



Northumbria Region U3A Newsletter

JULY 2007



Thirty four U3A's and counting

Letter from your Chairman

This being in fact my first letter to you, I think I will begin by thanking all members of the committees. They have had a great deal of work. Having said this, it is difficult to pay tribute to a committee without also thanking all those members who have contributed over the years. It is inevitable that, concepts initiated in one year, are completed by a new committee the following year. I would however, like to thank Sandy Hood for the editing of the newsletter over the past years, thanks for a job very well done Sandy, and to welcome David Grundy to the team as new editor.

Grateful thanks go to Development Officer Margaret Minns and the members who helped to support the 5 new groups in our Region.

We are very grateful to John Leiper, our representative at National level. John spent three years getting the regional constitution in such a form that we actually got charity status! Without which we would not have got the grants for 19th July.

This year as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of U3A we recognise that our founder members worked very hard to establish vibrant successful U3A's and indeed harder to form Northumbria Region U3A and to gain recognition for the Region.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to attend the Regional meetings. We want the meetings to be interesting and enjoyable so, if you have any ideas about what you would like to see happening at regional level please pass on your thoughts to a member of the committee.

All members are welcome at Regional meetings.

Do get involved in your local U3A as much as possible and keep as your main object the joy of teaming from each other in an environment of mutual respect and caring.

Do support Regional events and discover new friends over a much wider area. Come and learn from each other and discover new ways of doing things and new ideas for groups.

Your U3A will only be as good as you help to make it.

Greetings to you all.

Doris Dobson—Regional Chairman.

News from the Region

A while ago now I wrote (emailed) to all of the 34 U3A's in the Northumbria Region and asked them to provide some information about their U3A to go into the newsletter as a basis for the future structure of the newsletter. Amongst the things I asked them all to provide was:

- how many members do you have?
- how many of your members are involved in your groups?
- give a list of your groups
- does your U3A have its own newsletter, and what do you put in it?
- does your U3A have any involvement with your local community, and what is this involvement?
- has your U3A done anything special for the 25th Anniversary Celebrations of the U3A's in Great Britain?
- what are your plans for the future of your U3A?
- anything else that makes your U3A special to its members

In general give us a précis of your U3A, tell us what you do, what makes your U3A interesting to its members, give us all some feedback about your U3A.

I have received some responses, not as many as I would have liked, but I suppose fifteen out of thirty four is something, even if not quite enough.

Aycliffe U3A

Aycliffe U3A can best be described as small but sweet. After 18 months, our membership only stands at around 40, but we are really really keen.

The more sedentary cerebral activities of reading and bridge are our strongest groups, although walking, visits to stately homes and lunches are well attended; Computing, Crafts and Italian have all had an airing, and Musical Appreciation and Genealogy are on the cards.



Not all of our members, however, commit themselves to group activities—some just want to come along once a month for a cup of coffee, chat with friends and to listen to one of our excellent program of speakers.

Our Chairman produces a fantastic newsletter every couple of months. This started off as two sides of an A4 sheet and has since developed into a sixteen page booklet, printed in colour and packed with details of activities, national and regional events, reports of committee proceedings, monthly meetings, tips for healthy living and, of course, jokes!

What makes us special? Everyone knows everyone else and new members quickly become old friends.

Chris Ainscough

Cestria U3A at Chester-le-Street

Cestria U3A has just celebrated its first birthday, inaugurated in May of 2006 we now have 107 members and we are slowly growing all the time. The majority of our members are located in Chester-le-Street and its environs with some from other surrounding towns and villages.

We hold our monthly meetings and most of our activity group meetings at the Parish Centre on Church Chare in the centre of Chester-le-Street. Everyone is welcome to come along and see what we do at our monthly meeting at 10:00 o'clock on the first Wednesday of every month throughout the year.

As a U3A group we are delighted at the growth of our U3A and we have several varied and interesting groups for our members, these are currently:

Ambling and Coffee
Environmental Discussion
Family History
Geology
Healthy Living
Good Reads
Music Appreciation

Outings
Political Discussion
Scrabble
Short walks (3 to 5 miles)
Water Colour Flower Painting
Writers Workshop

We have a lively newsletter published each quarter throughout the year which gives news from the activity groups, an attempt to increase interest in starting new groups by telling everyone how well the existing ones are progressing.

