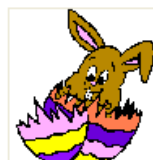




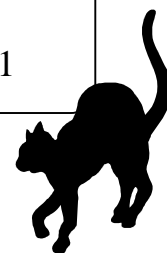
Revised edition



U3A

Northumbria Messenger

April 2011



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A Cats Tale

I live with a strange couple called Brown, who have catered for my every whim since I arrived from The Cat Action Trust as a kitten, 16 years ago.

I tolerate the pair of them because they feed me regularly and respect my need to be warm and comfortable. Humans have said that I wear a permanent, puzzled expression on my face and the occasional bouts of manic energy that I have been known to display (mainly on spotting the black Tom from next door through the patio window) was explained by my owners as "a rush to the head" because I was prone to "brain storms".

Granted, I HAVE run into the glass patio door when I thought it was open (only it wasn't) and I did drag the xmas fairy behind the settee one year in a bit of a mad moment, but, if I relate to you, the unfortunate accident which happened to yours truly, when I was 6 months old, maybe you'll accord me a little sympathy please. Strolling past the front door on my way, no doubt, to check the food situation in the kitchen, I was cruelly crushed under the "Yellow Pages" which was tossed through the door by a young Post Office employee!!! Please don't laugh, there's more. Iv'e had my head squashed in the toilet door. was sat on by my lady owner BEFORE she joined Weight Watchers and fell off the shelf I jumped on after it had been moved to another room (nobody told me!!)

Because the lady was to be out all day on something called a "trip" and I would be left alone all day, she thoughtfully left me water and my favourite cat food to, at least, keep the "inner cat" fed, whilst she was away.

Can you wonder that I wear that puzzled, bemused expression on my face, when I live with a woman who wrapped my dishes in cling film and didnt tell me!!! That day was the longest of my life (apart from the Monday when I received "the cruellest cut of all").

So you see, I may be a bemused, bewildered and puzzled feline, but hey, after living for 16 years with the dottiest, doziest set of humans on the planet, can you blame me?

Best wishes, Toffee Brown xxxx



Eileen Brown, Ashington



Chairman's Letter

With the approach of the AGM in April I am only too aware that my first year as Chairman is nearly over. It has been a very busy year.

We have been fortunate to have had some excellent events during the past year. In 2010 there were two Science Days and a Mini Medical School at the Centre for Life which were well supported and appear to have been very popular. We are now in discussions with the Centre for Life to explore the possibilities of further events with them including another Mini Medical School. However, we will try to hold it over two days rather than six days like the last one. If people have ideas about other subjects we might talk to the Centre for Life about please let me know.

There were also very successful events at Bowes with Teesdale U3A and a History Tour organised by Newcastle and Gateshead U3As. As I hope you are all aware we shall shortly be running our Science Residential School at Durham University. We have not had as many applicants as we had hoped but nevertheless we have people coming from as far as London, Wales, Dorset and Cornwall to name just a few. There are still places available.

This week we had the first study day at the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle about the current exhibition there called "Heaven and Hell" about the life and works of John Martin. It was an incredible day and it is due to be repeated on April 7th.

One of the main concerns we have for the future of the Region is to bring in new blood. Most of us on the Regional Committee have been in place in various roles for some years and we need new people to get involved. To this end the Regional Development Sub-Committee recently held a very successful Awareness Day to explain the workings of this committee and how the process of starting new U3As works. If anyone missed this who would like to know more about how they can help us with new U3As please contact either Joyce McKay or Margaret Minns. The Events Sub-Committee did a similar thing and both events were well attended. One was held at Marley Hill and the other at Newcastle U3A's office in Pink Lane. If we were to repeat these in the south of the Region would there be any interest? Please let me know.

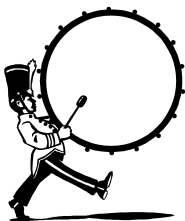
In just over a year's time we will need a new Regional Trustee and it is never too early to think about issues such as this. I am sure Joyce would be delighted to talk to anyone who might be interested.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Regional AGM at the Angel View Inn, Gateshead on Wednesday April 27th at 10.15am, which I hope will be well attended.

