



U3A

Northumbria Messenger

October 2009



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DARLINGTON tells us that...

Membership has now reached 315 with 23 activities all going strong. The newly formed Craft and Wine Appreciation groups are going from strength to strength. As usual the Garden Group was very active. They had a full season of lectures and garden visits. These started with a visit to the snowdrops at The Hermitage at Thornton Wattles. In March they had a talk on development of the gardens at **Littlethorpe Manor**. This started the garden visiting season incorporating visits to gardens as far North as Morpeth.



Harry Gibbs

CESTRIA says ...

We have ten Groups meeting monthly and always looking for fresh outlets for the latent talents within our U3A. I think it will be useful to list our interests and hopefully, receive comments from other U3As if they have spotted some yawning gaps!!

viz:

Art Appreciation
Bridge
Family History
Good Read Group

Music Appreciation
Scrabble
Short Walks

Water Colour Painting
Wine Tasting
Writers Workshop

There have been visits to **Harrogate** but the Tees Cruise had to be aborted due to flotsam on the river as a result of the heavy rain!! Sampling the local cuisine is a continual pleasure and, more importantly, raises the esprit de corps of the Branch by giving the opportunity for an exchange of ideas.

Ken Kay, Chairman

DURHAM recommends speakers!

Talks at monthly meetings inevitably vary in quality and interest but two recent ones have, for me, scored highly on both. The most unexpected was **Colin Hardy of Wear Tees** on 'The Bungalow - is this the future?' which was not about life styles, but the now decommissioned Nuclear Bunker at Kelvedon Essex. Though inspired to go there I have not yet managed it, but I was able to follow up **Morag Horseman's** excellent talk, with slides, at Durham on 'The History of St Mary's Island and its Lighthouse' and spent a most enjoyable day there - even if climbing the 137 steps proved beyond me



Eileen Wormald

Final Copy Date for the next edition of The Northumbria Messenger is Saturday 12th December 2009

Please send to Sandy Hood at email: regnewseditor@googlemail.com

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tel. 01325 384496

Dear Fellow Members,

I hope you have all enjoyed the summer (with, of course, its many barbecues in the scorching weather we were promised) and have found time to enjoy your U3A's events. I am fortunate that I get to see "The Northumbria Messenger" before anyone else; reading about the many and varied activities you arrange and/or take part in, amazes me. Having been pleased to be part of Teesdale's festivities on moving to a new venue, I am looking forward to celebrating with Gateshead (congratulations on your 10th birthday) and am happy to hear that Wessington is attracting members. It is very gratifying to be part of such a dynamic organisation, ever growing in size and ever ready to embrace the new.

The ideas for speakers (the future of the Bungalow sounds riveting) and visits (the gardens at Littlethorpe Manor) will be very useful; I wonder how many of us will meet up, unexpectedly, on the highways and byways doing our own "Motor Treasure Hunt" or at Yelland Meadows looking for wildlife? How about a potato hunt at Tiptoe Farm, Northumberland? The "Sound(s) of Music" have not been missing - from our own U3A Choral Group in Ponteland to Olly Burton at Teesdale; or how about a Recorder Workshop? Book reviews are now appearing (& for a book written by our members). N.B. - do you know how to "S.T.A.R.T"?

What has been your experience with the Educational Visits scheme run by English Heritage? The "Looking at Buildings" group I run for my U3A used the scheme this summer. To fulfil its requirements we did a "Find the Features" quiz (Medieval Castles & Jacobean Architecture at Belsay) and had hoped to do a complete "Compare & Contrast" series on the architectural features of claustral buildings at Tynemouth (EH), Durham, & Lindisfarne Priory (EH), but the weather didn't cooperate (however there were still prizes!). *I'm sure other groups would be interested in finding out how you used this scheme – please contact me and I'll collate your responses for the next "Messenger".*

"The Messenger" brings news of what our Region has in store for us over the next few months. The Events Sub-committee has proved its new lease of life by arranging a "Science Study Day" at the Centre for Life – congratulations, a real coup – I understand that one of the topics may be Forensic Science (do you think Gil Grissom will come out of retirement for this? And Heinz Wolff has been mentioned!). The long promised "Design for Living" event is now a reality, so look out for details. Instead of the usual Regional Meeting in January we are arranging a "Meet the NEC" all-day event so we can ask the questions we've always wanted answered by our National body – more information at the next meeting and in the next "Messenger".

