

U3A

Northumbria Messenger

October 2010

Contents



Updates from

	Page No.
Chairman, John Leiper	3
Regional Trustee, Joyce Watts	6
Events Committee, John Lloyd	8
Obituary, Geoff Moore	14



Regional & National Events - past

AGM	6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18
ICADI	3, 8, 17
Tall Ships at Hartlepool	4, 5



Regional Events - to come

Bridge afternoon	18
Dates for Your Diary	20
Connect it!	10
Science Days at Durham University	19



Who's Done What

Tunnelling under the Tyne, Ashington	2
Lindisfarne & Carpet Page, Ashington	1
Candidates for "The Young Ones"? Bede	15
On the Banks of the Coaly Tyne with Dunelm 7 seful tips from Middlesbrough	13
Saltburn goes to London	16
Re-discovered - Barforth Village, Teesdale.	12
Brass Bands in Wessington	14
On the Lowry Trail with Whitley Bay	9
Exploring Dilston with Wooler	13



<u>What's where & Who's Who</u>	10
---	----



Tunnelling under Newcastle



Mel and I, winners of the Journal Culture Club competition joined the other nine winners assembled outside the Victoria Tunnel, Newcastle's least known historical attraction. Steve and Ian, volunteer guides, handed out hard hats and torches and checked we were wearing sensible footwear. before we ventured through the airtight door and entered into the darkness below.



Named after Queen Victoria, the tunnel was a wagon-way built to transport coal from Spital Tongues colliery to the river Tyne in 1839. The colliery closed in 1860 and the tunnel was abandoned very shortly afterwards. It remained closed for



eighty years.

In 1939 the city engineers built a series of entrances along a six-mile route so that when the sirens wailed over nine thousand people, including women and children, could file underground into the tunnel until the danger was past.

We saw indentations in the floor and walls, where benches and bunks had been allocated for those in reserved occupations to sleep. Faded signs in the whitewashed walls read 'Ladies and Gents' and I inspected a chemical bucket which when filled had to be carried out of the tunnel and emptied as soon as the all clear sounded. No privacy of course , but needs must when you are desperate. Imagine nine thousand all needing the loo!

The half mile section that we were allowed to explore seemed longer as the ground underfoot alternated between dry, wet and muddy, but the 1.5 hours we spent travelling along its length seemed to fly by as Steve stopped often to point out interesting landmarks along the way. Behind the Hancock Museum are two blue steel doors. This is an entrance used during the war but now no longer used.

The most moving moment for me came when he shone his torch on the tunnel wall and revealed a carved statue of the crucifixion and a roll of honour alongside, engraved into the brick. as a tribute perhaps to family members who had died or as a symbol of gratitude from those survivors who were kept safe from the air raids during World War 11. No-one knows exactly.

As we returned our hard hats and torches and thanked Steve for his marvellous dialogue, I looked around at the Saturday pedestrians and wondered how many of them (if any) knew what was lying just beneath them.



Eileen Brown, Ashington U3A

Words from Chairman John

First of all I would like to **welcome two new U3As** to the fold, namely, **Coquettale**, based at Rothbury, and **Seaham Harbour**. I hope that they will get involved with the Region and they are invited to attend the next Regional Meeting at the Angel View Inn at Gateshead on Wednesday 27th October. The meeting is at 9.45am for coffee and starting at 10.15am.

Joyce and I have just returned from the **National AGM** in Cirencester where we were delighted to see a good contingent from the Region. It was unfortunate, however that there was no conference this year and it meant that there was virtually no time to network. As you will see in the Regional Trustee's report the **next conference and AGM is in Nottingham**. I was hoping that there would have been more discussion about the fact that conferences will only be bi-annual which I think is a shame. If others think like me perhaps you would like to write to U3A News or even to the Chairman or National Office. Maybe we should even consider a motion from a Regional U3A for next year's AGM?

There were no surprises at the AGM. None of the elections for Officers were contested. Of the three resolutions the first was passed and the second failed. The third resolution, the amendment was passed and then the amended resolution was passed which means at future AGMs and elections of Regional Trustees ALL votes will be counted and the results declared.

The day before the AGM John Lloyd and I gave a presentation about the U3A to the **ICADI** conference at the **Sage in Gateshead** which I understand went down well and produced questions about the U3A from delegates from around the World. Due to the lack of numbers registering for this international conference they extended invitations to a number of U3A members and my thanks go to those who took up the offer. We were not able to extend this invitation to all the Region so my apologies to all those who were not invited.

You may remember that **the last Regional Meeting** was attended by Barbara Lewis (a National Vice Chairman) and Mike Long (the National Education and Development Officer). Whatever the feelings about this meeting - and I have heard many different views - it does at least appear as though our message has got through. We will see what long term effect it has had.