John Leiper
March 2011

TEESDALE - AWARENESS DAY

Teesdale U3A recently held an Awareness Day at the Witham Hall to let people know who we are and what we can offer and to dispel some of the misconceptions that others may have about us.



Attractive posters were distributed around Barnard Castle and other strategic points in the surrounding villages; an article and an eye-catching advertisement were placed in the 'Teesdale Mercury' in addition to some publicity on Radio Teesdale. Despite the weather producing a 'typical Teesdale day' and consequently there being fewer people around than usual, we had a surprising amount of interest with over 25 people coming in to look around at the display boards and information on offer, to chat with us and enjoy a cup of coffee and home made scones. Two ladies actually signed up there and then and several more took membership application forms with the clear intention of joining.



Not all of our existing members are happy, questioning why we want more members when our venue, the biggest in the area, is reaching capacity. We have tried to justify our initiative on the grounds of the need to replace the yearly loss of members and to build up membership a little more to fortify our interest groups. Hopefully the method we chose reached out to a slightly different population.

Whilst not wishing to grow to a state where our groups become impersonal, it is only through membership replacement and growth that we can increase the range and scope of membership activity and ensure that all the interest groups have sufficient active members to maintain their viability.

As it is our National Chairman's ambition to double the number of members in U3A in this country, we applied for and were awarded a grant from the Third Age Trust which covered all our expenses for the Awareness Day, thus avoiding using our own funds. Overall, it was a very successful event - as well as being in 'good books' with the National Chairman we were able to spread the word about U3A in general, as well as attracting some interesting new members.

Diana Mead, Chairman

Former Tynedale & NEC Chairman, a founder of Northumbria Region and well known member of Tynedale U3A for many years, **Allan Willey** and his wife Margaret, have moved south to Surrey in order to be near to their daughter and son-in-law. They would like to stay in touch with their friends in Northumbria U3A.

If you would like their address please contact Jenny Lewis at Tynedale U3A

Wagner as never before ...

It was interesting to watch the reaction of our members as they arrived for the February meeting. Obviously many had assumed a talk and perhaps some music from the great composer Wagner and instead they were greeted by the riot of colour and energy that is Ingrid Wagner, accompanied by her rainbow of rugs, cushions handbags and enormous knitting needles!

Ingrid lives by her beliefs that life should not be lived in a straight line but that we should take every opportunity to follow all the twists and turns and changes of direction on offer.

Her early jobs began in the cutting room of a recording studio where the plain bare walls cried out for a touch of colour and she gave it to them by pasting up Penguin biscuit wrappers in order of colour. An application for a job in filming led to a weekend of intensive study to learn about cameras - she got the job!

From there, a chance to work in Russia during highly dangerous political times was the next challenge, and a love for travel was born.

An exciting escape from the country due to the illness of her mother brought her back to England and a chance to continue her Arts studies with a Master's degree to add to her first one.

A trip to Morocco and an interest in textiles inspired her to buy 20 rugs to bring back to sell at the Station Hotel in Newcastle - a venture quickly brought to an end due to the council banning her

unorthodox method of advertising on street lamps all over the city, and the fact that only one rug was sold. The others soon expired after she decided to wash them to freshen them up!

Next came the idea of "Big Knitting" which brought contact with textile mills and buying strips of fabric from them to be hand wound into large balls. Also to find a company which was able to make the rather beautiful wooden needles in three lengths. Of course a suitable company was found in Newcastle who invented a method of making these and topping them off with colourful knobs.

The visit to Morocco gave another change in direction in Ingrid's life journey and now she runs Creative Skills trips there - more than just holidays, this is the other string to her Big Knitting bow.

Who would have imagined that Durham U3A members would end the afternoon being strung up together by lengths of colourful balls of fabric snaking their way around the rows, being admired by both men and women. Some took the opportunity to tuck the big needles under their arms to have a go at knitting for themselves. Eventually we all disentangled ourselves and the huge balls were tightly re-wound.

I think we all felt that we had enjoyed our own colourful creative experience in Durham on a cold February day and perhaps many will be planning a trip up to Kirkharle Courtyard near Wallington Hall in Northumberland U3A in the summer.

Pat Johnson, Durham U3A

Booking now!