Education & Development, as well as supporting new U3As, run Awareness Days for established groups. Why not get together with neighbouring U3As and ask Margaret & Joyce to arrange a day so you can share experiences, learn from each other and find out what is available to you regionally & nationally?

The Communications & IT Sub-committee will be reporting on the development of a "Google-group" to enable you to share information and take part in debates, to complement our Magazine and the Regional Meetings. *Our next task is to look at the website – ideas to Morgan please.*

Despite the brouhaha before the AGM and Conference in Edinburgh, the event itself was enjoyed by those who attended and the high quality of the speakers caused particular comment (N.B. It is planned for Prof. Tom Kirkwood to be at our Science Day in March). At the AGM, Ian Searle was elected Chairman and he & Terry Hardie, Treasurer, will be at our January meeting. The motion to look at the number of Regional Trustees per Region was passed. We are fortunate that our out-going Regional Trustee, John Leiper, will be explaining the role and remit of these Trustees at the October meeting (& in the next "Messenger").

I want to take this opportunity to thank John for his time as our Regional Trustee – always busy, sometimes thankless! I would also like to welcome Joyce Watts as our new Trustee, thank her and wish her well for her time in office ...

(N.B. We need a volunteer for a Minutes Secretary to help Joyce on our Committee).

contd.. on page 16

GATESHEAD ...




members are gearing up for our **10th anniversary celebration** which is to be held at the beginning of October. We have a working party who have been beavering away for months on this project and, I think, as time draws near they must be at gnashing teeth stage. However, it is going to be quite a celebration with a special lunch for members and visitors from other groups, visits to places of interest in Gateshead and, for those who prefer to stay inside, a selection of activities.

I went down **memory lane** recently to hunt out old photographs relevant to events within the U3A and was shocked to see what a difference a decade makes to looks, especially mine. I am involved with the walking group and was looking at those who no longer walk, either for health reasons or family commitments and, sadly, one particular member who is no longer with us. The cry is "it can't be 10 years" but, again, when I think about it, most of us had teenage children when our group started. Now, the same ones are pushing prams or helping with the looking after of grandchildren! So, yes, all in all, a lot of water has gone under the bridge in the last decade. I hope the next one drags!

Anne Finn

We all wish you well with your celebrations, Editor

PONTELAND 'S ...

highlights from their programme this summer include the **Concert given by the U3A Choral Group** in Ponteland Methodist Church in May. They sang music from Mozart to Gilbert & Sullivan and Lloyd Webber. Thanks go to the soloist, Teresa Magnowska, and the accompanists, Jean Gould and David Foster. Brian Prickett, the Musical Director,  wishes to thank the choir for all their hard work towards making the evening such a success, and to everyone who supported the choir in a variety of ways. Additionally, he would like to mention that **The Regional Choir** will be holding a further Choral Workshop as part of the preparations for the visit of the Tall Ships to Hartlepool on 8 - 10 August 2010. The Workshop will be held in **St Mary's Church Hall on Saturday, 17th October, 2.00 to 4.00 p.m.** and this time the tutor will be Ed Milner. Approx. cost for the event - £2.50 (inc. tea & coffee)

Recently, our general meeting enjoyed an excellent lecture by **Neil Maxwell** on the most **innovative Northumberland Farm Enterprise**, Doddingtons, with its local cheeses and ice creams and it turned out to be both a treat for mind and body when we were all given delicious free samples of the ice cream.

Notable trips made to gardens include **Northumberland's Lilburn Tower** and **Yorkshire's Newby Hall** both outstanding for planting of quality and interest. So a memorable summer all round.

Gillian Williams, Vice Chairman



A centre for world-class science

NORTHUMBRIA REGION



NEWCASTLE SCIENCE FEST 2010

(www.NewcastleScienceFest.com)

A NORTHUMBRIA REGION SCIENCE STUDY DAY

on

WEDNESDAY MARCH 17TH 2010

to be held at

THE CENTRE FOR LIFE, NEWCASTLE

FROM 10AM TO 5PM

The day will include:

Opening Address by Professor Tom Kirkwood

Lectures by leading Scientists

Hands on laboratory sessions

Tour of the Centre for Life facilities

Lunch

(Details of all the above to be confirmed)

COST TO COVER ALL THE ABOVE £10 PER PERSON

(Normal entry to the Centre of Life is £8 and schools are charged £5 per person for each lab session)

Make your reservations now by sending remittances to John Leiper.

