

Northumbria Messenger

July 2011



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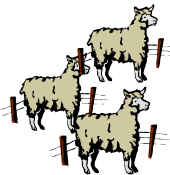
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U3A Northumbria Region

Committee - Elected at the AGM in April 2011 was as follows:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Person Elected</u>	<u>Email address</u>
Chairman	John Leiper	lorbottle@tiscali.co.uk
Vice-Chairman	Brian Stephenson	bsteph316@aol.com
Business & Distribution Sec.	Barbara Herring	barbara@sdit/co.uk
Treasurer	Maureen Stephenson	Mesteph7@aol.com
Minutes Secretary	Maggie Grocott	mad36g@aol.com

Ex Officio

Regional Trustee	Joyce Watts	joyce.lorbottle@tiscali.co.uk
Educ. & Development Contacts	Margaret Minns	wwu3a@hotmail.com
	Joyce McKay	jmcmckay1@btinternet.com
Newsletter Editor	Sandy Hood	regnewseditor@gmail.com
Contact List & Website Editor	Mo Morgan	regionalu3alist@btinternet.com

Committee Members

	Anne Finn	annefinn@blueyonder.co.uk
	Derek Grocott	mad36g@aol.com
	Pat Penney	patpenney@btinternet.com

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Sub Committee members - at the time of going to press - (email addresses are above)

Development:

Margaret Minns,	Joyce McKay	Brian Stephenson
Maureen Stephenson	Joyce Watts	John Leiper

Events:

Chaired by John Lloyd (johnlloyd73@hotmail.com)	with	
John Leiper	Joyce Watts	Sandy Hood

Help would be much appreciated. If you would like to work with either of these sub committees please get in touch with a member of that committee.

Regional Chairman's Report June 2011

Well, we have finally managed it! We ran our first Residential School at Durham University during April and from the feedback we received it would appear to have been a great success. If there was a disappointment it was that there were only eighteen people from the Region who attended. The rest of the fifty eight were from all over the country from as far as Cornwall, London, the South Coast, East Anglia, Wales and Scotland. I have to thank the National Office for distributing details nationally and Francis Beckett for all the plugs he gave us in the last three issues of *U3A News*. Of course I would also like to thank the Regional Committee for their support in this endeavour and also the Events Sub Committee for all the hard work they put in.

On the subject of events there are details of all the future events elsewhere in this issue and I hope you will give them all the support that they deserve. Many of you attended the Science Days that we held last year at the Centre for Life in Newcastle. You may also remember that there was a Mini Medical School which took place over six weeks. Although the feedback from that was that the lectures were excellent, having to attend one afternoon a week for six weeks was a disadvantage. We are now discussing another Mini Medical Course with Newcastle University and the Centre for Life and as a result of last years experience the plan is to run a new version on just one day with probably four lectures and plenty of time for questions and even some practical work! We are looking at a date in November and we hope to have more details in time for the next Regional Meeting on Wednesday July 27th. The cost will probably be similar to the previous events at around £10 but this is to be confirmed.

Talking of November please do not forget that we have our next joint Regional Meeting with the Third Age Trust on the 17th at the Memorial Hall in Ponteland at which Francis Beckett, Editor of *U3A News* and Elizabeth Gibson, Resource Centre Manager are due to attend. You will need to book your places at this meeting with our Secretary, Barbara Herring barbara@sdlit.co.uk.

I am delighted at the fact that we have new blood on our committee and that people have been attending Awareness days for the Development Sub Committee and the Events Sub Committee. If anyone else wants to join in let me know.

I hope to see many of you at the forthcoming National Conference and AGM in September at Nottingham.

Finally I would like to extend my best wishes to Sandy Hood who is recovering from an operation and does such a splendid job in producing the *Messenger*.

John Leiper, Chairman

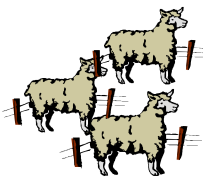
**Washington Heritage Day is
on Saturday 17th September
held at 'F' Pit at Concord in Washington**

for more details contact Wessington U3A normaharrison@yahoo.co.uk
or Margaret Welsh on 0191 417 6286

The road to nowhere ...

The visitor centre at Bellingham was really worthwhile, helpfully directing us to places of reiving interest and, in itself, acting as a little museum for the town.