Stockton U3A is hosting a

Literature Study Day



on Wednesday 18th May 2011 - 10am-4pm.

Guest speaker is Stella Porter

Co-ordinator of the U3A Storytelling Network who will also lead a workshop

The cost of the day is £5.00 (exc. lunch)

There are four workshops from which participants will choose two

- * enjoying a novel or *storytelling,
- * creative writing, or *enjoying poetry,

Other leaders are:

- **Mary Cooper** who has worked with many creative writing groups in adult education
- **Kathryn Hobson** who is joint leader of Stockton U3A Reading Group and a great and knowledgeable reader of novels, and
- **Jean Machell**, poetry lover and leader of Stockton U3A Poetry Group, a very well-attended and successful group.

It's going to be an interesting day - an opportunity to enjoy and explore your literary interests with members from other U3As.

Numbers will have to be limited – so please apply as soon as possible.

Application forms and more details can be obtained from

Mary Cooper. Telephone 01642 554508. Email marybraemar@btinternet.com



Did the early birds notice? Latecomers please note!

The Group from Bede of Jarrow have **AN EXTRA REASON TO VISIT LAING ART GALLERY** as there are photographs of a sculpture some members of the art group made and a piece explaining why we made it. It is in the shape of a lighthouse depicting all the famous sights of South Shields. I trust the photos are still on display, if not, you will be able to visit the South Shields Museum where it will be on display from March 10th.

Mavis Hudson

The first group of U3A members to hear about and view works by John Martin went to the Laing on 18th March. (See pages 3 & 10) The second group (fully booked) is due on 7th April. You have been warned!

Ashington goes to hospital

In January our Music Group were invited to tour the studios of Northumberland Hospital Radio based at Wansbeck General Hospital.

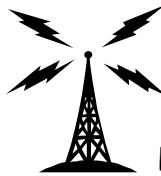
In 1974 Radio Wansbeck, as it was known then, began broadcasting from the basement in the now demolished Ashington Hospital. In 1977 it became a registered charity.

In 1990 a New Studies Appeal was launched by the then President George House, (of Look North fame) and in 1993 Northumberland Hospital Radio was born when the Cheviot & Wansbeck Hospital Trust opened its doors for the first time.

NHRs potential was recognised in 1995 and in 1997 a studio was opened at the Hartford Unit at the old Ashington Hospital. A grant for £2,700 helped open a second. A further grant of £3,500 helped launch a 24 hour service and in 2003 NHR moved to the newly built East Wing of Wansbeck General Hospital.



In 2008 a link was proved to Hexham and Morpeth Cottage Hospitals and at Blyth in 2009. NHR hope to expand to other hospitals within the area in the next 7-10 years.



Funding is by public collection, stockmarkets, Gift Aid, etc. and the Right honourable Alan Beith is the current president.

An automated service using a computer system means the service is less dependant on volunteers (availability and reliability). Emphasis is on a 24 hour service, not just the live hours when presenters are on air. A good speaking voice and community spirit is more important than an aspiration to be a dee-jay. NHR is an affordable, (the radio service is free to all patients once registered, long term patients go onto a lower tariff for TV and telephone) sustainable (the hospital does not charge rent) respected service.

Norma Talbert

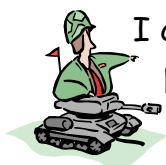
Passing of a President

Richmond U3A was saddened by the loss of their President, Grace Buckle, who died in January at the age of 94. Grace founded Richmond U3A in 1997 and was Chairman for a number of years, during which time she regularly attended the Regional meetings in Pity Me. She was a member of Richmond Town Council for many years and served a year as Mayor of Richmond. However the U3A was always close to her heart and she attended committee meetings and group meetings till the end of her life. This life was celebrated with a memorial service in the Quaker House in the beautiful village of Bainbridge where she once lived.

Pat Croft, Richmond

Ponteland goes to Print

"As convenor of the Local History group of Ponteland, I persuaded members that it would be a good idea if we all wrote something of our wartime experiences with the objective of putting them together into a booklet.



I collected 28 contributions from our members and added some photographs, drawings and a selection of wartime leaflets sent out by the Ministry of Information. We then used a local printer who undertook to have the material printed and bound into a 60 page booklet entitled "Our Wartime Memories".