There is to be an **extra Regional Meeting on November 17th** at the **Darlington Rugby Club** which will be similar to the meeting in January at Ponteland. On this occasion we will have **Terry Hardie** (National Treasurer) once again addressing us plus **Lin Jonas** who is the Company Secretary and National Administrator. Terry has asked us to point out that his talk is of particular interest to **U3A Treasurers**. We are holding this meeting in Darlington to give more opportunity to U3As in the south of the Region to attend. Please let Barbara Herring know if you intend to come to this meeting. (Tel. 01434 673 016 or email at barbara@sdlt.co.uk)

We have held these meetings because the Third Age Trust have provided the funding and is on the condition that National Officials are invited. It is intended that this should be an annual event. The last one was in January when the weather was bad hence the reason for bringing this next one forward. I do wonder though whether we are reaching saturation point. I would be interested to hear your views.

Finally, please do not forget that we are running a number of events, the details of which are elsewhere in the *Messenger* but we particularly need anyone interested to sign up for the Residential School at Easter 2011 to ensure that this event goes ahead.

John Leiper
Chairman – Northumbria Region

Here, amongst others, are some of your comments on the

Tall Ships in Hartlepool

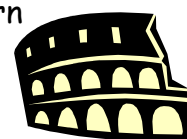
The highs



Let's congratulate all the U3A singers who took part in choral performances which made such an important contribution to the Tall Ships Festival. They worked so hard to prepare for the event, under the skilled leadership of Brian Prickett, and it was such good fortune that lovely weather arrived to complement their fine performance.

We are lucky as an organisation to enjoy the benefit of so many members with knowledge and expertise. Just to give you an example from my own recent experience when I went on one of Ponteland **U3A's Local History excursions**.

Leslie Almond and his wife Kathleen had planned a trip along the eastern section of Hadrian's Wall, as far as Chesters fort, with a southern detour to Corbridge on the way back. I suppose that many of you may find that unremarkable, even commonplace, however, that was far from the case. There were, for example, two sites visited along the West Road, in Newcastle which were completely unknown to me: one a Roman shrine and the other, a uniquely surviving example of a length of Vallum which has a stone causeway across it. Their existence within present day housing estates is fascinating. Perhaps the most unusual experience of the day was a journey along what may be a long lost Roman road route and I will close with this image from it, our 26-seater coach bearing down the narrowest of country roads upon an unsuspecting cyclist who was absorbed listening to her headphones. All survived the trip, even the cyclist.



Gillian Williams, Ponteland

the lows ...

As expected, the tall ships were magnificent but the surroundings were not. The organisation of the outing by Eileen Sparham was fine, but disappointment awaited us on arrival at Hartlepool. Long walks,



'entertainment' on a stage amplified to a nearby huge television, not to mention £2.50 for a paper cup of coffee, all seemed to overshadow these stately vessels. The young crews did their best to give us an impression of just how tall these ships are



as they clambered up the masts, and the popular Indonesians even 'danced' there in time to the music of their band below. This helped, but even those of us lucky enough to ride in a boat among the ships on the last day as they were moving out did not see them, as we had hoped, with sails unfurled as they reached open sea. At least we gave the crowds something to wave at as they were waiting! So, good to have been there but, in my case, not to be repeated.

Eileen Wormald, Durham

and lastly, from the the Choirmaster himself ...



As a follow up to the successful involvement with the Tall Ships when they visited Tyneside in 2005, it was agreed that the Northumbria Region choir should sing at their next visit to the North East, in Hartlepool, in August 2010.

Using the same pattern as 2005, we held a series of choral workshops, with different tutors each time, commencing in October 2009 through to July 2010. This enabled us gradually to bring in some new arrangements of sea shanties as well as refreshing some of the sea shanties and folk songs used previously.

This all culminated in a mixed choir of some 55 singers and we were given the opportunity to sing three times on Sunday 8th August. The first two were in the beer garden in front of the Victoria Arms pub, opposite the main entrance into the Tall Ships Village. Our final performance was in St. Hilda's Church on the Hartlepool Headland which overlooks the entrance to the main harbour.

The first venue was noisy due to the passing traffic and public making their way to the Tall Ships Village entrance, but nevertheless the performances of the sea shanties and folk songs were enthusiastically received. The final performance was a total contrast. In a lovely predominately 12th century large Early English architectural setting, the choir sang to a more attentive but appreciative audience. The church was a beautiful setting and a lovely place to sing in, and the choir concluded their performance with a rousing rendition of "The Song of the Jolly Roger" - a very appropriate piece on the day!

An additional incentive was the very attractive range of cakes and pasties made available the back of the church by the ladies of St Hilda's congregation!

My thanks go to Eileen Elliott for accompanying the choir in such a professional manner and to the members of the 8 Regional choirs that took part for all their hard work and enthusiasm which made the endeavour such a success.

What next? Possibly an all day choral workshop with one of the tutors who helped us prepare for the Tall Ships, if there is the necessary interest and support. Please let me know.