Our contact with other local organisations is non-existent, although we are members of the Chester-le-Street Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) which will be a great help to us with any applications we might make for any grant funding.

As for the involvement with the Regional U3A Celebrations in July we have one of our members giving a couple of talks on 'Complementary Therapies—see how they work for you' and a number of our members are acting as stewards for the day.

Our plans for the future development of our U3A are to keep increasing our membership over time, and to add to our existing activity groups base with an equally exciting menu of subjects to that which have at present.

Our U3A is special to us, we have members who have made new friends and re acquainted themselves with old friends they had lost touch with over the years, we have a hard working committee who look after the affairs of Cestria U3A very well.

Cestria U3A take this opportunity to wish all of the U3A's in the Northumbria Region the very best of good wishes for the future.

David Grundy

Anarchism is founded on the observation that since few men are wise enough to rule themselves, even fewer are wise enough to rule others.

Edward Abbey

Cowtons and the Countryside U3A

COWTONS AND THE COUNTRYSIDE U3A is in its third year of life with all of its 63 members actively involved in their choice of groups.

Currently, the groups we offer are:

Art	French
Art Appreciation	Gardening
Books	German
Bridge	Walkers
Canasta	

We also have a monthly meeting with a speaker. The groups are advertised monthly in our newsletter delivered to members.

We were formed when our local church annexe was able to be built, using a legacy and funds from DEFRA. We were able to apply for these funds as our local community had been hard hit by the foot and mouth disease, but part of the conditions stipulated that the local community would benefit.

It was decided to try to set up a rural group serving the villages and farming communities around East Cowton and a steering committee was formed.

The annexe is used for some of our meetings and provides a focal point for the U3A.

We continue to attract new members and have ideas for more groups in the future as people do not have to travel so far, or to towns to be part of the U3A.

There is a good friendly atmosphere with members enjoying learning together.

Sylvia Aitken—Secretary

Darlington U3A

We have had approximately 300 members for the last few years and all of the members are involved in one or more of our groups.

Our groups are Walking—there are two groups, Scrabble, Hand Bell Ringing, Line Dancing. Art Appreciation. Practical Art, Literature, Handcrafts, Creative Writing, Bridge, Whist, Jazz Appreciation, Poetry Reading and Classical Music Appreciation. Additionally, we have a very active garden group which organises visits to open gardens and also organises garden visit holidays. There is a theatre group which arranges group bookings at local and nearby theatres,

The purely social side of our U3A is not neglected. We have a Luncheon Club which meets monthly and a monthly coffee morning.

We don't produce a newsletter but at each monthly meeting a diary sheet is distributed to all members outlining the activities on offer for that month. One week before the monthly meeting our committee meet to conduct U3A business and plan future events.

We do not have any particular involvement with the local community but support various appeals from time to time as appropriate. For the celebration of the U3A in Great Britain we are concentrating on supporting the Regional Celebrations in July .

Since the last newsletter all our groups have been active. The newly formed Jazz and Poetry groups are growing and the Walking Group has organised a holiday to Spain. The Garden Group started their season with a lecture, and they have visited the Alnwick Garden, the tree house was especially enjoyed. Their next visit was to Holker Hall including the Lakeland Motor Museum. The June visit started off very wet but the weather improved and all voted the gardens at Thorton Hall the best they had ever seen. The group have a very full programme arranged for the remainder of the season. More of this in the next news letter.

Harry Gibbs

Easington & District U3A

Here at Easington U3A we have a membership of 75 and an average attendance of 45 to 50 members at our monthly meetings which are held at the Methodist Church Hall on the third Wednesday of each month. We are a friendly, approachable crowd and growing in size and interests.

We have several groups such as Walking, Strollers, clubs for Books, Theatre, Gardening, Lunches and Outings, and an Art Group. We also have a few members who have joined a local Cycling Group.

We do publish our own newsletter and our Editor Kath works very hard to present to us a newsy, amusing and informative read which is avidly read by all.