We went out to see a ruined bastle* (although I found the climb to it pretty lonely!) at Black Middens where Margaret Trewick took an explicit photograph of a black midden. Trying to leave we took a road which went literally nowhere, ending up at The Gate Across The Road, beyond which there was just a farm track. We did 3-pointers across the extremely narrow ribbon of asphalt which had on one side a pretty steep drop to the bottom of the valley and on the other a continuation of the hillside with extrusions of rock at bumper level.



The larger of our two vehicles did well while I had the easy job in my covered skateboard, but that was not the end of it. A good many sheep and an even greater number of skittish lambs decided not to wait for the abattoir lorry, thinking it would be quicker under the wheels of our cars, so to that end they galloped for miles just two inches in front of our radiators. Finally we arrived at The First and Last Cafe which had some cup and ring carvings next to it plus the Saxon roundhouse built inside the footprint of a Roman fort.

After lunch at the Redesdale Inn we returned to the site and discovered that it was inaccessible, having been closed about 5



years. However, the café proprietor invited us to use the back door, so two of us clambered around the completely virgin rocks before the café proprietor told us the site was entirely "reconstructed" anyway. The good part of all this being that his rescue dog was an extremely likable Alsatian who submitted with grace and charm to our attentions.

The next two History Trails visits will be to the border area in an effort to find some authentic artefacts and fill in some genuine history - watch this space.

Lin Hardiman, Ashington

* If, like the editor, you thought this was a typing or spelling error - look it up!

Bookings now!



Regional Choral Workshop

Saturday, 24th March 2012

Tutor - Simon Fidler

Venue - St Mary's Church Hall, Ponteland

Duration - 10.00 am until 4.00 pm

Cost - £12.00 per person.

Please bring your own lunch - tea and coffee provided.

For more details contact Brian Prickett, Regional Choirmaster
e-mail: brpandajp@talktalk.net tel: 01661 825129

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Music will be made available in the autumn for choirs to copy. This will help to make the event more enjoyable as singers will have had an opportunity to study the pieces to be worked on during the workshop.

Would choirs and singers please let Brian know in the near future the number likely to attend.



Reading recommendations:

Shipwrecks by Akira Yoshimura (from Stockton's Literary Study Day)

The Road Home by Rose Tremain (London through the eyes of a legal immigrant)

Beautiful Girl by Rachel Simon (a Castlebeck parallel in America maybe?)

A History of Jerusalem by Simon Montefiore (Non-fiction- a biography of the city)

Not on My Patch, Lad – (and others) by Mike Pannett (Tales of a Yorkshire bobby)

The Long Song by Andrea Levy (set in Jamaica when the slaves were freed)

Behind the Scenes in the Museum, by Kate Atkinson (not what you might think!)

The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak (WWII as seen by residents near Munich)

The Help by Kathryn Stockett (tales from black maids in Southern USA c1963)

How to be inspired in two days

In April, some 60 U3A members from around the country took the opportunity to study science at Durham University, and it certainly was a privilege. This was quite a new departure for the non-scientists among us, and incidentally, the majority of us were female, which may not have been expected.

Our lecturers included a professor and several Doctors of Science, all of whom made their subject really accessible to our various levels of knowledge, with genuine enthusiasm without being too technical. They answered our questions with patience, showing appropriate illustrations, demonstrations, and excellent samples, which added to the intrinsic interest of their talks. In the two days we learned some fascinating facts, were treated to an evening lecture on GM foods and were also entertained one evening with some delightful classical music by the talented Cobweb Strings.



The study subjects we were able to choose from were:-

- Earth Science - rocks and fossils
- Oceanography - the creation of the sea floor
- Biology - the study of life
- Astronomy - the solar system and beyond
- Particle Physics - the quantum world within atoms

We even watched a live transmission from the current research work at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Switzerland.



Collingwood College provided very acceptable accommodation for us, being situated within the beautiful Botanic Garden "next door" - a must to see, with many examples of trees and plants from around the world and pleasant surprises in various corners.

Our grateful thanks must go to John Leiper of U3A Northumbria Region and his associates, for their efforts in organising such an enjoyable event. They even managed to fit in an optional field trip on the final day. Many thanks also go to Pete Edwards and colleagues of the University Departments of Physics, Earth Sciences and Biology, for their valuable time and expertise.



