out more and to join go to

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/get-involved/u3a-friends>

Sheffield u3a's 40th anniversary - How can we celebrate?

In January, 2026, Su3a will celebrate its 40th anniversary, something all members can be proud of. It may seem a long way away now, but time flies, and, of course, arranging celebrations for something like this takes a lot of time, energy, people, and ideas.

For starters we are thinking of holding one big main event at a large venue where different groups can have displays both indoors and outdoors. In addition to this, we would love to keep the momentum going throughout the year to celebrate this special occasion.

So we want your ideas! How could you and your group get involved? What suggestions can you put forward for events we could arrange during the year? All suggestions will be welcome. Please email Shirley Taylor at shirley@shirleytaylor.com, using the subject line: Su3a 40th.

News from groups

Where groups are encouraging potential new members to make contact, details of coordinators can be found either in the centre pages of the hard copy of *Links* or online at <https://su3a.org.uk/groups/>.



Discussion II

What does it mean to be human? If you were Chancellor of the Exchequer, what would be your priorities? Men are from Mars, women are from Venus. These are just three of the subjects our group has discussed over the years. We started in 2007 and have rarely needed to advertise, but at the moment we have a vacancy. We meet at 10am for two hours on the second Tuesday of each month, with a coffee break at 11am. Now is your chance to join us. You don't know what you're missing! Call me on 0114 2556385 or email mary@lupin8.plus.com for more information.

Mary Alexander



Current Affairs Book Group

This November our group celebrated seven years. Whatever the difficulties and challenges of the modern world, you can be sure of one positive thing - there are now more good books on current affairs being published than ever before. Topics coming up over the next few months include:

- *Side Effects: How our healthcare lost its way and how we fix it*, by David Haslam (2023)
- *How Migration Really Works: Twenty-two things you need to know about the most divisive issue in politics*, by Hein de Haas (2023).
- *Among The Trolls: Notes from the Disinformation War*, by Marianna Spring (Jan 2025).
- *This Time No Mistakes: How to Remake Britain*, by Will Hutton (2024).

It's pleasing to have people wanting to join the group but disappointing when I have to tell them all the time that we're full. There is a lot of interest in current affairs, so if you're one of those people, why don't you contact the General Coordinator at groupsa@su3a.org.uk, and set up your own group?

I keep the group to 12 members so everyone can contribute one book over the course of a year and, for cost reasons, we read only paperbacks, so, if your book is still out in hardback, you have to plan ahead. If you'd like to know more, email paulclose48@icloud.com or call me on 07717 942278.

Paul Close



Walking Group R

We are continuing to enjoy our local walks of seven to nine miles, mostly in the Peak District with occasional trips further afield.



The group on Lindisfarne

This year's trips further afield were to Northumberland in June and to Spain in late September for a week of walking in the Pyrenees.



The group in the Pyrenees



Merendera



Bearded vulture

The Pyrenees holiday was based in the Aragon village of Albella where an English couple, Lucy and Simon, have restored a lovely farmhouse. They have set up a company, Aragon Active, offering walking holidays, with an excellent local guide Alberto, as well as flora/fauna holidays, cookery workshops and Spanish courses. Alberto led us on several walks overlooking spectacular deep canyons amid dramatic mountains on the Spanish-French border. Although we were there in autumn, the wild flowers were impressive. They must be quite a sight in spring. On our last day we watched bearded vultures gliding above us and then visited Ainsa, a beautiful village with impressive architecture, including the distinctive Aragon chimneys.



Ainsa

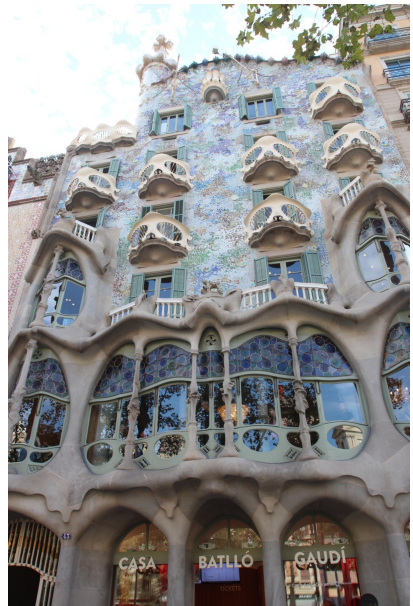


Aragon chimneys

Some travelled to Spain by plane while others went by train, stopping off in Barcelona or Girona. Those who stopped in Barcelona enjoyed some of the Gaudi architecture that awaits the European Travel Group around the same time next year.



The Gaudi Cathedral



Casa Batlló Gaudi

David Jordan

Deafness is a complex condition that affects everyone differently. As you get older your hearing often deteriorates. Because you don't notice changes day by day, you may just think that your friends are losing their voices, and that these days young people have not been taught to speak clearly enough.

Eventually, usually 10 years after you would have really benefitted from aids, you get round to seeing your GP and find that there is a several months' waiting list for an assessment for NHS aids. When you do eventually get them, you may find them to be uncomfortable and too much bother, settling for solitary activities and communicating less with friends instead. You may even feel hostile towards them because they are not speaking clearly enough.