This has been an interesting and worthwhile project, which we recommend to other U3As. One of our local middle schools has already purchased several copies and is using it to enhance the pupils learning about the Second World War. It has been suggested that some of the contributors could talk to the pupils about their experiences.



The booklet is priced at £5 or can be posted to anywhere in the UK for £6.50. Please get in touch with me (01661 822178) or any Ponteland member."

writes Leslie Almond

I hope that this will have whetted your appetite to read our booklet and perhaps go on and produce something similar on your own behalf. Certainly, we were surprised at the diverse range of experiences which came to light,

adds Gillian Williams, Chairman, Ponteland

Education and Development in Northumbria Region

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

Air Ambulance called to Teesdale

It just goes to show.... you never know what is around the corner.... as I found out when I set off in my trusty Mini one morning.

It was 23rd February when I went off to meet up with the other Teesdale U3A Fellwalkers at Hanging Shaw Car Park. Our aim was to go up Cronkley Fell! The weather was not wonderful but six of us set off. We had been walking for about an hour when I had a dispute with a slippery stone in the stream by the side of the River Tees
Down I went, immobilised!

The events after this were well recorded on camera for our newsletter!

It was decided that HELP was needed, so I am very grateful to my companions who quickly sought help, giving excellent GPS points and a description of the location to enable the emergency services to respond. Mobile reception is notoriously bad up Teesdale but the use of the international emergency number 112 succeeded when 999 failed. Meanwhile three of us waited inside the **portable U3A bivouac**, bought with grant aid.

This proved to be invaluable as not only did it keep us warm and dry but the Air Ambulance men said it made

finding us much easier as it is bright orange.

I was stretchered away into a waiting Air Ambulance as the ambulance and paramedics who were also near the scene by this time couldn't reach the actual accident spot. The journey to hospital took no time at all but I missed the view. Once there I was treated very well. I am most grateful to all concerned and was most appreciative of the generous donation collected, at the U3A meeting, for the Great North Air Ambulance. We really never know when any of us will need the emergency services.

It was certainly good that we were prepared; the GPS and mobile phone were invaluable as well as the bivouac and it certainly helped that several of us had just had **first aid training with our U3A**. However if any of you are unfortunate enough to end up in this situation and a friend can't fly with you, make sure you have money, keys and dry clothing with you.



Thanks again to all, I will now be known as "Calamity Jane" no doubt.

Kathleen Howcroft, Teesdale



Heaven & Hell - a great success

Eighty lucky members from 13 U3As spent an exceptional day on 18th March at the Laing Art Gallery with John Martin (in spirit) and some of his paintings.

Dr Barbara Morden shared her enthusiasm and knowledge of a local man, born in Haydon on Bridge, who made, and lost, several fortunes with his painting and engravings, his interest in engineering and architecture and gave us insight into his world-wide impact then and now.

Barbara's two presentations in the morning on Martin the man, then Martin the painter gave intense background for us to view his works in the exhibition during lunch time.

We then returned to have Barbara the expert answer our questions with yet more insight into the complex man that inspired her to write her book - *John Martin: Apocalypse Now*. The written words cannot do justice to project the author that gave us so much of her time

I hope that she will come back to the Region with another presentation next year.

John Lloyd for Events Sub Committee

A repeat of this event is to be held on 7th April but is already oversubscribed. Ed.



Wearside experiences: A happy event in more ways than one!



We thoroughly enjoyed the visit, which was very well organised by John Lloyd.

The company should be congratulated on the programme provided for us all - a guided tour of the extensive plant, followed by tea/coffee, cheese and biscuits with an introductory talk on wine production given by the company's Quality Assurance Manager. There then followed a 2-hour session with Mr Tony Cleary, the Managing Director of the company, who tutored us on the correct way to 'nose' and savour wines and then we were, under Mr Cleary's expert guidance, able to appreciate generous samples of 12 wines (poured by his two charming daughters) from various regions of the world.

It was a very happy coachload of participants on the journey back to Sunderland!

Susanne and Keith Williamson

A learning experience for Marian and me since we did not know there was one of the largest bottling plants in Europe right on our doorstep.