It was indeed an *inspiring* two days, in fact I was so keen to learn more that I bought several books on particle physics, quantum theory and the universe in order to find out more!

The U3A certainly educates, if this was an example!

Toni Harris, Stockton



Invitation to

Alnwick's July Meeting

As we hold our monthly meetings in school premises, which close during the summer, it has become the practice that our July meeting takes the form of an 'away day'.

We choose a base somewhere not too far away and arrange a variety of informal activities appropriate to the area, e.g. walks, painting, local history, geology, architecture and bird watching. We also have on hand a supply of outdoor and indoor games - the latter in case it rains - and, a couple of years ago, we added a photographic competition to the list. Our members know that they can meet at the base at certain times of the day for morning coffee, a picnic lunch and afternoon tea, and there is always someone there with information about what is happening.



Our base is the sports pavilion in Rothbury on Thursday

21st July. If members of other U3As would like to join us at any time during the day, you will be very welcome. Just turn up or, if you would like more details, please contact our regional representatives:

Maureen Stephenson 01665 575552 mesteph7@aol.com or

Joan Johnson 01665 830944 jayajohnson@tiscali.co.uk

Bookings now!

Alnwick Castle and Garden Event



At the time of going to press, there are still places on most workshops for the study day **on 29th September**. Although it would be ideal to have bookings channelled through one contact person in each U3A, I don't mind taking individual bookings. If you would like details and a form, please contact me on 01665 575552 or email mesteph7@aol.com

Maureen Stephenson

Are U3As ignoring their reason for being?

I am concerned about the direction that U3A is taking, where it seems that growth is being seen as the same as development and where quantity is seen as the same as quality.

The effect of this is that we are moving further away from the philosophy and ethos of our founders. Peter Laslett one of the founders clearly spelt out what the U3A movement was all about. Fundamentally, we are an educational co-operative where all involved take part in the process of educating and being educated through the sharing with other members our skills and knowledge. He said other things about being independent and about not taking money from anyone else, so that our independence could be maintained. Some thirty years later what do we have? New U3As starting up with precious little reference to our principles, and members joining who have no intentions of doing anything but sit on their backsides and be done to by a few active members. One of the greatest problems we face is how to involve the membership at almost all levels.

I suggest that, if all new U3As were aware of what we existed to do, and all members were fully aware of what the responsibilities were of joining U3A, and that everyone had consciously signed up to these responsibilities, then getting involvement wouldn't be a problem, but a natural part of being a U3A member. And if that means that some people would be put off from joining because they did not want that commitment, then so be it. I would rather have a U3A of fifty members, all active and playing their part, than 250 members where 200 members contribute nothing but their subscriptions and sit passively waiting for others to organise things for them. We need to state some things clearly. U3A is not an organisation to organise classes for people to attend, nor does it exist to create a social get-together. You don't join a French Group or a Walking Group - you join the U3A - and this is far too often forgotten. Certainly, there is a fantastic social aspect to the U3A, but that is not a purpose for our existence, it is an off-shoot.

Years ago I attended a national AGM and heard a member of a U3A say, 'All our classes are organised using external, paid tutors'. When I challenged this I was firmly told, 'We are retired, we're too busy with other things to take classes, we can afford to pay tutors, so why not?' Why not indeed, if that's what a group of people choose to do? Good luck to them, but don't pretend that you're a U3A, because you're not. I will accept that that example is at the extreme end of what can happen but I believe that there are many U3As at that end of the spectrum. Then I hear one of the saddest statements that a U3A can make. 'We would like to do this, that or the other, but we can't get a grant.' Why do we need grants? Surely we are capable of raising our own funds or even doing without.

What Peter Laslett spelt out for us was a unique vision. Why do we insist on dumbing it down so that we can grow more quickly? We have plenty of examples of how we could finish up. The Pre-school Playgroup movement starting as a wonderful concept of parents helping other parents. Look at it now, an arm of the educational establishment, subject to Ofsted inspections, governed by regulations that make the organisers paid and qualified and too often parents kept standing at the door. An adult Education Service, once a wonderful opportunity for people to learn and acquire new skills, is now priced out of the market and subject to regulations, insisting that every course must have a qualification attached and linked to the jobs market. It's not impossible to see U3A taking on aspects of both catastrophes, especially if we keep on thinking that building relationships with government is a good thing, especially if we can get some funding from them. Do we really want a situation where we are told, 'I'm sorry but your tutors really have to get a qualification to tutor, and if we're going to give you money we really do have to inspect you so that we can be sure that we are spending the taxpayers money correctly'? We're not there yet and we will need to fight to make sure that we never are. And it's keeping to our principles of independence and self help that will protect us.