Cheques should be made payable to U3A Northumbria Region

(Preferably arrange for one person to act as contact for your U3A)

This will initially reserve your places. Information to enable you to select which lectures and laboratory sessions you wish to attend will be sent out later when the programme is finalised. We may open the event to outside the Northumbria Region after the October General Meeting so hurry!!

All enquiries to: John Leiper, Marlfield Lodge, by Coldstream, Berwickshire, TD12 4J
Telephone 01890 840494 e.mail lorbottle@tiscali.co.uk

This event is part of Newcastle ScienceFest – a 10 day and night celebration of creativity, innovation and science across the whole of the city 12-21 March 2010. For more information on the festival see the website – address above

NORTHALLERTON - a bit of history

The ancient market town of Northallerton has been home to our U3A since its inception sixteen years ago, The town is in the centre of The Vale of York a position that made it ideal as the County Town and administrative centre of North Yorkshire. Nestling between two National Parks (The North York Moors and The Yorkshire Dales) it provides a wonderful backdrop in which many of our groups can enjoy their chosen studies.



A market is held every Wednesday and Saturday following a Royal Charter in 1200. It is no accident that our main meetings happen on a Wednesday morning. The town is steeped in history, razed by the Scots no less than 3 times, remarkably the 1000 year old Parish Church still stands, Porch House that sheltered Charles the 1st still welcomes visitors and the coaching houses that were built in the Golden Age of Coaching still ply their trade albeit with less stables and more car parks.



During the summer break the Gardeners and friends visited **Raby Castle Gardens**, the Natural History Group went to **Yelland Meadows**, a Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Reserve, and the Walkers took their annual holiday with walks in **Pembrokeshire**.

Three members attended the **Edinburgh Conference** which we thoroughly enjoyed. I had trepidations when the programme suggested we were going to spend a great deal of time examining the ageing brain!! However I came away enlightened and full of positivism about the future.

Maggy Grocott

TEESDALE ... has a new venue

Two years old and 180 strong, Teesdale U3A has moved to the Jersey Farm Hotel, Barnard Castle. Their function suite, on the edge of the town on the Darlington road, gives us much more space and a better layout for our meetings which are on the fourth Thursday of each month, 10.0 am.

We were delighted to welcome Marion Whyte, Margaret Minns and other special guests to the inaugural meeting. This took on a celebratory tone as we were entertained by **Olly Burton** with his splendid **Comedy In Song**.

Our twenty groups arranged a display illustrating the variety of their activities and proving that there is a great deal happening.



It will be of interest to other U3As that we have introduced a **new logging-in system** for meetings. Each of our members has been given a new name card with a bar code, printed by us. These bar codes are read by an inexpensive hand held reader, an Opticon OPN 2001 Pocket Memory Scanner. Members who bring their cards can be recorded and get into the hall very quickly. The data has to be downloaded later. When we have gathered more experience we will report again.

Barry Cook



Motor Treasure Hunt - a ten point guide to success

You will need:

1. Clipboard, eraser, pencils and two copies of instructions per car
2. An assertive, responsive, fearless driver
3. A well-fuelled car with excellent brakes and a tight turning circle
4. Navigator with excellent local knowledge, knowing left from right
5. Idiot-proof seat belts with quick release mechanism
6. Back seat passengers, eagle-eyed and nimble limbed
7. Razor-sharp and twisted minds for deciphering cryptic clues
8. Stout shoes, waterproofs for tramping through graveyards etc.
9. Charming smiles and enough confidence to banter with locals, barmen,, museum staff ...
10. Capacious handbags stuffed with useful miscellany of items – picture of Charles Darwin, ruler, mirror, Christmas fayre menu, ring pull ...



Of course, as a last resort, you could bribe, cajole or blackmail the fiendish mastermind behind the clues, especially if you met him in the pub at a pre-treasure hunt lunch.