Looking round the plant was very interesting, very high standards of hygiene, even the visitors had to wear supplied hair nets. It made us wonder if the producers of the wine ensured the workers washed their feet before treading the grapes?

The highlight of the trip was the tasting of some of the fine wines that were bottled there. Not all members drank all the supplied samples, we did. Very good descriptions and costs of the wine were given out. How did we get home? Frankly we don't remember. We definitely recommend John organises another trip to Lanchester Wines. Please note red wine is known to have health promoting properties.

David and Marian Bowman



Booking 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.

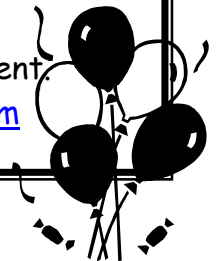
Barry Keane's dramatic presentation '**Never Too Old to Learn**' is an entertaining look at ageing and learning.

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



Fancy a glass of wine?

Visits to **Lanchester Wine Cellars** (see page 10) are possible by U3As with prior booking during the day. Numbers need to be between 25 & 40 and costs for the tour --coffee -- cheese ----wine tasting will be approx £10 per head.

If figures impress -
they can fill 14,000 bottles an hour. They average 1,000,000 litres a week.

For more details contact - johnlloyd73@hotmail.com

Freshers' "Week" at Whitley Bay....



Well; Cullercoats actually, but to extend the analogy of a University, 28 hopefuls had completed their UCCA forms, citing Whitley Bay U3A as their first choices, had been cleared, vetted and selected and invitations had been extended to them to attend a welcome meeting prior to their actual joining. 27 of the 28 turned up on Wednesday 9th February at Cullercoats Methodist Church Hall by 2pm. This was the 3rd or 4th of such meetings in the past 2 years.



As previously they were greeted by members of the Committee and many of the current group leaders who generated warmth and understanding for the newcomers. Some of them had only been on the "waiting list" a matter of weeks. Unlike a real Freshers' Week this was only going to last a couple of hours. The candidates were not about to be showered with promotional tee-shirts, key-rings, pens, ring-binders and the like. Nor were they offered complementary Happy Hour, Buy-one-get-one-free, eat-as-much-as-you-like-for-a-fiver deals at the local hostelrys, night-clubs and food-outlets. Instead they were treated to a short, introductory talk by Chairman, Margaret Scanlon, a brief explanatory outline of U3A financial matters by the Treasurer, Maureen Naulls and an overview of current group activities by the appropriate leaders. A short Whitley Bay produced DVD of an outing on a Routemaster bus was followed by the up-to-date version of the Northumbria Region DVD, which had most of them clamouring to pay their subscriptions. An informal period followed with everyone circulating, asking questions and in some instances renewing old friendships as well as creating new ones.

If there had been a risk of any of them escaping without joining, Molly Herridge's tea and scones and Ann Wilson's fairy cakes put paid to that. Result: 28 new members and an extremely successful and enjoyable afternoon. Who needs a free tee-shirt anyway?



Wanted

Can you play a recorder?

Northallerton, Ponteland, Wooler and Morpeth recorder players are meeting at

**Merton Hall, Ponteland
on Saturday, 14th May from 12 noon
for a Recorder workshop
with Professional conductor John Hawkes in attendance**

If you would like to join us, please ring Joyce McKay on 01677 450 494
Bring your own picnic lunch

U3A readers are 1st & 3rd

Four teams representing Ashington U3A competed at Ashington Library in a General Knowledge/Quiz afternoon on 5th March. There were (I think) ten teams altogether from organisations in the area. Questions were also included in a mailing sent to the teams about books and their authors which had to be memorised. (This caused plenty gnashing of teeth and the burning of midnight oil).

Marking was done by passing each team's papers to their neighbouring table to avoid any cheating (there are none of these in a U3A team) although one team's answer as to where in a garden would you find a gnomon, (it's the triangular part of a

sun-dial) was to say 'in a sunny spot' we thought was pushing it a bit.

Half-way through the afternoon we all enjoyed 'a cup that cheers' - the library's tea-urn proving the point that 'a watched pot never other boils', plus scones and muffins from Ashington's Deli-Licious restaurant (very aptly named).