Our very hard-working and supportive Committee meet periodically to make sure that all ideas and needs are aired and met with enthusiasm and efficiency.

Wherever possible we publicise our U3A in our local area and make full use of the local Further Education College for any of our needs.



Our recently formed Gardening Club has been working hard and enthusiastically in our allotment and it is looking very good. Unfortunately, the recent inclement weather has messed things up a bit, but it is all in the learning curve and we'll do better next time!

Our Outings Club has proved to be very popular and our leader Derek has worked very hard to provide us with some very interesting and thoroughly enjoyable days out. The Theatre Club has also proved to be very popular and we try to please all tastes as much as possible.

We have had some very interesting and amusing Speakers at our monthly meetings and our Speaker Finders have put in many hours of hard work providing interesting people to listen to and to learn from. Hats off to them, they do a very important job, and they do it well too.

Finally, our hardworking Refreshment Team who provide the very welcoming Tea, Coffee and Biscuits to all who enter our meetings and then spend much time clearing the decks afterwards. We do have a rota so that the load is shared and fellowship and goodwill prevails.

All-in-all, we here at Easington are proud of our U3A and welcome anyone who would like to come and visit us and see what we are about. Please DO come and see us!

Frances Nelson

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the places and moments that take our breath away.

Anon

Middlesbrough U3A

Middlesbrough U3A has operational for just one year, in that time we have enrolled 124 members with a number involved in our groups, the exact figure is unknown.

Our 18 groups are quite varied in nature and content and are:

Bridge for returners

Coffee mornings (2)

Computers (one to one)

Computers (class and clinic)

Osteoporosis support (also gentle walks)

Spanish

Swimming

Theatre Studies

French Conversation
Gardens
Jazz Appreciation
Luncheon Club

Traditional Music
Walks (2 groups)
Watercolour Painting
20th Century music

Being "the new kid on the block" in Teesside, I would like to co-operate in some way with Stockton, Stokesley and Saltburn, but don't know how, or how to organise it. Would any of them like to suggest a method?

We have a bi-monthly newsletter which informs us about the walks and speaker programs, details of all the groups with their leader details, local and regional U3A news and national news, for example competitions, singing days etc. We also include details of local non U3A events in our area, for example tai Chi classes held elsewhere.

We have every little official contact with other community organisations.

Some of our members are contributing to the Northumbria Region U3A terrific jamboree in July.

Our aims and plans for Middlesbrough U3A are to expand gradually.

Our U3A is unique. There is no other association in the area combining opportunities for study and socialising in the same way.

Marion Bolton—Secretary

Northallerton U3A

Northallerton U3A is in its sixteenth year. Started by three gentlemen, Joel Fiskin, Ted Hartley and Jim Foster who all identified a need for an organisation that embraced the learning and social needs of the over 50s in Northallerton. The principles underlying the U3A appealed to them and they used their considerable skills and boundless energy to create our U3A which is currently vibrant and thriving.

At the end of May we had 318 members. We have main monthly, where we socialise, listen to our speaker, advertise and organise future events, such as holidays, theatre visits and trips. the average attendance at these meetings is 160.

There are 36 groups at Northallerton U3A and these include:

Painting and Sketching	Games
Family History	Armchair Travel
Health Matters	Creative Writing
Reading for Pleasure	Singing for Pleasure
German	Gardening
Recorders	Archaeology
Jazz	Science
Walking Groups (four in number)	Media/IT
Natural History	Discussions
Keep Fit (two in number)	Music Study
Film Appreciation	Badminton
French	Food and Recipes
Computers	Astronomy
Absolute Beginners French	English Language and Literature
Listening to Music	Down Memory Lane
Monthly General Knowledge Quiz	Theatre Outings

The majority of our group activities take place in the Forum, numbers vary from 6 to 8 for the German Language group to as many as 45 on a walk

Additionally we hold a monthly coffee morning.

The U3A produces a diary which shows timetables for all groups, gives details of speakers, forthcoming events and contact numbers for Group Coordinators, Membership Secretary, Group Convenor and our Almoner. This is available at our main meetings, in the local libraries, the Tourist Information Office and The Forum.