The brain does an amazing job in interpreting speech and it needs constant practice to keep doing so. It's your choice, of course, but if you don't want to just give up, then joining our Deaf Awareness Group may prove helpful. We meet at Shirley House in Psalter Lane on the second Tuesday of the month from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. You would be very welcome either just to come once and ask for advice or to join our friendly, mutually-supportive group.



The photo shows some of our members enjoying a meal out. If you are
website: <https://su3a.org.uk/>

interested, please contact me at U3AChrisCarter@gmail.com. If you do not have email I can be contacted on 07855 908007, preferably by text. If so, please do say who you are!

Chris Carter



Vintage Voices

It's that time of year, when we start to think about Christmas and what new songs we can rehearse to perform at local events, care homes and luncheon clubs around Sheffield. This year we have started rehearsing *Somewhere in My Memory*, *I Believe*, *Over the Rainbow*, *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* and *Winter Wonderland*. Not so much carols but certainly heartwarming to sing. We are planning to sing at a South Yorkshire WI carol service and a luncheon club nearer Christmas.

We are a very friendly group of people who like to sing and also occasionally meet socially for a meal and to visit the Sheffield theatres.

We meet on Mondays from 10.15am to 12.15pm at The Walker Hall above the Scouts and Guide shop in Trippet Lane. We are a mixed-voice choir who sing in four-part harmony and are particularly looking for altos, bass and tenors.

If you would like to join us or book the choir for an event or a performance email jackie-hall3@sky.com or call me on 07770 332155.

Jackie Hall



Military History

The Military History Group has expanded rapidly this year, but would still welcome more members. We meet at Tapton Hall in Broomhill at 2pm on the last Thursday of all months, except August and December. Most members come early to enjoy a light lunch and a friendly chat. We have enjoyed a wide range of talks this last year, from both our own members and external speakers, and are always interested to hear about new ideas and subjects.

Andrew Beard

Lecture Review

Friday lecture October 18, 2024 - Polish Culture & Heritage Group

Our Polish Families' Long Road to Freedom and Sanctuary in Great Britain

A large audience heard presentations from several members of our Su3a Polish Culture & Heritage Group. The contributors were descendants of those who arrived in the UK after 1945, under a government-sponsored resettlement scheme.



Following the turmoil of the First World War and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, Poland became an independent republic until September 1, 1939, when the country was invaded from the west by Germany and from the east by Russia. In 1945, the borders of Poland were determined at the post-war Potsdam conference, remaining under Russian/Communist control until 1989.

From 1939 onwards, large numbers of Poles perished, were deported or escaped. We heard graphic descriptions of the experiences of those who escaped, eventually ending up in the UK.

The mother of one of the contributors spent time in a camp in East Africa where many refugee camps were established. The father of another contributor followed a lengthy, tortuous route from Poland via Persia (now Iran), Palestine and Egypt. Another contributor described her grandfather and uncle's involvement in the battle of Monte Cassino in Italy. Several contributors spoke of their parents' reluctance to talk about their experiences. It was moving to see and listen to the stories of those who did eventually speak of them.

The 1947 Polish Resettlement Act allowed those connected with the armed services and their dependants to stay and work in the UK. In 1954, the Polish Ex-Combatants Association Club was opened in Dover Road, Sheffield and the property next door became the Polish Catholic Centre in 1964. In 1984 a memorial to the Polish servicemen who died during the Second World War was installed in the Catholic Cathedral of St Marie in Sheffield.

The Polish community in the city is now well-established and plays an active role in the business, commercial and cultural life of Sheffield. The cultural and historical life and traditions of Poland are still maintained by members of the Polish community and, of course, by our Polish Culture & Heritage Group.

The large audience greatly appreciated all the presentations and many stayed to talk further with the speakers and their families.

Deborah Beetham

Forthcoming lectures

December 13, 2024 *The Ghostwriter*. Neil Hanson. Last Christmas Neil spoke to us about the trials and tribulations of running England's highest and most remote inn. This time he'll be telling us about his experiences as a ghostwriter for celebrities of stage, screen and sport.

January 17, 2025 *5,000 and Counting: Exoplanets*. Roy Stewart. Exoplanets are one of the hottest areas of research in cosmology and currently it seems our solar system is very much the odd one out.

February 21, 2025 *Sheffield Artists in the General Cemetery*. Helen Brown. The second talk about who's who in the general cemetery.

March 21, 2025 *The End of Roman Britain*. Derek Barker.

Looking further ahead, there will be a lecture on April 18 on *Gaudi's Barcelona* by Derek Bacon. We have seen examples of Gaudi's work already in this issue. Here is one more, from the roof of Casa Batlló.



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As always, this is subject to change. See Page 22 for lecture titles.

December 3	Drop-In	10am-12 midday, CURC*
December 13	Lecture, Neil Hanson	11am, Showroom
January 17	Lecture, Roy Stewart	11am, Showroom
February 4	Drop-In	10am-12 midday, CURC*
February 21	Lecture, Helen Brown	11am, Showroom
February 28	Links Copy Deadline	
March 4	Drop-In	10am-12 midday, CURC*
March 21	Lecture, Derek Barker	11am, Showroom

We have another gap to fill! So here are some puffins on the Farne Islands to go with the guillemots on Page 8.



Links 217: April 2025

Copy Deadline: February 28, 2025

Regd. Charity No 703147

* CURC: Central United Reformed Church