At the end of the afternoon the result was

- 1st. Ashington U3A (team 1)
- 2nd Ashington Library Staff
- Joint 3rd Ashington U3A (team 2) and Ashington Institute.

Prizes of chocolates and wine were given and every participant received a paper-back copy of one of the books from the original mailing.

Norma Talbot

Booking 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

Looking back - as far as 2,000,000 years -

Tynedale is thriving. Numbers have gone back to well over 400. This has been in part due to public coffee mornings in winter plus a planned one for April which has raised our profile resurgence on group numbers. We trust they will survive our necessary increase in fees. As well as regular local meetings there have been more extended visits.

Our Travel Club will be in **Coniston** this October and in **Normandy** next spring. The Botany group plan to visit **Harlow Carr** in April and **Lindisfarne** in June while our Geology group will soon be visiting **Cyprus** and our Science group will be studying at **Whittledene**.

The Art & Appreciation group have visited the **Oriental Museum in Durham** and plan further trips to **Cherryburn** and **Cragside**.

For some years we have had an active Museums Visits group organised by one of our members, a retired museums curator. We plan four visits a year - three day trips and a longer excursion. A party of 50 of us recently visited the recently renovated **Yorkshire Museum** which proved a total delight. Having viewed the Roman, Mediaeval and Natural History Galleries in the morning we spent the afternoon with the Senior Curator who both entertained and educated us. We went behind the scenes and were encouraged to handle artefacts that were even older than us ...some by 2 million years. We cannot recommend this museum too highly.

....and forward a few months

Open to all



Annual public lecture organised by our five Literature/Book Groups
This year it will take place in **Hexham on November 4th**
when the cultural historian extraordinaire **Gail-Nina Anderson**
will be talking on **Shakespeare In Art**.

We are in the **early stages** organising a **U3A Art & Craft Exhibition**

We would be pleased to offer
lunch and guided tours of the town/ Hexham Abbey to other U3As.

Our convenor did some consultancy work at the **Georgian Theatre in Richmond** last year and had promised to bring a U3A party to view this wonderful building. He is planning to do this in late November and has suggested that we would take over the theatre for a **preview of their famous pantomime**. We do hope that other U3As might join us for a pre-Christmas party.

If you would like more information about these or other forthcoming events invitations please contact our Chairman:

Jenny Lewis telephone 01434 608257 or - e-mail carstone@waitrose.co



Northumbria Region Trustee's Report

There is an NEC meeting on the 23rd/24th March and as the newsletter deadline is this weekend I won't be able to bring you totally up to date. I and your committee have been busy putting in the budget from the TAT for next year. It looks as if we will get the funding we require. However I would like everyone to bear in mind that we are not funded for our events, these have to be self-supporting.

At the last NEC meeting I was asked to say how many new U3As we hoped to start in the Region and I preferred that we could possibly be starting three. However after our Awareness Day early in March and by talking to people it looks like there might be the potential for more. If your U3A has a problem with waiting lists or know of someone in a town in your area that would possibly like a U3A please let me know. It is important that no one is left out and that everyone who wants to be part of our marvellous organisation has the opportunity to become involved.

As I said before we had an Awareness Day and a few members from the Region came forward who would possibly be prepared to help with the start up of new U3As. Our present EDCs explained their roll and we went through the procedure for starting a U3A. We have another meeting at the end of the month and hopefully we will be able to increase our number of U3As.

I was invited to present the membership certificate to Seaham Harbour U3A in February. I was delighted to see how they have grown and how enthusiastic they are. It is good to see that they are keen to become involved in the Region as well and are well represented at regional meetings.

We do need new blood on the Regional Committee. It is good to have people with past experience of the movement in order to give new members the benefit of their knowledge but we do need volunteers to shadow so that the same people are not doing all the work. A commitment to do something in U3A, be it a Group Leader, Co-ordinator, committee member or whatever, should not be a life sentence. It is not fair that the same people carry on forever doing all the work. They may be doing a very good job but they also have a life, possibly outside of the U3A in some cases. We are a self-help organisation and we should be helping our fellow members.

I was disappointed that no one has come forward with recommendations of people who have had life changing experiences through the U3A. It will be a shame if the Northumbria Region is not represented in this exercise at the AGM in September. If you know of someone or you yourself would like to send something to me, just a few words and maybe a picture, I will forward it on.