Brian Prickett, Ponteland U3A

Update from our Trustee

I have just returned from my first **National AGM** after being elected as your Trustee. I was delighted to see so many members from Northumbria Region, in fact nearly the whole committee! It was unfortunate that it was not a conference as being a one day event did not give enough time for networking. It was a long way to travel for such a short time. I am pleased to say that we now have the full number of Trustees on the NEC with four new elected Trustees - for Wales, Scotland, the North West and West Midlands. **The next full conference will be in Nottingham, Saturday 17th – Monday 19th September 2011.**

I would like to thank all those U3As who returned the questionnaire about their membership. This was very useful and I and the EDCs will be looking at this to see if there is a need to start **new U3As** in our region.

On the subject of questionnaires there will be another one being sent to your committees from the Third Age Trust. With the continuing growth of the U3A movement in the UK it is putting pressure on the Trust as well as U3As themselves and we would like your committees to complete this (not just one individual). This is as a result of the Away Days we had and is **asking for your opinion** on the way you feel we should **go forward with the movement.**

I am pleased to say that **Wessington have taken up the £100 offer** from the TAT to help fund their Heritage Day on the 18th September. I hope other U3As will think about what they can do to open their doors and encourage new members. Please get in touch with me if you would like further information.

There is a large amount of **merchandise** available from the National Office and this could be used **to help with fund raising.** The items are very reasonable and you could add a small amount to the cost to help your own funds as well as the TAT.

I would like to emphasise yet again the importance of encouraging your U3A to obtain their **U3A News by direct mail.** The latest edition is much more readable and interesting and it is being improved all the time. By receiving *U3A News* directly means that you get up-to-date information and are informed of what is happening country wide. It will also give you ideas that you maybe able to use within your own U3A. Another advantage too is that you **obtain Sources directly.** I would like to make it a challenge to be able to say that our region is the first one that everyone has their very own copy of the magazine. Personally I think that each member should receive it by right but unfortunately it would be too expensive to have a data base to deal with this. NO only deal with U3As and not individuals.

The Third Age Trust is looking for a new treasurer for 2011. Terry informs us that there is a bookkeeper and accountants to look after the money side of things so if there is anyone who feels they would like to be involved with the TAT in this role please let me know.

Joyce Watts, Trustee

On the Banks of the Coaly Tyne



Region is to be congratulated on the excellent "Local History Day" held on both sides of River Tyne on the 28th June; so much was packed into what turned out to be an absorbing day exploring two Millennia of Local and National History,

Special mention should go to the quality of the guiding throughout, well informed and all delivered with some wit, all added to the day. My Group got off to a flying start with Peter Bladon at St Mary's, his tour through the rich heritage of the Church linked to the rise of Gateshead, and it's Churchyard in which he pulled in strands that we were to return to during the day. Our first Grave visit was to the inspiration for Helen Burns in "Jane Eyre" our day ending on the other side of the River, with the story of Bessie Surtees, so even the romantics among us were catered for? Then Trafalgar, the Civil War, Collier Trade, Pestilence and the Industrial Revolution were all evidenced in



the well preserved headstones and within the walls of St Mary's. The Church served as Christian beacon for 700 years and its history from the Conqueror (and prior to that) and Bishop Walcher through to its sad later years once abandoned in the 1970s were well traced. But what an inventive and clever way to revive the fortunes of what was until recently a former Auction Room!

The pace stepped up after lunch when we were put into the very capable and knowledgeable hands of the City Guides and in two hours we went through the History of Newcastle its River and contribution to the Trade of our Nation, at a cracking pace. Our leader, Jocelyn proved excellent, emphasising landscape and contour which are so necessary to understand local history as we were piloted through Chares, Stairs, Side, Street and Quays to show us some real gems. Trinity House, All Saints, St Nicholas and not just our ancient built heritage, we had the chance to explore the Sage after lunch Time demands meant we could not get into every building (and some had to be missed) but Jocelyn insists that went next in Town we call into the places such as the Mechanics Hall ,and the Lit & Phil., among others. One group even managed time to get into a pub cellar to check the Town Walls base - they could not recall the pub name for verification?. As mentioned earlier we packed so much in and in the best traditional of our Northumbrian Light Infantry Regiments, I think we went past the flashing Green Man in Collingwood Street at 125 paces to the minute to get to the Town Walls, Stephenson Works, the Keep and Black Gate to ensure we kept to time for our date with Bessy Surtees, John Scott and our Tea!

Of course all of this just did not happen, and I would thank Anne Finn and Mo who were identifiable from their badges, and any others I may have been unaware of who put this all together. All went so well, the weather was glorious, I take it that was just chance, unless U3A have REAL connections within its organisation, and it was shirt sleeve order right through. I could not finish without a compliment on the comestibles, Coffee at the Crypt, Salmon at the Sage and Cream Scones at the Copthorne with plenty of hot tea - great! How do they do it all for the price, as one of my tea companions remarked! Well done everyone.