We are planning to hold a cheese and wine evening at the end of September to celebrate the 25th anniversary of U3A's in Britain.

Maggy Grocott—Chairman

Ponteland U3A

Following an AGM in February we currently have 252 paid up members of which 23 are new members. 2006/7 members (33), who had not renewed at the end of May 2007 are being personally contacted by members of the Committee.

Ponteland U3A has 30 special interest groups in which about 80% of members participate. We have a programme for monthly meetings set out at the beginning of the year, from April onwards, with a speaker or special entertainment, for example December.

There is an attendance of about 100 to each of our monthly meetings so it can be seen that many members are involved only in the study groups. We have a convenor/organiser of new special interest groups and she has organised the inception of three new groups in the last two years. One of these, Tai Chi, performed at the Northumbria Region U3A celebrations of the 25th Anniversary of U3A in Britain.

We publish a newsletter about our activities three times each year and produce an annual report from all groups for the AGM.



Our main involvement with the community is a display at “Ponteland in the Park” each June—organised by Churches Together this is very well attended each year. Our Choral Group put on a Charity Concert which is open to the public each year. We have been fully involved in the Regional 25th Anniversary celebrations at New College, Durham—being quite near, there is opportunity for members to participate and attend.

We hold an annual meeting each September of all convenors of our Special Interest/Study Groups when a report is presented on the activities held and plans for the future. Each year we have a special welcome meeting for new members in a member’s home where new members can declare their special interests to the Committee—a source of ideas for new special interest groups.

The wide range of quality speakers and the variety of Special Interest Groups makes U3A one of the strongest activity groups in Ponteland. The special interest groups at Ponteland U3A are:

A Good Read	Gardening Group II
Another Good Read	Geology Group
A Third Good Read	German Intermediate
Art Group I	Italian Intermediate
Art Group II	Italian Advanced
Bird Watching	Local History
Botany Group	Luncheon Club
Bridge – Improvers	Poetry Group
Bridge Club	Photography Group
Choral Group	Scrabble Group
Computer Group	Spanish Conversation
Family History	Vegetable and Plant Growing
French Conversation	Short Walks Group
French Intermediate	Writing for Fun
Gardening Group I	

Syd Cowan—Vice Chairman

Richmond U3A

At the moment Richmond U3A has 81 members. Roughly 50 members are involved in our groups which at the moment are: Art Appreciation, Book Club, Cinema Club, French, Gardening, German, History, Oral History, Music, Mah Jong, Play Reading, Poetry [Reading for pleasure], Poetry Study, Walking and a Luncheon Club.

We have our own Newsletter which is published once a month and is used mostly to give information about the activity groups and the dates of their meetings. It also contains news of forthcoming events and any information the secretary has to pass on to the members.

Our involvement with our local community raises funds for our U3A at a yearly Coffee Morning held in Richmond Town Hall, this also helps us to publicise Richmond U3A. At our event in June we circulated newsletters and other information about our U3A.



In the future we would like to attract more men as they are very much in the minority, though we are making slow progress! Something like an Architecture Group or a Science Group might help to tempt them in, but nobody is coming forward to start one.

Richmond U3A is comparatively small but we feel that this is not always a disadvantage. Our general meetings are well attended, happy occasions when people mix easily with one another. At the last meeting our speaker had to cancel so we took the opportunity to use some of our Oral History to stimulate discussion and this was a great success with members asking whether we could do it again sometime.

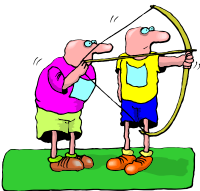
Pat Croft—Secretary

Ryton U3A

Ryton U3A boasts around 95 members; this is not definitive, as we shed and gain members in small numbers due to people moving, sadly dying, and new people finding out about us and joining. Most of our members are involved in groups, though some generally feel happy just turning up for our main meetings held monthly to which a speaker is invited, and where we have refreshments prior to the 'talk' (this may be a slide show, demo, video, etc.) The issue times of our magazine are not 'set in stone' but is prepared on a fairly ad hoc basis when it is felt that it is time to update our membership on what is happening generally, the need to inform about specific events, i.e. AGM, Open Days, this summer's celebrations etc. To that end all our members are issued with a magazine, either via main meetings, where those recorded absent are posted copies of the magazine. As a rule of thumb, membership of groups tends to be around twelve, although the Bowls group is much larger and indeed has a waiting list.