The above list is compiled with hindsight. If only we had known all this beforehand.

About thirty of us set out in our innocence on Sunday, 26th of July at two o'clock; no one failed to return but some did abandon all hope. Clues like: *"If you are going putt putt putt, you are on course and this is where you'll find the ninth commandment"* were very challenging!

Surprisingly, most of us found our way to the final pit-stop for emergency rations - Pimms, dainty sandwiches, cholesterol-laden scones and plumptious, diet-busting confections. It was tremendous fun enjoyed by everyone. All who finished the course received a certificate, the winners - a bottle of wine and the booby prize, appropriately, was an emergency whistle and compass!

Anne Yates, Derwentside

A challenge for U3A members. Have you heard about St. Oswald's Walk? It runs from Lindisfarne to somewhere near Hexham. Radio 4 is recording walkers' progress over a period of about 6 weeks on Saturday mornings. Could this be the basis of a project for walkers, photographers, wild life, writers, history enthusiasts? The possibilities are endless





Out with the old ...

A last word from our retired Regional Representative ...

So the National Conference and AGM is over and with it my term as Trustee for Northumbria. It was really good to see so many from our Region in Edinburgh. I think it was probably the best conference I have been to. The quality of the speakers was outstanding.

The new Chairman is Ian Searle who polled some 100 votes more than Alan Morris. Both motions were passed although the first one, proposed from the South East requiring the NEC to reconsider the number of Trustees from each Region was lost in the hall but passed as a result of the postal votes.

There will be a lot of exciting Regional events coming up soon details of which will be distributed shortly. There is to be a Design event at the Centre for Life on November 19th and we are looking at the possibility of a Science event also at the Centre for Life in March.

Thank you for all your support over the last three years and I hope you will continue to support my successor, Joyce.

John Leiper

Important Notice!

The Regional Meeting scheduled for Wednesday 27th January 2010 **will not** be held at the Angel Inn.

Details of the venue and content should be available at the October meeting.

In with the new ...



Wow, what a start to becoming a new Trustee!

The Conference and AGM were fantastic, one of the best I have been to. Many excellent speakers talking about the problems of ageing and how to deal with them. The one thing I did learn from the speakers is that we are all in the U3A doing exactly what these eminent people say we should do... eat healthily, exercise, get out, help others and use your brain. Yes, using your brain is one of the most important, more or less a case of 'if you don't use it, lose it'!

It was lovely to see so many members from the Northumbria Region at the conference and a big thank you to all those people who came and congratulated me on becoming your new Trustee. I am entering into this role with a bit of fear and trepidation. I know this will be an exciting phase of my life but as I feel the U3A (particularly my own in Wooler) is more an extension of my family I am sure I will receive a lot of support from you all. I am in a better position than any of the other new Trustees in as much as I am going to get the help and support of the previous Trustee at close quarters in John on an 'in house' basis, which is more than any other Trustee is going to have!

I have my first induction meeting on the 7th October when the four new Trustees, new Chairman, Ian Searle, and the present Trustees will be meeting. I will keep you posted.

Joyce Watts



SPEAKERS UNLIMITED-NORTHEAST was unfortunately stillborn. For legal reasons we are unable to use this name for the website domain and so the launch has been delayed.

Anyone trying to find it pre-launch will have found themselves guided to Washington U3A Newsletter for some unknown reason!

I have found it necessary to buy a domain that is truly unique and have registered **NORTHEASTSPEAKERSEEKERS**-- quite a tongue twister! That is how we shall appear in the near future as soon as possible. Thank you for your patience. We look forward to your co-operation.

Syd Slawther

WHITLEY BAY solves a mystery ...



"It sounded too good to be true!! A full day mystery tour by bus for £2:50? This was the offer taken up by 50 members and friends of Whitley Bay U3A. The trip was organised by committee member Neil Cockburn who has a PCV licence and access to a 1960 former London Transport Routemaster double decker bus. We embarked on a journey into rural Northumberland, stopping for coffee and again for lunch at two well known garden centres. The afternoon was spent travelling further north, up the A1 to Felton, returning for an afternoon comfort stop at Newbiggin-by-the-Sea. The sun had disappeared by this time, however, a pleasant stroll along the promenade was still possible, observing 'The Couple', a statue erected in the bay. The 'tourists' returned along the coastal road to Whitley Bay and Tynemouth, getting back home in time for tea. Everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable day, no doubt bringing back many childhood memories of 'open rear platform' buses. A request has already been made to do it all again soon!!