It could be argued that all organisations develop and move on and I would agree, but let us make sure that the development is thought out, agreed by the membership at all stages and always related to our first principles. Ignore or change those principles and we become something different.

We are a wonderful movement. Let's not throw our uniqueness away so that we can force growth. We don't need growth targets. We just need to keep on doing what we're doing, making sure we're not watering down our philosophy, in order to become something we are not.

If some of the readers of this are getting angry with me and saying 'who's this fellow Peter Laslett?' then I'm glad. My point will be proven.

Brian Stephenson

(speaking only for myself,
certainly not Morpeth U3A,
of which I am proud to be a member)

Three-quarters of the U3As in the Region have not contributed anything to this publication. Do they prove Brian's point? Your comments please to the editor - or to Brian direct.

One thing lead to another

As reported last month, Ponteland U3A published their book of 'Wartime Memories' with stories of their experiences in the war from 28 members. The stories ranged from service in the forces and being evacuated to being bombed out of home and covered many parts of the UK and also life in Dublin. Year 9 at a local middle school, studying the Second World War as part of their history syllabus, subsequently purchased several copies. And so ...



In April four members who had contributed to the book were asked to visit the school for an afternoon to talk to the children. We saw some of their work and a display of memorabilia including wartime recipes, ration books, gas masks and photographs. The children had all prepared questions to ask us and came in groups of about twenty and quizzed one of the four. This session lasted about half an hour and was followed by two more. This meant during a fairly hectic afternoon between us we talked to over 200 children. The questions they asked were many and varied and included several about being evacuated, what school was like then, what toys we had, what we ate and what food we missed? Service based questions included what plane did you fly and where did you go? A more unusual one was 'did you meet Hitler?'

At the end of the afternoon the children and staff thanked us, and staff expressed a hope that this could happen again next year.



Our book is available by post at £6-50p
from Leslie Almond 196 Western Way Ponteland NE20 9NB

Janet McCann (for Leslie and Kathleen Almond and June Nesbit)



10 years on South Tyneside

Celebrations to mark our tenth anniversary began in February with a dinner in the Sea Hotel. A gala Garden Party is planned for July 19th to mark the anniversary day itself and August sees us sailing up the river entertained by a jazz band. A social evening in November will end the year on a high note.



An **exhibition** will be mounted in the Stairwell Gallery of South Shields Museum from **4th June to 10th September** 2011 entitled "**Fun, Friendship and Learning**" This exhibition celebrates South Tyneside U3A's achievements over the last ten exciting years.

With a membership of 370, over 35 interest groups and 150 plus people on our waiting list, the future of South Tyneside U3A seems secure.

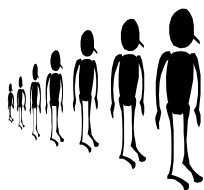
Eric Makepeace, South Tyneside

Learning aplenty with FAGS & WAGS



Membership of Mid Northumberland U3A has now reached 148 spread across over twenty groups with the branch based at Longhirst near Morpeth in Norm where amongst other things we've heard about Red Kites, Quakers and Across Africa with the Princes. After the hols we'll have Uncle Joe' (Stalin) and Ladies Billiards amongst items on the menu.

Whilst the **Historians** have moved from 'Revolution' to 'Spain' for their in-depth research, the **Local Historians** have left the winter lecture room for the Newcastle Discovery Museum Film Archives; well worth a trip; and a trip to Bamburgh castle and the Grace Darling Museum.



Still outdoors the two **walking** groups (3 and 5/7 miles) continue to take the air as do the **Natural Historians** who've seen Red Kites on Derwentside whilst the **Travel** and Walkers will be savouring the Yorkshire Dales in the autumn.

Staying in Yorkshire, the **Gardening** Group will be winding up their season at Harlow Carr gardens at Harrogate and at Helmsley.