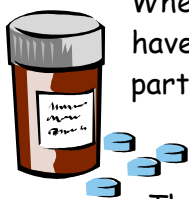
Chris McLoughlin, Dunelm U3A Local History Group.

No rest for the ... Events committee

The events sub-committee have had a busy time with progressing planned events and coping with un-planned ones! Some of us have been multi tasking and not the female members! Enough waffle I will record some facts.

The Regional presentation to the International Conference on Ageing, Disability and Independence (**ICADI**) at The Sage is over. Not easy to be clear how effort and worth relate with full hindsight. There was positive reaction from other delegates and it was a surprise when Peter Laslett was quoted twice by an American professor and equally rewarding when I was explaining to a German post graduate student that I was representing U3A he told me it was Peter Laslett that started it!! But he was at Trinity College Cambridge finishing his studies!!

When you are reading this the six-week **Mini Medical Course** at the Centre for Life will have started on **15th September**. Not totally filled, not clear why but we assume it was partly the six-week commitment but we would like to have confirmation from you please.



The **Medical Science Day** at the Centre for Life will start nearly full on the **22nd September** and we would like your feed back at the Regional meeting in October.



Bowes Museum study day on **4th October** was so oversubscribed that an overspill has been booked for **19th October**.

The **Residential Science Days at Durham next April** are being taken up from a range of points countrywide! Make your mind up to invest your time and money for a one off experience now or you could be too late!!



We have had a very recent offer from **Ashington U3A** to hold and run a **History Day** Event **early in 2011**, probably April. Further details very soon.

There have been some recent questions to us about the repeat of a **Major Regional Event in 2011**. The Event will again be partly in **YOUR HANDS**, we want to cater for all who want to come and participate. What we need is commitments from individual U3As and/or groups who will prepare and provide at least a half-day of a variety of learning/talking/showing things to fill an average classroom. We think we need at least twenty!! It would be good to get all U3As pleading for space. We will aim to get as wide a variety as possible so think what you do that is different/will stimulate others/could fill a whole regional day in the future. Some of you will remember that in 2007 over 900 came to New College. We will accept the challenge to find a venue that may cope with more **BUT** we need to know **ASAP** if your U3A will fill a part of the day. We will start looking now **BUT** you are the keys to unlock what we need to find and where we could gather on a day within the next twelve months Regional! Answers/offers/thoughts postcards or ??? by the October Meeting to myself, John Leiper or Joyce Watts

That Older Codger, John Lloyd
email: johnlloyd73@hotmail.com

On the Lowry Trail ...



L S Lowry on our doorstep! Not quite, so members of Whitley Bay U3A set off by coach on a very wet June morning. After a welcome coffee and comfort stop we digressed from the main route to a higher vantage point to view the Northumbrian coast towards Holy Island - in beautiful sunshine.

Our destination was Berwick upon Tweed which hosted the Lowry Trail, a designated walk round the Elizabethan walls, with information boards identifying places and views from which Lowry had painted his pictures.

Art is not everyone's taste so an alternative visit to Paxton House which is situated nearby, was offered. This stately home was occupied as recently as the 1980s by a local family and houses a superb collection of Chippendale furniture and a Regency picture gallery.



Both groups were re-united for our next visit to the nearby Honey Bee Farm, where our members could view a working beehive, the story of honey making and a display of vintage machinery and tractors. Coffee and cake were served aboard an old double-decker bus and we could purchase various honey/bees was products - including shoe polish!!

Some members chose to walk the short distance to view, and cross, the Union Chain Bridge over the river Tweed which was built in 1820 and is the oldest surviving iron suspension bridge in Europe.

Are we nearly there yet? Yes. Our final visit took us over the border into Kelso for a walk by the river and refreshments in continuing sunshine.

Our homeward journey was via Wooler and the scenic foothills of the Cheviots. Our day out was almost complete - we had a wonderful day and many happy memories to treasure.

R N Cockburn, committee member & coach driver

National AGM – Proposal 1

Proposed by Leicester U3A

Seconded by South Leicestershire U3A

When planning future conferences the Third Age Trust should make every effort to arrange that they be held in a central location to ensure that the majority of U3As and their members have reasonable access with regard to transport and costs.

This proposal was passed.

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 of the region

Margaret Minns: 0191 414 3924 is in Wickham, for those in the north of the region

Brian (Stephenson) will be showing anyone interested how to use this equipment - on Thursday 30th September in Marley Hill. Your U3A should be represented! Contact Brian on 01665 575 552 for details.