WESSINGTON U3A in Washington

Thank you for the welcome you gave us, as the new kids on the block, in the last newsletter.

Our membership is gradually increasing each month. We may be lacking in numbers in comparison to other U3As but certainly not in enthusiasm. We have currently got 5 groups started e.g. History, Lunch, Reading, Theatre and Health & Well-being, we also hope to start a walking group soon. All groups are well attended and thoroughly enjoyed.

We welcome any visitors to our meetings on the third Monday of the month at the North Biddick Social Club which has a very pleasant and comfortable atmosphere.

Norma Harrison



A good read ...

"Dreams From My Father" by Barack Obama comes highly recommended - an autobiography of the President's life until he went to Harvard - gives a different perspective into life for Kenyans and their relationship with the colonists.

"Wedlock" by Wendy Moore - the story of Mary Eleanor Bowes, ancestor of the John Bowes who started the Museum, is an intriguing social history, much of it set

in Northumbria and at Glamis where the Lyon connection came from to give the late Queen Mum the name Bowes-Lyon.

On The Trail Of The Yetholm Gypsy

The old and the new can get on extremely well together - as Wooler U3A discovered when they took a field trip (quite literally) out to Tiptoe Farm in Cornhill, Northumberland to find out about heritage potatoes.

Seated aboard bales of straw on a trailer sedately pulled by a tractor, they visited the fields where potato varieties such as Pink Fir Apple, Shetland Black and Salad Blue, grow side by side with Ratte, Arun Victory and Sharpes Express.

Lucy and Anthony Carroll, who own the farm, decided several years ago that there was a market for the forgotten delights of the tasty old potato varieties which had lost favour with modern farmers because of their comparatively smaller yield.

Local chefs have been quick to snap up their produce and they are also supplying several stores and a couple of northern farmers markets as well as running a mail order business.



As well as the delightfully named Mr Little's Yetholm Gypsy, a variety originating in the Border town of Yetholm which is famous for its connection with local gypsy families, there is a Highland Burgundy Red with a red coloured flesh and Salad Blue - true to its name right through.

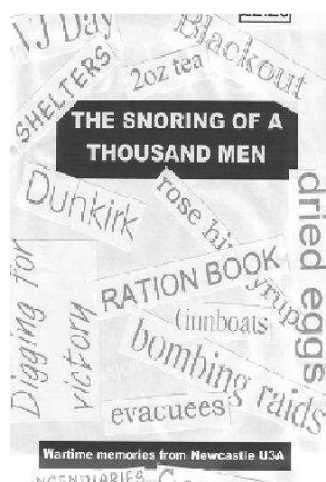
But while the produce might hark back to earlier times, the methods of production are definitely 21st century. Metre long probes, sunk into the ground, relay information about how wet the soil is at various depths to a satellite. Staff then consult a computer each day to find out exactly how much water is needed to get maximum growth while conserving precious water supplies.

It's all part of the way the farm is managed to maintain harmony between environmental needs and food production. Tiptoe Farm belongs to an organisation called LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), which promotes the best of the traditional farming methods alongside new technology so that farmers can maintain the highest standards of food production with the minimum impact on the environment.

LEAF farms are also usually willing to show groups around their farm, so **if there's a LEAF farm near your U3A we can recommend a visit.**

Wooler U3A

WARTIME MEMORIES ARE A HIT



The book of childhood memories of members of Newcastle U3A was a sell-out at its launch on September 18.

Over 60 people attended a very special coffee morning brilliantly organised by Sandra Davison. Some were dressed in 1940s clothes (lent by the People's Theatre costume collection). The Discovery Museum Archives brought an evacuee's suitcase, complete with gas mask and teddy bear. Two people (in military uniforms) from the NE Centre for Life-long Learning had a very impressive array of wartime memorabilia, including machine-gun bullet strips, tin hats, ration books, ID cards and scores of pictures. A video of wartime events – such as incendiaries and dancing – was screened. Refreshments included cakes, spam sandwiches and tarts home-made to wartime recipes. People sang wartime songs around the piano. Altogether it was a memorable and memory-rich event.