Gastronomically, the **FAGs** (Food Appreciation Group) were impressed by the Masterchef finalist Duke of Wellington at Newton, near Corbridge and it's been a vintage time for the **WAGs** (Wine Appreciation Group)

Philosophy and Genealogy thrive whilst the **Artists** have been to many local exhibitions.

Theatregoers have either reported back from afar (eg London, West Yorkshire Playhouse) or accompanied each other locally, likewise the Cinema buffs.

The Social Group now has over 20 dropping in for coffee, making contacts, gaining confidence and meeting people and, indeed developing a **Crafts** group from within its ranks.



Then there are the **Reading** Groups, with eclectic literary tastes. **Bridge** expands whilst the **Science and technologists** look at 'Magnetic Fields'



Four years down the line and now comes the test as some of the original coordinators look to step aside. Fingers crossed that the next generation are ready to come from within the ranks. Exciting times. Enjoy the summer.

Bob Crosby

Bookings now!



A Yorkshire Bobby brings his tales to a ...

Literary Lunch
Blackwell Grange Hotel, Darlington
Tuesday, 26th July
12 noon for 12.30pm

Guest speaker: Mike Pannett

Bestselling author of "Not on My Patch Lad" and others

£15.00

Please book through one person in your U3A

sandyu3a@gmail.com : tel. 01325 384496

Cheques should be made payable to *Northumbria Region U3A* and sent to Sandy Hood at 4 Glenfield Road, Darlington, DL3 8DZ

Bookings now!

Stockton U3A celebrates its 25th anniversary

a one-day event at the Stockton Campus of Durham University

on 5 July, 2011 - 10am-4pm

Main speaker is Chris Mullin

The former MP and respected parliamentarian will be speaking about his years in the House of Commons with reference to his acclaimed diaries 'A View from the Foothills' and 'Decline and Fall'.

Robert Cooper will give a presentation '**Song of the Tees**' - a celebration of the river's life in photographs, words, and music.

Barry Keane's dramatic presentation '**Never Too Old to Learn**' is an entertaining look at ageing and learning.

In addition there will be displays showing activities through the years.

Members from U3As in the region will be particularly welcome.
Come and join in our celebration!

The cost is £22.50 including lunch.



For further information and programmes contact Sheila Sargent.
Telephone 01642 601843 or email stocktonu3a@hotmail.com



Reality Viewing ...

Log on to <http://www.machaven.co.uk/birdingU3A> for a human eye view of what the birds have been up to this spring.

Teesdale U3A member, John Howard, has combined his technological expertise with camera and computer and his interest in birdwatching, to launch a website dedicated to the lives of Teesdale locals. This spring we have been able to follow the fortunes of the hard working Nuthatch Family.

The story began in early spring with a turf war between the Nuthatch and a Great Tit over a des res nestbox in John's garden. Demonstrating that brains can overcome brawn, the Nuthatches held the competitor at bay whilst they customised the nestbox entrance to exclude the slightly larger contender.

Clips of film take up the story charting their progress, from the resizing of the nest box, through the days of dedicated feeding of the brood, right up to the fledging and flight of the kids.

For nuthatch viewing go to the Garden and Woodland bird page.

It takes hours of filming, editing and uploading to produce these condensed snippets of avian action but John's interest and dedication gives a brilliant dimension to our birdwatching activities. Birdwatching beginners get the opportunity to absorb the plumage and jizz of a range of species so that when they are "in the field" their ID skills are greatly enhanced after having watched the clips instead of relying on books. Those who can no longer get out and about so easily can enjoy Armchair Birding. The rest of us enjoy the footage and marvel at John's patience. Over to John.

A lot of the clips are from my own front & back garden. The others have been taken whilst out with the Teesdale U3A Birding group or by me going back to places we have visited, the exception being our many local birding areas.

The filming is done via one of 3 methods all of which are on a tripod.

1. A smallish Sony camcorder.
2. A pocket camera that has a movie program then through a telescope, this is called digiscoping.
3. My main camera is a Canon XL1 min DV.



Once the footage has been shot I then edit out much more than is left in. This is for two reasons, the first being the incidental footage where I cannot find what I'm looking for or whilst adjusting the viewfinder etc. Secondly people's concentration span when watching film clips, I try to keep mine to under 3 mins.