U3A Northumbria Region Committee

Elected at the AGM in May 2010, IS AS FOLLOWS:



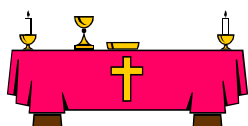
<u>Position</u>	<u>Person Elected</u>	<u>Email address</u>
Chairman	John Leiper	lorbottle@tiscali.co.uk
Vice-Chairman	Brian Stephenson	bsteph316@aol.com
Business & Distribution Sec.	Barbara Herring	barbara@sdit.co.uk
Treasurer	Maureen Stephenson	Mesteph7@aol.com
Minutes Secretary	Pat Moore	pat@redburn27.freemove.co.uk
Committee Member	Len Cline	leonardcline@talktalknet
<u>Ex Officio</u>		
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

Lindisfarne and "Carpet Page"



In June, the History Trails group from Ashington went to Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, from where, in the 7th century, Christianity was spread into the rest of Britain after being adopted in the powerful kingdom of Northumbria. The island was situated at the heart of an early political and commercial network. Northumbria stretched from Edinburgh to The Wash. Its extensive coastline gave shipping access to Scandinavia and mainland Europe as well as the British Isles. Its location, just across the water from the capital at Bamburgh, gave these Christian pioneers the opportunity to promulgate their faith with backing at the highest level.

The ruined priory, necessarily "gentrified", welcomes a huge number of visitors, but is still able to convey a sense of its original magnificence, at the same time calling on the visitor's empathy for the community whose home this was. The monks' great achievement was the Lindisfarne Gospels, an illustrated manuscript still extant, but requiring such care and security that only replicas may be seen in the place where it was made. A computer in the Lindisfarne Centre allows each page to be put on-screen. Much information is available on all aspects of



the Gospels, for example, almost 30 calves contributed their hides and colours were sourced from far and disparate sources. One of these pages, known as the "Carpet Page" was the inspiration, not only for the carpet fronting the altar in St. Mary's Church, but also for a quilt to the same pattern. This magnificent piece of stitching took at least three years, although the maker claims to have enjoyed every moment ... and your correspondent complains about replacing buttons!

Unfortunately, our time was limited by tides and the Barn at Beal, a restaurant conveniently positioned at the end of the causeway, was beckoning. Our visit was short and intensive, but we will probably return to sample again the unique atmosphere of this special place. Berwick is next on our agenda.

Norma Talbot, Ashington U3A

National AGM – Proposal 2

Proposed by Bridlington U3A

Seconded by Hornsea U3A

Given the fact that the lease on the current Third Age Trust (TAT) premises in Bromley is shortly up for renewal, and given the anticipated growth of the organisation in the next few years, we propose that serious consideration should be given to the relocation of the national office to a more central and cheaper geographical position in the UK, in particular to avoid a future increase in capitation and in general, to reduce overall costs whilst making provision for additional office space.

This proposal failed.

Rediscovered - Barforth Village, near Gainford

Teesdale Archaeology Group very much enjoyed a visit to St Lawrence Chapel at Barforth, Nr Darlington. This is a Grade II listed site which has recently been conserved by Natural England and English Heritage at a cost of £250,000.

We gathered at Chapel Bridge, unusually constructed of red sandstone which has stood for over 800 years. Barforth is a deserted medieval village and would have been an ideal site as it is close to the River Tees where fish and water would have been in plentiful supply.



We inspected the small chapel which is only 66' x 16'. The Priest at one time lived in the rear of this area whilst the front part contained the church with altar and 3 lancet windows. Notable is the original wooden lintel which supports the stone over the main doorway. Having stood for several centuries, it now has to be reinforced by metal. A piscine can be seen and originally, a cinquefoil window stood above the 3 lancet ones.

The church had 25 acres of land and was the Chapel of Ease for Gilling West, a village some miles distant. The church probably declined in the 1300's due to the black death, when half the population died although it's final demise came in 1536-1541 during the dissolution of the monasteries.

Near the Chapel is a magnificent dovecote. The inner walls slope inwards to a domed roof which probably held beehives. Hundreds of nesting holes line the inside as doves were kept as a source of eggs and meat.

On the hillside below are the 'hell holes'. These are caves either side of Barforth Beck, separated by a cascade of tufa rock such as that found in Mother Shipton's cave in Knaresborough. The 'cave' on the left is actually a drift mine which was worked for brown coal. And it is thought that the natural cave on the right was used to put bodies in at the time of the black death.

After an exhausting but enjoyable morning, the Group de-camped to a local hostelry for a well earned lunch.

Angela Green, Teesdale U3A



Recommended reading

If you enjoyed Bill Bryson's "A Short History of Nearly Everything", then "Alex's Adventures in Numberland" by Alex Bellos may well be for you. An intriguing look at numbers, their history and uses. A great book to dip into for both useful and useless information – abounding with knowledge with which to impress your friends.

Useful tips from Middlesbrough U3A



We initially had problems running excursions because of numbers. This year we have worked with a local company and done block bookings with them on their published programme of trips to avoid the headaches of having to fill coaches to keep costs down.