The book itself was introduced by its editor, Ruth Lesser, who read short extracts from Fay Weldon's Foreword to it. She then invited many of the 27 co-authors present to sign a copy to be sent to Fay as an acknowledgement of her generosity in praising what she has called an important, vivid and moving book.

The Newcastle Evening Chronicle featured the book and the event, with photographs, in its September 19 issue. One of the co-authors has already spoken about her memories from the book in a programme with Michael Aspel on the BBC (see www.bbc.co.uk/irenetaylor).

The book is currently being reprinted. It will be on sale at Newcastle's Central Library from October 1, Older People's Day. It can also be obtained direct from Newcastle U3A, Unit 3, 1 Pink Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5DW for £5 including postage.

Regional Recorder Workshop

Ponteland, Northallerton and Wooler recorder groups attended a workshop in Ponteland on 4th July 2009.



The groups were led by an experienced conductor and recorder player, John Hawkes. He was able to keep us together and gave us valuable tips about technique. We had all prepared most of the pieces beforehand and also each group made solo performances of two pieces. I know my group, Wooler, were a bit nervous that maybe we wouldn't be good enough, but in fact the balance was very good. When John wondered why some of us weren't playing, our excuse was we hadn't seen the music. No problem, just play the notes you can play!

We all enjoyed the workshop so much that we are hoping we can have another next year.

Joyce Watts, Wooler

Are there any other recorder groups in the region who would like to take part?
Contact any of the three groups mentioned above.

Remember the name Lynne Corner? "Years Ahead"?
This could be for you

Institute of Ageing & Health : Ageing & Vitality : Newcastle University

Design for All Ages

from gadgets to packaging

A STUDY DAY FOR NORTHUMBRIA REGION U3A

on Thursday November 19th 2009

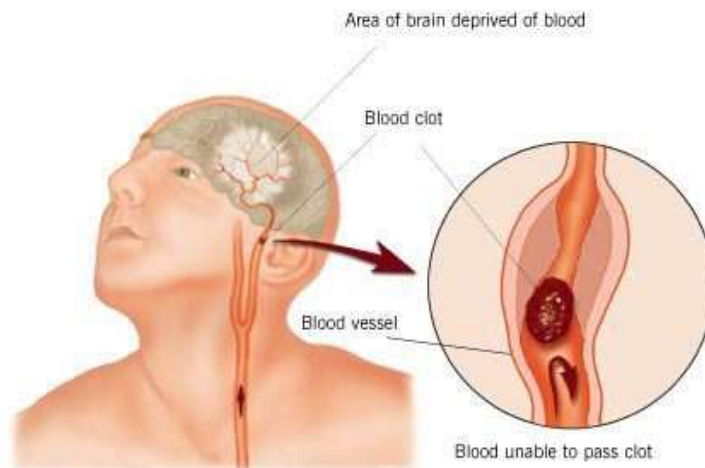
to be held in the

CENTRE FOR LIFE, NEWCASTLE

from 10am for 10.30 to 2.30pm

All enquiries to: John Lloyd 38 The Mowbray, Borough Road, Sunderland, SR1 1PS
tel: 0191 567 4484 e.mail johnlloyd73@hotmail.com

Blood Clots/Stroke – **Would YOU recognise the symptoms?**



If a neurologist can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours we are told he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke ... totally. The trick is getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed, and then getting the patient medically cared for within 3 hours.

Would **YOU** recognise the symptoms?

A bystander can recognize a stroke by asking **FOUR** simple questions.

S T A R T

- **S** **SMILE** - Ask the individual to smile? Is the mouth crooked?
- **T** **TONGUE** - Ask the person to 'stick' out their tongue.
If it's 'crooked' or goes to one side or the other, that is a sign.
- **AR** **ARMS** - ask the person to **RAISE** both arms together.
Are they symmetrical?
- **T** **TALK** - Ask the person to talk - to repeat a simple sentence, coherently. Is the voice slurred?

IF HE OR SHE HAS TROUBLE WITH ANY ONE OF THESE TASKS,
CALL THE EMERGENCY NUMBER IMMEDIATELY AND
DESCRIBE THE SYMPTOMS.