The finished clip is then converted to a size suitable for U Tube and uploaded. The relevant links are created within the web site on the Mac. The main site is then updated on the server. Once I'm happy all is working well an email is sent to all those people who have asked me to keep them informed of updates.

Should anyone reading this have any interesting things happening or birds in their garden or area they would like me to look at, or need help in doing something similar please contact me initially through birdingu3a@gmail.com

Introducing Bedale

Bedale is a small Market Town known as the 'Gateway to the Dales'. Our group was started in 2009 and was an immediate success with about 40 people attending the first meeting.

Val and I volunteered to be Speaker Finders (What is it that they say - never volunteer for anything!) It is sometimes quite difficult to find speakers who will appeal to both men and women. Other societies have been very helpful passing suggestions on. We have had a variety of speakers including a man from The Donkey Sanctuary, an interesting talk on Whitby Jet, the local Police and two we were not quite sure about the titles being ' Acid Faced Virgins' and 'What we Found in Auntie's Drawers' one turned out to be about libraries and the other interesting articles found in a chest of drawers whilst cleaning a house out! Both were very amusing.



At the Christmas meeting we were asked to provide some kind of entertainment. Various members took part including our Singing for Pleasure Group who gave a rousing performance of Christmas carols, everyone singing so much better after a glass of delicious mulled wine. One of our talented members, David Reekie, gave a hilarious rendering of Stanley Holloway's musical monologues. Val and I (Val's idea) then gave our version of 'Give us a Clue' dashing around the floor trying to portray 'Nuns on the Run', 'Top Gun' and 'Ben Hur' to name but a few - seemed to go down rather well, much hilarity and a request to perform at a local nursing Home!

Our U3A has a wide variety of groups for people to be involved with including Art, Bridge, Computers, Country Dance, Family History, French, History, **Latin**, Listening to Music, Lunch Group, Needlecrafts, Photography, **Railway Interest** Group, Readers Group, Social Outings, Walking Groups. - something for everyone!



In July we are holding a Car Boot Sale one of our Fund Raising events, we are also having an outing to Saltaire Mill.

We have an excellent and hard working committee guided by our enthusiastic Chair Woman Beryl Pemberton.

Our first two years have been well supported by the local community and we hope that we will go from strength to strength and that we will continue to bring shared learning experiences in a wide range of interests and that many new friendships will be formed.

Sheila Bowe and Val Howitt - Speaker Finders for Bedale and District

Trustee's Report June 2011

I am pleased to say that at last we have now received the third tranche of our funds from the Third Age Trust. Hopefully after sending in our budget requirements we will get the first tranche for year 2011/12. Also the cost of the PA system which we purchased. This was to be originally funded by ourselves but purely by chance I heard that the TAT would pay for this. I have to say I was quite surprised (and delighted). However I have been told that the one we purchased (which, after a lot of research by Brian was thought to be the best one for our purpose) was rather more expensive than they thought it would be as there has been another region that has purchased one cheaper. I explained to Terry (and he agreed) that the one we used at Darlington was not suitable. The result of all this is that we should/have received the cost of this machine which is approximately £900 but there was to be a stipulation that it is the property of the TAT and can be used by anyone outside our region who wishes to use it. I doubt if this will happen but as long as they want to collect it and bring it back I don't see that that is a problem.

I went to London in May for a Start Up Day with other Trustees. There were five Trustees, of whom we were one, who did not want the Educational Development Officer to come to the region. It has been agreed that Carole Millin and Zazzia Pratt will continue to do start ups with the other regions. The Trustee would be responsible for start ups of new U3As and a form would have to be signed by the Trustee to signify that the new U3A had been through all the necessary documentation.

I notice there are some changes in committees recently and wondered if you had remembered to inform National Office of your changes.

The Laing John Martin Exhibition which was so successful in our Region is moving to Sheffield in June and I passed Dr. Barbara Morden's details to the Yorkshire and Humber Region Trustee and hopefully Sheffield U3A will promote a similar event to ours. It is then going on to The Tate in London and hopefully Barbara can do the same for London Region U3As.

I attended a very well organised Literary Day at Stockton in May. It was supported by quite a few U3As from the Region and as it was so successful hopefully will be repeated in the future. This was all done for a mere £5 and represented extremely good value.