*Joyce Watts, Regional Trustee
March 2011*

A philosopher went into a restaurant and ordered a chicken salad sandwich and an egg salad sandwich to find out which would arrive first.

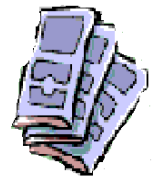
Project War Memorials



As ' U3A Wessington War Memorials Project' we meet regularly and work in partnership with Washington History Society. We have researched the men on Harraton, Washington and Usworth War Memorials. We are developing folders for the men named on these Memorials which detail their lives and the circumstances of the deaths, illustrating with photographs from newspapers of the time, and of their graves and cemeteries we have visited in France, UK, Belgium and Germany. There may be a possibility of printing copies for use in the Washington libraries.



Our display highlights the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, The War Memorial Trust and the North-East War Memorials Project. We also include a map of the Harraton parish in the early part of the 20th century with relevant information.....visitors will be offered the opportunity of adding further details to extend our knowledge base.



One of our intentions is to raise awareness of the existence of War Memorials in Washington and the need for their restoration and upkeep. In order to do this we have established links with the local primary school, the Sixth Form College who may work with us on the project, the local Arts Centre and Church as well as Sunderland Council.

We hope on the Heritage Day (see below) to meet the wider community to 'spread the word' about our U3A project and hopefully increase the membership of Wessington U3A. Ours is a work in progress which would be rather more difficult to complete, if we ever do, were it not for the opportunity of working with like-minded people.

Margaret Welsh

**Washington Heritage Day is
on Saturday 18th September
held at 'F' Pit at Concord in Washington
for more details contact Wessington U3A**

On behalf of members of the Northumbria Region we would like to thank the members of the Regional Committee, the Development and Events sub committees for all their hard work during the past year.

We have enjoyed more regional get-togethers than ever before.

Thanks also go to individual U3As who have organised open events.

Between them all they have included science, the arts, celebrations and outdoor pursuits.

There's no excuse for boredom in U3A - it's all there for the sharing.

Will YOU give a helping hand next year? Contact the Chairman (pg 18)

Birdwatching Group News

Last year saw the eleventh year of our day outings and longer trips. The annual Christmas lunch at Washington Wetland Centre had to be postponed for snow, as did a February trip to Croxdale because of blizzard conditions. Apart from that it was another very successful year

Our itinerary covered Northumberland, Durham, North Yorkshire and South Cumbria, plus trips abroad to the Greek island of Lesvos in spring and Bulgaria in autumn. This year, as well as local visits, we plan to visit The New Forest in spring, and Norfolk / Suffolk in autumn. Unlike some U3A groups who restrict

their activities to their own members, we welcome any member of Northumbria Region on our outings. Last year we had members from South Tyneside, Ryton, Newcastle, Morpeth, Mid Northumberland, Whitley Bay and Tynedale U3A's join our local outings at one time or another, augmented by members from West Cumbria U3A on our trips abroad.



Anyone interested can contact me on col_free@yahoo.co.uk

Our current programme is on the Regional Website,

<http://www.nru3a.co.uk>

Fame comes to Washington

Ever wondered if the letters in the Radio Times are genuine? Some of them seem to appear in print almost before the programme has gone off the screen. Many of you will be able to confirm they are indeed genuine. You would have spotted one a few weeks ago from Pat Gauntlett - a longstanding member of Washington U3A. Pat had spotted a familiar dress in one of the dramas. Proof positive that real people do write and are accepted. There was even a photograph of her. Well done, Pat.

ALNWICK'S GEOLOGY GROUP



We are a group of about 16 people who enjoy monthly meetings which, in the winter months are in members' houses but in the remainder of the year are used for fieldwork.

We have been working our way up the geological succession of Northumberland and the Borders, attempting to understand the sequence of events over the last 400 million years! In addition, some of our members take part in longer expeditions to more distant parts of northern England - so far we have looked at Upper Teesdale, Yorkshire's Jurassic coast and the limestone scenery of the Malham area.