We have visited Helmsley and a lavender farm (not much lavender because of the cold weather), Bury market, a most enjoyable cruise to the mouth of the Tyne, a trip to Sunderland dogs where Evan came back considerably richer than when he went! We are looking forward to a mystery tour and a Christmas lunch and tea dance in Harrogate.

Our luncheon club continues to thrive and we have enjoyed a variety of venues in North Yorkshire and on the Moors.

The Real Ale Appreciation Club (aka the Pie and a Pint Club) roams further afield - just to test the quality of the steak and ale pie you understand! Adrian Wright has sought out some wonderful locations and good pies. We reckon the best yet is the Cover Inn at Coverbridge near Middleham.



Heather Walker



Recommended reading

Lover's of Louisa May Alcott's books and those under her pen name - A M Ballard - might well enjoy "Louisa M Alcott, the Woman behind Little Women" a biography by Harriet Reisen published earlier this year. A film was made of the book, too.

Exploring Dilston with Wooler U3A

On Thursday, August 12, the Wooler U3A History group took a 50 minute journey to Kirkharle for coffee and a browse round the craft shops there before boarding the coach to take another leisurely drive to the Queen's Head at GT Whittington where, after having a most superb salad buffet lunch, we made off to our main destination, Dilston Hall, near Corbridge. Here we were shown the remains of the castle home of the Radcliffe family (the Earls of Derwentwater in 1715 and 1745) two great supporters of the Jacobite Rebellions. After a walk down to the river to see the Lord's Bridge over the Devil's Water we once again boarded our coach to make our long journey back home via Elsdon where we stopped to have a delightful afternoon tea at the Coach House, then back to Wooler. Everyone left the coach saying what a thoroughly enjoyable day it had been. Even the driver.



Jean French

Obituary ... Geoff Moore

U3A members in Northumberland have paid tribute to one of the founder members of North Northumberland U3A (now Wooler U3A), Geoff Moore, who died recently aged 79.

Geoff and his wife Joyce, together with Gertrude Carr and others, started Wooler U3A in Northumberland in the 1990s. Geoff later went on to become Wooler U3A chairman before moving down to Thirsk where he also started Thirsk U3A. They later moved to Oswestry where he continued to play an active role in the U3A.

He was also very much involved in Northumbria Region having held the post of Chairman in 2000.

Having worked in education all his life, Geoff was keen to see people remain active in retirement and went on to write two books himself, one about a friend's experiences as a prisoner of war and another on local history.

He is remembered by all his friends in Wooler, Thirsk and the Northumbria Region for his enthusiasm, dedication and great sense of humour.

Brass Bands in Wessington



What is more evocative than the sound of a brass band, the sight of pit banners dancing along and the sound of marching feet? It must be the parade from The Gardener's to 'F' pit in Washington to celebrate Washington's Heritage Day on Saturday 18th September 2010.

What is it that draws people to the marquees? Is it the hope of finding an old photograph of where you used to live, or went to school or is it to offer information about someone whose name is on a Washington War Memorial, or is it to add something to an old map of one of the villages? Whatever the reason.....come they did.



From 14-year olds to 92-year olds they came to ask questions about the men of Harraton, Usworth and Washington who had given their lives in WW1. We could provide answers too. We have completed now about eighty or so biographies of those men....where they lived, where they went to school, where they worked, where they enlisted, where they served and where and how they died. We have some pictures from newspapers of the time, we have photographs of their graves in France, Belgium or Berlin. A number of visitors made crosses to remember a relative or someone of the same name. We are travelling to France and Belgium in October so we will leave the cross at the grave or on a memorial. Photographs of the graves will be sent to the makers of the crosses.

continued on page 19

Candidates for "The Young Ones"?

We have had a very successful year to date, both in growth and success among the media.

Bede of Jarrow's two Art groups were asked to **exhibit** their work at Primrose Community Centre, as **part of the Jarrow Festival**. This was opened officially by our local well-known painter Bob Olley (who painted the famous Westoe Netty). He was greatly surprised at the talents of our painters, many of whom have not painted since school days. Twelve of our artists went on to sell some of their work, which has encouraged a further sense of well-being among those artists, and others.



the U3A plays in the community, as well as the pleasure it brings to so many people."

Eight of our members were **asked by the curator of South Shields museum to take part in an exhibition of the history of South Tyneside**. Such exhibits were photographs of our landmarks, drawings of the old cinemas, sculptures, and the original jazz bands, to name but a few. This exhibition was very successful and we have been **asked to take part in another project for the Laing Art Gallery** in January, so **WATCH THIS SPACE PLEASE!**



A young lady named Sarah Gribben, currently completing her final year of a degree at **Northumbria University has been working closely with these Art Groups**. Her degree is Learning in Families, Schools, and Beyond. We folk are part of the "Beyond" in the nicest way, of course!!!! Sarah comments: "During my time so far, the main aspect that has struck me within the group is the sheer sense of enjoyment. There is much laughter and camaraderie. Beginners are offered the same support and encouragement as those with more experience, and are made to feel part of the team"

The success of these 2 groups is undoubtedly down to our resident and very successful artists, Mavis Hudson and Brian York.