Remember the AGM in September. There are five interesting speakers and lots of discussion groups. It is a good opportunity to meet with other members from all over the country and to get more ideas for your U3A.

Joyce Watts, Regional Trustee

Exclusive offer for U3A members!

Tynedale U3A has a very active MUSEUM VISITS group. We had planned to visit the Georgian Theatre Royal in Richmond, later this year on a study tour. Our convenor has worked professionally both in the theatre and as a museum director was doubly enthusiastic. The Theatre Royal is wonderful dating back to 1788 and still boasts the original stage and seating planyou can see for yourself on georgiantheatreroyal.co.uk Whilst making the arrangements the opportunity came up to attend a performance....so much better to see a live performance than view an empty space however beautiful.

Last year the theatre devised a period pantomime Mother Goose which was voted the best pantomime in Yorkshire. This year's offering will be Sinbad the Sailor. Talking to members of the Regional Events Committee it was suggested that other U3As would wish to join Tynedale in a special event in the south of our region. At the last regional meeting the delegates encouraged Tynedale to go ahead and book the entire theatre for an exclusively U3A performance. This our convenor has done booking all 210 seats at a special discount...in his own name! We do now need to ask individual U3As to suggest how many of their members would wish to join in the fun. So far Tynedale and Ponteland have provisionally asked for 70 seats. For the sake of Peter Lewis's sanity and bank balance we would be grateful if all other U3As would assess how many of their members would wish to come.



Georgian Theatre, Richmond, North Yorkshire Exclusive performance for U3A



THE ADVENTURES of SINBAD
Thursday 8th December 2011 at 7pm.
All tickets at the discounted price of £12.

No money required until September but tickets allocated on a first come first served basis. If you want the Royal Box speak now!

Options include: guided tour of the theatre pre performance
high tea in local restaurants/
visits to other local heritage attractions
- all dependent your wishes.

Please contact ASAP Peter Lewis
Tynedale U3A - Carstone, St George's Road, Hexham, NE46 2HG
e-mail carstone@waitrose.com

The Old Codger regrets ..

He has just returned from darkest Africa and is still suffering jet lag.

For once he has very little to say! While he was away with the big cats his co-workers enjoyed their freedom and have nothing new to report....yet.

Ed.

Listen, discuss, read and write ... study day



A Literature study day, hosted by Stockton U3A took place on May 18th at the URC, Alma Street, Stockton.

As we arrived we were welcomed with coffee or tea. Over 40 people attended, some from U3As outside Stockton.

Mary Cooper, the organiser, introduced the guest speaker, Stella Porter, who had travelled from Sussex. She seemed relaxed and put us at ease and laughing at her stories. She told how as a child in India she would hear stories being told, as story telling is a tradition there.

We then split into two groups for the morning workshops. The reading session was led by Kathryn Hobson; the book studied was "Shipwrecks" by Akira Yoshimura. The story telling was led by Stella Porter. This session showed how to create a five-minute story for adults with a punch line at the end. The break for lunch had us all saying how we had enjoyed the morning sessions.

The afternoon session on poetry was led by Jean Machell and Mary Cooper took creative writing. This made us use our imaginations and work hard. When the workshops were over, we all came together to discuss how the day had gone. The only complaints were not enough time in the sessions, and a wish to have been able to attend all four. People expressed how they had enjoyed the day, meeting people from other areas, and voted it a success.

Thanks were made to the four workshop leaders, with special thanks to the guest speaker and the organiser. It was a great day.

Clodagh Tranter, Stockton



Updates from the Education & Development team

START UP PLANNED FOR CONSETT AND DISTRICT

**Coffee Morning at Consett Methodist Church, Station Road Consett
10am- 12noon Saturday 2nd July.**

At the Coffee morning there will be displays, handouts, posters etc.
Anyone interested in displaying a poster in the area please get in touch.

