



Poynton u3a News

poyntonu3a.org.uk

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Poynton u3a Update

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General meeting was held on Tuesday 18th March. Kate Clarkson was confirmed as a committee member although she has been operating as a co-opted committee member for most of the previous twelve months. It should be noted that more committee members are needed if the u3a is going to continue to run successfully. There were no resolutions this year.

Hester Ormiston continues as Chair. As before, some of the roles taken on by the Chair are being shared with other committee members.

David Sewart has retired from the committee after many years of invaluable service mostly occupying the role of Chair. Margaret Myerscough has replaced Anna Marsden as Vice Chair although Anna remains on the committee.

After the formal business of the AGM, the Town Clerk, Mrs Haf Barlow gave her usual informative presentation on the work of the Council, followed by a question-and-answer session.

The boxes below show some of the content of the Town Clerk's talk which may be of interest to members. This information was correct at the time of the meeting.

Car Parking

On street parking. It is not illegal to park on pavements unless it is causing an obstruction or there are parking restrictions on the highway adjacent

- Council Community Support Officers and Police have different powers.
- CCSOs can ticket for all parking infringements except obstruction. An obstruction is deemed to exist if a double buggy cannot pass.
- Police can ticket for obstruction.
- They will sometimes do joint patrols in problem areas.

Bus Service

- Following extensive collaboration, a new enhanced bus service will begin on 31st March 2025. There will be an hourly service for the 391/392 bus route between Middlewood-Poynton-Stockport (via Stepping Hill Hospital).
- The two-hourly service will be maintained between Poynton and Macclesfield to the South. The next area of focus will be to try to get the Poynton to Macclesfield service increased.

Household Waste and Recycling Centre Closure

- Cheshire East Council have closed the tip last year.
- We worked with Bollington Town Council to explore the feasibility of taking on the running of the tip.
- Cheshire East Council refused to explore options.

Town Council and Cheshire East Responsibilities

POYNTON TOWN

COUNCIL is the town council for the town of Poynton and supports the following services:

- . Council Community Support Officers
- . Facilities Officer
- . Making the town attractive
- . Christmas tree and lights
- . Civic Hall
- . Brecon and Hockley Play Areas
- . Allotments
- . Inclines management
- . 83 street lights
- . Funding CCTV services
- . Community grants
- . Citizens Advice Bureau
- . Mayor of Poynton
- . Poynton Easy Access Scheme
- . Statutory consultee for all planning applications
- . Community events and funding events

CHESHIRE EAST

COUNCIL is the principal authority for all of Cheshire East and supports the following services:

- . Highways (e.g. street lights and pot holes)
- . Schools
- . Libraries
- . Waste and recycling collections
- . Council Tax
- CCTV
- . Business rates
- . Benefits
- . Licensing
- . Social Services and Social Care
- . Planning and building regulations
- . Public/Environmental Health
- . Parks and play areas (Barnaby, Deva, Lower Park, Mount Vernon)
- . Poynton Pool
- . Car parks
- . Road and gritting
- . Buses

The website has information about where different things can be reported.

Gerry Neale – An Appreciation

We have been informed that Gerry Neale passed away recently. Gerry was part of the original u3a committee and brought his knowledge of accountancy to the role of Treasurer. He established the initial systems for keeping our financial records and passed them on to our next Treasurer Kay Dacey.

Gerry also assisted his wife Iris with the running of the successful Day Trips group.

General Meetings

The next General Meeting is on Tuesday 15th April when *Rebecca Done* will be telling us about *Music Through the Decades*.

The May meeting is on Tuesday 20th May when *Gerry Hambridge* will be describing her *Uganda Adventures*.

NW Summer School - Tuesday 12th –Friday 15th August

Manchester Metropolitan University - Central Manchester Location

4 days of fun learning in Manchester with fascinating topics to choose from

- Archaeology around Cottonopolis
- An Introduction to Ancient Egypt
- Literature 'I have something to say'
- Art - A Pot-Pourri
- Art – Challenges
- Folk music with singing
- Uzbekistan - Heart of the Silk Road
- Intermediary Ukulele

Full Board Residential Delegate; £430

Non-Residential Day Delegate: £215

Don't miss out on booking your place! Information and booking details

<https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/summer-school-2025/> .

The above information is taken from the most recent North West Region Newsletter.

Members' Contributions

Painting the Town Red

Henry Beresford was the 3rd Marquis of Waterford,
He was known as a boozier and mischief maker,
Who led a group of friends on a night on the town.
Their drunkenness turned them into lawbreakers.

In the English town of Melton Mowbray
These revellers lost all control,
Causing havoc wherever they went,
Which included swinging from a flagpole.

They broke windows on some buildings
And stole flower pots from others.
But the worst was when they found a pot of paint,
They let rip, those roguish band of brothers.

With the paint they decorated people's doors,
And painted the local tollgate in bright red.
Their drunken escapades turned into a wild night out
And their freedom was hanging by a thread.