Sarah goes on to conclude "My completed dissertation will convey **the vital role that**

Bede of Jarrow last year **raised money** for a raffle for a **Breast Cancer** organisation run by such sufferers in the Sunderland area. This year, we are **sending shoeboxes to our troops** in Afghanistan -male and female.

Our days out lately have been to **Chillingham Castle/herd, Stockton riverboat trip**, and latterly, Seahouses and Bamburgh. We hope to visit Preston park in September. We also had a very interesting and educational visit to the **Port of Tyne in South Shields** (free entry and you get a useful gift). An organised tour of the **Watch Tower at South Shields** is also forthcoming. We look forward to any good ideas/recommendations from you for day visits, please!

Happy reading folks!!!!

Iris Walls, Bede of Jarrow

Some thoughts on this year's National AGM

"Too far and too expensive to travel for just an AGM where valuable discussions can be overruled by postal votes."

"Bring back the conference and give us more time to network." "Too difficult to get to."

... were some of the oft repeated common complaints about this year's National AGM. All is to be improved next year. Conference and AGM are to be in September in Nottingham! Complaining **can** get results.

True devotion to the cause?

At least two members travelled from the region to Cirencester and back on the day!
Mo made the trip by train and Len Cline drove.

Saltburn goes to London

Every year Rod Bell (Secretary) runs a trip to the Proms.

This year it was to see the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev playing Scriabin's 1st Symphony and the Firebird ballet.

This is Barbara Spight's (she runs our Theatre Group) account of the weekend from her perspective as a 'Proms Virgin' as she puts it.



"We managed to pack an amazing amount into our 3-day stay, starting off with a lovely visit on the night we arrived to the beautiful Royal Albert Hall to listen to our brilliant Proms concert.

"One day a group of us did a 3-hour boat trip down the Thames to Hampton Court Palace and gardens with an amusing cockney commentary to accompany the 3-hour trip. Another day, Paul and I walked our socks off down the Thames Path, all along the South Bank. We managed to get on the London Eye (not a long queue), also visiting the National Film Theatre (where we saw Eammon Holmes interviewing a group of about 50 women in a Rock and Roll choir). We took a lift up the Oxo Tower to the 8th floor viewing gallery, and would have loved a glass of wine whilst viewing the fabulous panorama of London. However, the exorbitant £13 per glass price rather put us off. We visited the Tate Modern and Shakespeare Globe Theatre and walked over the Millennium Bridge (not a patch on ours at Gateshead) and ended up at the Tower of London where my feet gave out and we took the tube back to the Holiday Inn hotel to chill out.

"We also walked through St James Park, Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens where we saw the Diana Memorial Fountain. I thought that the Duchess of Northumberland at Alnwick could have done a better job for the money one of spent.

One evening a group of us had an excellent gourmet dinner at the Indigo restaurant at the Aldwych before going across the road to see the spectacular Lion King show."



Howard Leake, Publicity Officer



From the grapevine

One of the current series of '**New Tricks**' is set in a U3A meeting! Watch out for it - no news yet on when it is to be screened, but the series has started

More thoughts on the National AGM

Several members throughout the region had not heard anything about the proposals to be put at the AGM. Shame on you committee members who don't keep your members informed. They have a right to add their ha'porth to the discussion and influence the way their U3A casts its votes.

An edited extract from a witty write-up of the AGM

Annoying and infuriating are what AGMs can be. However this year's had a great start, a speaker who was more like a stand-up Welsh rugby comedian than a Law Lecturer, who caused much guffawing and laughter. Things went slightly downhill in the amusement stakes after that.

It was all quite as expected except hearing a familiar U3A member mentioned by name - John Lloyd. The old codger sneaks in again - and he was not even there, but still at the Sage, propping up the ICADI conference!

I was quite amused by the picture created in my mind by the Chairman's (Ian Searle's) referring to his division of members in his U3A into two groups - Active and Apathy. He escaped the audience's indignation by hurriedly saying - 'You, of course, are all in the Active group or you wouldn't be here'.

The Treasurer, Terry Hardie, seemed to be surprised that U3As are not continuing to grow as rapidly as they had projected. Their figures hadn't appeared to take into account that the spurt in growth when the baby boomers retired would decline

Bridlington's proposal was put over in a very spirited and amusing manner - that a move to a less expensive and more central area of the UK should be considered now that the lease of the premises in Bromley was coming up for renewal. It failed. *(Other proposals and the results can be found on other pages.)*

As one of the folks from Cambridge said on our way back to Cheltenham Railway Station, "It is not so much what you gain from hearing the TAT bods, but the fun you have and the stimulus you get from meeting so many other ordinary, lively, happy U3A members." If we can pass that on when we get back home it's worth coming!