This is a shortened form of an email which was circulating recently. It sounds helpful.

Editor

Education and Development

Teach me something Today I will Teach you something Tomorrow

Why we have Awareness Days

To give an opportunity for all members to meet members from other Northumbria U3As, to ask and answer questions of

- those in new U3As
- new members in established U3As
- those who have been members for some time.

Most importantly come along to communicate your expectations of U3A and make new friends. It is hoped that all who attend will join in discussion, questions and answers.

There is no charge for Awareness Days

The following will be covered - Misconceptions -that each U3A is a club or a branch, is autonomous and that there is an age limit, etc.

What do you get for your membership fee and for your capitation fee?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| ▪ | From your U3A |
| ▪ | From The Third Age Trust |

Some things explained-insurance, money handling, support available, etc

The actual format of the day depends on the numbers attending. Absolute limit is 30. If there is interest it may be possible to hold another Awareness Day in the centre or north of the region in the very near future. Marley Hill is a possibility (it has good facilities including parking!) Bedale, is already being considered by Joyce as a possible venue for the south of the region.

Ask the EDCs for more details

Margaret Minns, EDC 0191 4143924 email: Mitzi200@supanet.com

Joyce Mckay, EDC 01677450491 email: jcmckay1@btinternet.com

Awareness Day
for Morpeth, Mid Northumberland and Ashington U3As
in the Methodist Church Hall, Howard Street, Morpeth
on October 5th.

Arranged and hosted by Morpeth U3A
Welcome and introduction by Joyce Wat's
Led by Margaret Minns

Now fully booked

RYTON AND DISTRICT celebrate 10th anniversary

This summer we are celebrating ten years since the idea of a new branch was discussed by a few people sitting in a pleasant summer garden in Ryton. We now have over one hundred members and a good range of groups especially designed to suit the interests of members, including thriving indoor bowls, art, crafts, reading, history music games, walking and visits to places of interest. We recently joined other North-East Regional members at the new Newcastle Library for an afternoon of talks. We also have monthly talks and coffee mornings. Our meetings are mainly held at the Ryton, Crawcrook and District Youth Centre and at the Library in Crawcrook or out and about. These venues are ideally situated for us.

To celebrate our anniversary we have advertised our activities resulting in some new members; had a Branch Outing to Nidd Hall, and the Council have incorporated our Logo into one of the flowerbeds in Ferndene Park.

Our next special event will be our Open Afternoon on the 21st October, where we will give a warm welcome to all visitors. With refreshments, craft stalls and plenty of information about the U3A. There is a very pleasant welcoming atmosphere in all our groups.

Jean Jongman

Dates for your diary

5th October	Awareness Day at Morpeth - now fully booked
17th October	Choir Practice - see page 4
21st October	Open Afternoon at Ryton & District - see above
2nd November	Study Day at Bowes Museum - waiting list only now
19th November	Design for All Ages at the Centre for Life - see page 13
12th December	<u>Absolute</u> deadline for entries for the next "Messenger" Pg 2
27th January 2010	Regional Meeting - venue and details to be announced
12th-21st March	ScienceFest at Centre for Life - see page 5
17th March	Science Day at Centre for Life - see page 5

...from page 3

The issue of the role & remit of Regional Committees was raised the last Regional Meeting. The following questions/concerns have been posed by Guisborough U3A & we look forward to the debate arising from these, and others, on the day (& extending this to our Google group and the meeting with NEC members):

1. What function does The Third Age Trust expect Northumbria Regional U3A to fulfil?
2. Do we see the meetings as fulfilling other functions in addition to those of The Third Age Trust, e.g. to mandate U3As to take a particular line on local and national issues?
3. Based on answers to the above who should attend NRU3A meetings e.g. nominees of constituent U3As; others who wish to attend?

We look forward to seeing you and/or your Regional Representative at the next Regional Meeting on Wednesday October 28th 10.00 for 10.30 am at The Angel View Inn, Gateshead.

Finally, my thanks to Sandy Hood, our Editor, and to you our contributors, for such an interesting magazine.

Best wishes, *Marion Whyte*, Northumbria Region U3A Chairman