But recently **our studies have taken a new and exciting turn**. The Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has, as part of its geodiversity action plan, involved us in doing some work for them. **We are writing 'geotrails'** based on 3 selected areas of the coast: Bamburgh, Craster and Cullernose Point, and Boulmer to Howick. They are illustrated guides to the geology and scenery of the area, written in terms which will, we hope, be comprehensible and interesting to people - local residents and tourists - who visit the region and feel they would like to understand a bit more about what they are looking at and why it looks the way it does.

The guides, when completed, can be accessed via the website:

(www.northumberland.gov.uk and follow the link to the A.O.N.B) and can be downloaded and printed for users to take with them on their walks. It is hoped to have them written by the end of March so they should be available for the holiday season.

J Hannon

U3A Northumbria Region Committee

Elected at the AGM in May 2010, 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	Pat Moore	pat@redburn27.freereserve.co.uk
Committee Member	Len Cline	leonardcline@talktalk.net
<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

Snippets from around the Region

Are we all one U3A or are we individual U3As? The front cover of the last *U3A News* has prompted discussion on this oft talked about subject. The quarter millionth member of which U3A? And the next question on the same topic - If we don't have a national database and several members belong to more than one U3A how does anyone know how many members there are all together?

Music lovers have been listening to music which changed a member's life - music ranging from classical to modern pop. Others have been following ballet.



George Jameson, retired dentist in Teesdale, leads a group of U3A members researching dental services in Teesdale as part of a Voice North project.

Vermeer seemed a popular topic for Art Appreciation groups, recently backed by the BBC series "Private Life of a Masterpiece" or a DVD fronted by Melvyn Bragg. Salvador Dali and Hogarth are promised shortly.

Alan Denham of Sunderland joined the ubiquitous John Lloyd in the letters column of *U3A News*, discussing the merits, or otherwise, of Windows, Linus and Ubuntu.

Recommended reading includes:



- *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett - amusing and heart-rending, set in USA
- *The Dark Side of Love* by Rafik Schami - love and intrigue in Middle East
- *The Long Song* by Andrea Levy - 'autobiography' of Jamaican slave
- *South Yorkshire* by Winifred Holtby - much better than the TV serial

The harsh winter didn't deter many gardeners. They have attended lectures, watched videos and/or visited garden centres. The History of Gardens - a free on-line U3A course - was backed up by Alan Titchmarsh's series on BBC TV



Reminder: English Heritage allows free entry for any group on an education visit. Go to www.english-heritage.org/education for details.

Other interesting websites include:

www.laraproject.net

LARA (Learning - A Response to Ageing) - full of interesting ideas and help for anyone interested in continuing to develop, or try new interests for themselves or as a group leader. One member of the team is Professor John Benyon of Leicester University who is a speaker at the annual conference in Nottingham.

<http://creative-writing-course.thecraftywriter.com/>

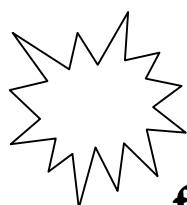
A free 8-session course to work through at your own speed. The basis for a study group?



Dates for your diary



Tuesday, 5th April	Study Day at Woodhorn with Ashington U3A
Thursday, 7th April	"Heaven & Hell" lectures and exhibition at Laing Art Gallery. (Fully booked.)
11th-14th April incl.	Residential/non-Residential Science School at Durham University. Non-residential places available. (see page 3)
Wednesday 27th April	Regional Meeting & AGM - 9.45am for 10.15am at The Angel View Inn, Gateshead
Saturday 14th May	Recorder Workshop at Ponteland (See page 12)
Wednesday 18th May	Literature Day at Stockton U3A
Saturday 11th June	Deadline for next <i>Northumbria Messenger</i>
Tuesday, 5th July	25th Anniversary Celebrations at Stockton U3A
Tuesday, 26th July	Literary Lunch with author Mike Pannett, Darlington
Wednesday 27th July	Regional Meeting - 9.45am for 10.15am at The Angel View Inn, Gateshead
Saturday 17th Sept to Monday 19th September	U3A National Conference & AGM in Nottingham

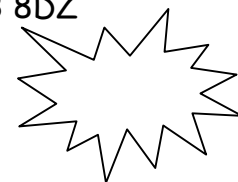


**Final copy date
for the next edition of The Northumbria Messenger is
Saturday 11th June 2011**

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