Mo Morgan, Newcastle U3A

Recommended reading

As drug running in Mexico takes up time in the news bulletins, one member has been reading Arturo Pérez-Reverte's "Queen of the South". Translated from Spanish it revolves round the story of a Mexican girl caught up in the trade who rises to the top with friends in high places to ensure her success. An exciting story a bit different from the usual run-of-the mill thrillers/gangster stories.



Have you booked your place ?

Regional Bridge Players

are meeting in **St. George's Bridge Club, Whessoe Road, Darlington**

on **Thursday 14th October**

from 2pm till 5pm. Tickets are £3

Contact Chris Johnson (Cowton's & Countryside U3A) on 01325 378481

National AGM – Proposal 3

Proposed by Fetcham U3A

Seconded by Elmbridge U3A

It is proposed that at Annual General Meetings and at Extraordinary General Meetings, where appropriate:-

- a) All votes cast for officers are declared.
- b) All votes cast for regional trustees are declared.
- c) After a show of hands on any proposal, the chairman of the meeting shall decide whether, in the knowledge of the postal vote, a count of votes cast in the hall is required. If a count is required then the count of both the votes cast in the hall and the postal votes shall be declared. If a count is not required then both the outcome and the postal votes shall be declared.
- d) A total of electoral votes held by all affiliated U3As and a total for each region shall be declared.
- e) All procedures governing elections shall be published in advance of the meeting.

Amendment to clause c)

Proposed by Wokingham U3A

Seconded by Thameside U3A

To replace clause c) above by

"All votes, both postal and by show of hands, on all resolutions shall be counted. The outcome shall be declared. The count of votes shall be declared before the close of the general meeting."

The amendment was passed.

The amended proposal was then passed.

Bookings now!

**Northumbria Region U3A Residential School
at Durham University Science Site
Monday 11th April-Thursday 14th April 2011**

Some non-residential places are available

Programme will include:



BIOLOGY: The hidden beauty of plants; sex, corruption and deceit - the sordid truth about wild flowers; lab sessions, Botanic Gardens

EARTH SCIENCES: Understanding earth's rocks and minerals; Co-evolution of life and the planet; -Talks, lab sessions, fossil records

PHYSICS: Beginners Guide to the Universe; Views of the Planets; Other Worlds' Big Bang Theory (Hadron Collider); Guide to Galaxy Zoo



STEM CELLS: Evening lecture by Professor Hutchison

VIEW NIGHT SKY - if skies are clear

Optional geological field trip to the Northumbria coast (extra charge)

Costs: incl. 3 nights accommodation and all meals £220 (field trip extra)
some non-residential places are available - £100



THIS EVENT IS NOW OPEN UP TO U3As OUTSIDE OUR REGION

To ensure you get a place - or for more information - contact
John Leiper: Tel: 01890 840 494 email: lorbottle@tiscali.co.uk or
John Lloyd: Tel: 0191 567 4484 email: johnlloyd73@hotmail.com

continued from page 14 ...

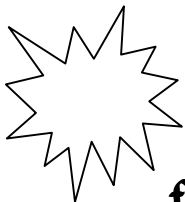
Our display for the day included First World War uniforms on mannequins, music from the time, 'singing hinnies' to nibble, Fatfield School triptych with the names of the boys and masters who went off to war and never returned, the Union flag and various memorabilia. It certainly attracted lots of attention. The result of our efforts today we trust will be an increased membership of our Wessington U3A! We had some interest from local schools and societies who would like us 'to speak' on the Project which hopefully will provoke even more enthusiasm for research into the men of Washington who went to war and never returned. The work continues.....

Peter Welsh, Wessington U3A



Dates for your diary

September 30th, Thursday	Connect it! Marley Hill, 10-3pm (details page 10)
October 4th, Monday	Bowes Museum Study Day (1) - fully booked
October, 14th, Thursday	Bridge Afternoon in Darlington (see page 18)
October 19th, Tuesday	Bowes Museum Study Day (2)
October 20th, Wednesday	Mini Medical School finishes
October 27th, Wednesday	Regional Meeting & AGM - 9.45am for 10.15am at The Angel View Inn, Gateshead
November 17th, Wednesday	Regional Meeting with Terry Hardie & Lin Jonas Darlington Rugby Club (Details page 3)
December 18th, Saturday	Deadline for next <i>Northumbria Messenger</i>
2011 April 11th-14th, Mon-Thurs.	Residential Science School, Durham University (See page 19)
September 17th-19th	National AGM, Nottingham. Details to come
From the grapevine - possibilities for 2011	1-day event at Alnwick Castle & Gardens Northumbria Region Conference History Day with Ashington U3A



**Final copy date
for the next edition of The Northumbria Messenger is
Saturday 18th December 2010**

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