Their next act was to paint the town statue,
Which stood in the market square.
It was of a local dignitary, dressed in fine clothes,
Which had been unveiled, with some fanfare.

At the Red Lion pub, they removed the sign
And threw it into the local canal.
They repainted the Old White Swan sign in red,
For which there was no rationale.

Appearing in front of the magistrate,
They were found not guilty of a riot.
Each were fined £100 for common assault.
It was suggested they abstained from a liquid diet.

The Marquis and his pranksters, later compensated
The town and paid Melton Mowbray for the disarray.
The saying 'Paint the town red' became shorthand
For a really wild night out, causing an affray.

Susan J Pyett

Tales from the Outer Hebrides

Why are there no trees and lots of peat?

The earliest known islanders settled on the Outer Hebrides between 8,000 BC and 4,500 BC. Around 6,000 BC machair formed through a combination of plants, shells, wind and changing sea levels. A machair is a fertile low-lying grassy plain found on part of the northwest coastlines of Ireland and Scotland. Around 4,000 BC, islanders started chopping down trees. Without trees to absorb water, plants became waterlogged, died, decayed and formed into peat.



A view from the road heading north up the Isle of Lewis. No trees!

Today the central parts of the islands are still largely covered in peat with no trees in evidence. The machair in the coastal regions is used for low-intensity farming.

With no coal on the islands, as a special concession the islanders are still allowed to cut and burn peat as a fuel.

Lews Castle

Lews Castle is situated on a hill to the west of Stornoway harbour. Stornoway is by far the largest town in the Outer Hebrides. The area around Lews Castle has been inhabited for many years.

There are traces of both Neolithic and Norse settlers within the grounds. On the nearby Gallows Hill there is the remains of the 6000-year-old Cnoc na Croich burial cairn.

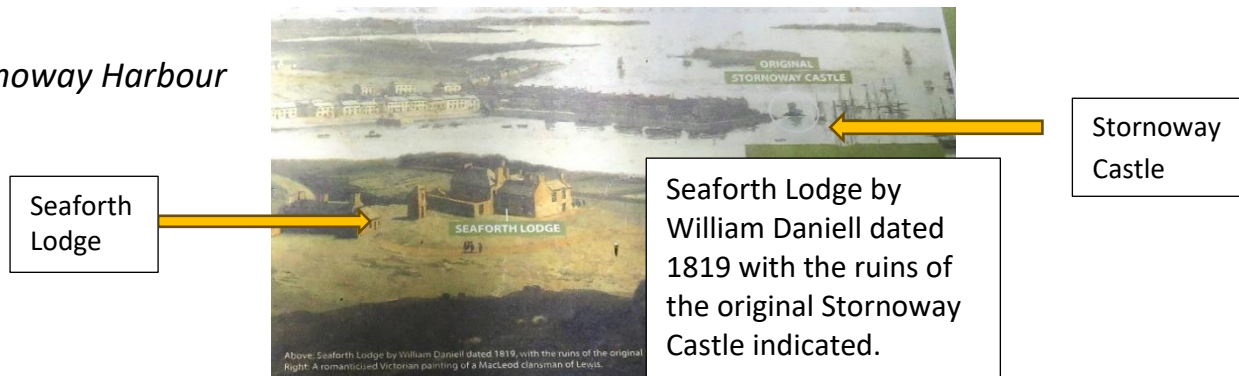


Thousands of years later in the early 9th century the Viking/Norse founded Stornoway (Stjórnvágr in Norse) where they ruled until 1266. The Vikings left a hoard of silver in the grounds as well as the Lewis Chessmen described in the previous newsletter.

The King of Scots granted Lewis to the MacLeods around 1343. The MacLeods ruled for centuries, building the original Stornoway Castle (see above).

By 1597 internal feuding within the MacLeods meant King James VI gave their lands to twelve "civilising" Lowland landowners known as the 'Fife Adventurers'. This plan failed and military expeditions were dispatched to pacify the island. In 1610 Lewis was finally granted to the Mackenzies of Kintail (Earls of Seaforth).

Stornoway Harbour



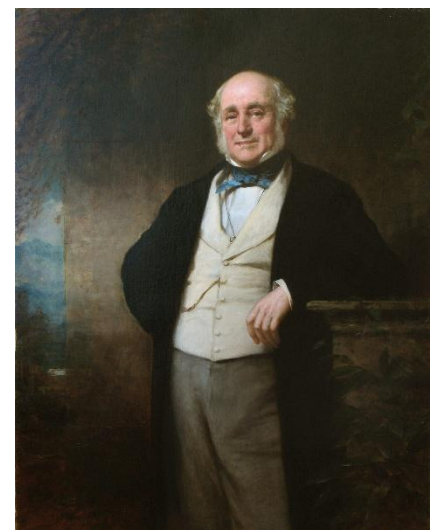
The Earls of Seaforth controlled Lewis for a tumultuous 200 years which even saw the temporary occupation of Lewis and the destruction of Stornoway Castle by Oliver Cromwell's Roundheads in 1653/4.