**Consett Public Meeting Friday July 29th 2pm.
at Consett Methodist Church, Station Road, Consett.**

Members from the surrounding area are welcome to come along to either event to
share their enthusiasm for U3A

REGIONAL RESOURCES "CENTRES"

The following equipment is now available for loan by any U3A within the Region

- Notice boards (4)
- Banners (2) - floor standing, depicting activities in the Region
- Lap top computers (2)
- Projectors (2)
- Screens -
- Digital camera/camcorder (2)

Get in touch with the E & D Contact nearest you for more information:

Joyce McKay: 01677 450 494 is in Northallerton for those in the south

Margaret Minns: 0191 414 3924 is in Whickham, for those in the north

A SECOND AWARENESS DAY START UP

It has been suggested that another Awareness day for U3A start ups be held in
another part of the Region.

If anyone is interested in one being held in their area -
please contact Margaret or Joyce or anyone on the Development Committee.

Recommended speakers

Ashington U3A says that these speakers were so well received that they would like them to come again.



Talks with a Historical theme: e.g. Women at War; The Other Geordies - (in Australia); The Siege of Newcastle; Lord Armstrong of Craggside. £30 approx. Contact Mr Alan Fendley - 01669 620152. Alan is a member of Coquetdale U3A

Local History: e.g. Bessie Surtees Story; History of the Co-op Movement; A Day in Beamish Town; Tyneside in Print. 20-25 mile radius from Whickham. Contact Mr Bill Saunders 0191 488 2617 Charges approx £30.00.

Local Heritage: e.g. Mining Memories; Monkey Business at a Medieval Abbey; There's More To A Needle Than Meets The Eye. 30-mile radius from Cresswell, N'land. Charges approx. £30. Contact Mr Barry Mead - 01670 861180

Maritime History: From Berwick to Whitby, incl. whaling, naval history, Collingwood, history of ports, etc. Contact Mr Tony Barrow - 01665 576716. Charges £30 + travelling costs.

Beginner's Guide to the Universe: Dr. Pete Edwards, Department of Physics at Durham University. Comes highly recommended.

Dark Ages Re-Enactment: Paula Constantine, Tel. 01668 283438. It's not about battle re-enactment! She has a background of archaeological knowledge, and recreates artefacts from the time- e.g. clothing, jewellery, cooking equipment, utensils... based on this knowledge. She wore recreated garments (all handmade, woven and stitched by herself) and is going to do a craft workshop for us in October. Recommendation from Wooler U3A.

There are many other well received speakers mentioned in various articles in the Messenger. Do contact the relevant U3A to get details.

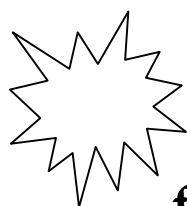
This page comes at the request of members at the last general meeting who find it difficult to find speakers for their meetings.

Most of those listed so far cover a small area in the middle of the region. Good speakers can be quite rare - so do share your finds with the rest of us. Details to the editor please. (Deadline & contact details on page 20)



Dates for your diary

4th June to 10th September	Fun, Friendship & Learning with South Tyneside (Pg 10)
Saturday, 2nd July	Start-up meeting for Consett & District (Pg. 18)
Tuesday, 5th July	25th Anniversary Celebrations at Stockton U3A (Pg 12)
Thursday, 21st July	Alnwick's monthly meeting - open to all (Pg. 7)
Tuesday, 26th July	Lunch with author Mike Pannett in Darlington (Pg. 12)
Wednesday, 27th July	Regional Meeting - 9.45am for 10.15am at The Angel View Inn, Gateshead
Friday, 29th July	Consett Public Meeting (Pg. 18)
Saturday 17th Sept to Monday 19th September	U3A National Conference & AGM in Nottingham
Saturday, 17th September	Washington Heritage Day (Pg. 4)
Thursday, 29th September	Alnwick Castle, Garden & Workshop event (Pg. 7)
Thursday, 17th November	Regional Meeting with 3rd Age Trust in Ponteland Speakers: Francis Beckett and Elizabeth Gibson (Pg. 3)
Thursday, 8th December	Georgian Theatre exclusive show for U3A (Pg. 16)
Saturday, 24th March 2012	Regional Choral Workshop (Pg. 5)

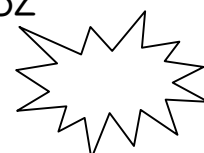


Final copy date
for the next edition of The Northumbria Messenger is
Saturday 10th September 2011

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

snail mail: 4 Glenfield Road, Darlington DL3 8DZ

tel. 01325 384496



For copies of this publication, photographs of some events and other regional information visit the Northumbria Region website www.nru3a.co.uk

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