Seaforth Lodge was built on the site of today's Lews Castle (around 1680) and it was here that Lord Seaforth planned a Jacobite uprising that ended in defeat at the Battle of Glenshiel in 1719. Seaforth's land was temporarily confiscated by the government.

The Seaforth Mackenzies oversaw a shift away from clanship towards profit. The clearance of people from the land in favour of sheep began under their watch and emigration to the New World became common.

Sir James Matheson bought the Isle of Lewis in 1844 for more than £190,000 from the bankrupt estate of the Mackenzies of Seaforth using the vast fortune he and business partner William Jardine amassed through their lucrative opium trade in the far east.

The two men formed Jardine, Matheson & Co. in 1832 and at first traded goods such as cotton, tea, silk and opium between Canton, Bombay and Calcutta. With expansion on their minds, they tried to extend their opium trade into China. However, the Chinese Qing government of the time were increasingly concerned by the impact opium was having on its population. They tried to abolish the trade through confiscations, blockades and even the threat of the death penalty to traders.



In 1839, Jardine and Matheson managed to successfully lobby the British government into challenging the Chinese position by insisting on 'free trade' between nations. This resulted in The First Opium War (1839-42) and saw the British navy utilise its superior technology to defeat the Chinese. The Qing government eventually conceded in 1842, and granted territory to Britain, which allowed Jardine and Matheson to expand their business into Hong Kong and China.

Today the Jardine Matheson Group is a huge global organisation.

Shortly after purchasing the island, Matheson embarked on a quest to re-invent the natural and built a completely different landscape in the estate grounds.



Matheson lost no time in demolishing Seaforth Lodge, the dilapidated home of the Mackenzies, taking on Glasgow architect Charles Wilson to design him a magnificent new island base: Lews Castle. A grand building needed grounds to match and Matheson completely reshaped the 'rough grounds' around his new home.

Moving more than soil in order for Matheson's vision to become a reality, islanders who had for centuries pastured their cattle on the low-lying land were moved off. Inconvenient nearby villages were cleared, public roads were re-routed and the land around the Castle was enclosed.

The land was drained and Matheson took on a huge labour force to carve paths, drives and embankments out of the hillside. Many of the workers were islanders, who laboured on the garden project by way of paying their rent. Thousands of tons of soil were shipped in from the mainland to enrich the poor-quality layer of peat that had acted as a barrier to tree growth for centuries.

Matheson provided employment, funded famine relief and engaged in many other social and economic projects to the benefit of the island's community, spending some £329,000 by 1850. However, Matheson and his notoriously heavy-handed factor Donald Munro presided over a period where clearances accelerated. This culminated in the Bernera islanders' court case of 1874 which was the first victory for crofters against 'modernising' landlords like Matheson.

In 1918, the Lews Estate, including the castle, was bought by industrialist Lord Leverhulme from the Matheson family. He gave the castle to the people of Stornoway parish in 1923.

During the Second World War the Castle was taken over as accommodation for air and ground crew of 700 Naval Air Squadron, which operated a detachment of six Supermarine Walrus aircraft from a slipway at Cuddy Point in the grounds. The base was referred to as HMS *Mentor*.

After the war, the Castle was used for accommodation for students of Lews Castle College in the 1950s. After the accommodation closed, the building was left disused for several decades.

The building, which is protected as a category A listed building, is now owned by the local council. In 2011, Lews Castle was awarded £4.6 million by the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable it to be converted into a bilingual museum and cultural centre.

Derek Gatenby

Things to Do

Sudoku No 59

		6				8		
5		1			4		6	
	7			6	3			
	6		2				7	
8			5			3		
7				8			1	
						7		
	4				8	2		
3		8		4				

Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9

Below is the solution to No 58

1	5	2	3	6	4	7	8	9
9	3	4	7	1	8	2	5	6
7	6	8	2	5	9	4	3	1
8	1	6	4	3	5	9	2	7
5	4	9	1	2	7	3	6	8
2	7	3	8	9	6	1	4	5
6	2	5	9	7	3	8	1	4
4	9	1	5	8	2	6	7	3
3	8	7	6	4	1	5	9	2

More quiz questions from Hooha.

1. Where was Mary Queen of Scots beheaded?
2. What is the purest form of gold?
3. Where in England is the major oak situated?
4. Which country has a red flag with a yellow star in the middle?
5. What nationality is former football goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel?

Below are the answers to the questions in the previous edition.

1. Name the four sisters in Louisa May Alcott's book Little Women
Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy
2. Which country in the world produces the most cheese?
USA
3. Who was banned from going inside Durham Cathedral when it first opened in 1093?
Women (for 50 years)
4. When was the first English parliament held in Westminster Hall? 1140, 1265 or 1310?
1265
5. Queen Elizabeth II had two other Christian names, what were they?
Mary Alexandra