Some of our groups also are 'seasonal' in nature, i.e. Garden Visits group generally operates from Spring to Autumn and Walking Groups may have a break when the weather is particularly inclement.

Round year groups are Crafts Group, Games Group, Music Appreciation Group, Reading (for pleasure) Groups, Art Group, Bowls Group and our monthly Coffee Morning. Luncheon Groups operate on a fairly seasonal basis also, and our 'Cultural/Outings' group also is fairly loosely active throughout the year, when the co-ordinator feels there is something or some events which it is felt members may find interesting.



It has been normal practise over the last few years to have a "Day Away" event open to our members where we can visit a place of general interest, and enjoy each other's company for a pleasant day's outing. We have had in recent years visits to a Warner's hotel complex near Richmond, which put on archery, bowls, swimming facilities, beautiful grounds in which our artists were free to draw and paint, and a pleasant chapel to visit. We visited Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle two years ago on the occasion when they had exhibitions of Turner's works, and last year a most enjoyable visit to Skipton (including a visit to the castle) was enjoyed. This year, of course, our 'Day Away' is the 25th year Anniversary Celebration, when we shall be spoilt for choice on what to "taste" in activities!

Our future plans are probably ruled by how our membership goes! If we have someone joining keen to explore other activities - there are rumours we may have someone keen on alternative therapy, that will be another activity to sign up to. The dynamics of our U3A depend absolutely on our membership; the more interesting our members, the more activities we can offer. We are very conscious that our members mostly enlist for pleasure and good company; we are not in the business of making membership a chore, we want people to come because they have an enjoyable time, either physical activity (bowls), stretching ourselves mentally (Reading, Music, Games) and the enjoyment of producing and creating something to be proud of (Crafts and Art). We try to keep administration to a minimum, social activities paramount. We hope we present a welcoming and warm environment where people can come along and make new friends, catch up with old ones they may have lost touch with, and generally spend some pleasant time together. I hope this has given you a flavour of what we feel our U3A is about.

Our involvement in the local community functions usually via members involvement in other community organisations, i.e. many of our members are active in churches, (we are very ecumenical!), other urban U3A branches (Newcastle), housing associations, etc. By the nature of where we are based, Ryton Crawcrook & District Youth Club, we are often drawn in to events the Youth Club hosts, and I think our members enjoy the peripheral contact we have across the age barriers.

Jenny Roberts

Stokesley and District U3A

Stokesley & District U3A began in September 2004, and now has 162 members. Of this number, I estimate that about 25 play an 'active role', by that I mean people who volunteer for the Committee, lead Activity Groups and help at Monthly Meetings. About 60 people take part in Activity Groups, whilst the rest are happy to attend only the Monthly Meeting. The current Activity Groups are:

Natural History	Art History
Armchair Travel	French Conversation
Walking (Short & Long Walk Groups)	Latin for Fun
Reading Group	Mah-jong
Theatre & Concert Group	Play Reading
Bridge	Computer Group (starting in September)
Scrabble	

Our U3A has a Newsletter which is issued 4 or 5 times a year and usually runs to four pages. The content is usually general news about our U3A and forthcoming events from the Activity Groups, but the editor is keen to include other topics relating to people in our U3A or interesting items from the Activity Groups, for example, a report on interesting places visited by the Natural History Group.

Our U3A doesn't have any direct involvement with the community, other than providing an enjoyable social environment for people to meet. We also of course hire rooms in the Town Hall, Community Centre, Library and local village halls, thereby support these by putting income into their upkeep.

We have no plans to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the U3A in Stokesley, but about a dozen of our members will be attending the celebrations in Durham, with one member, me, presenting a talk on art history.

As for the future, we are very keen to expand our range of activities, but face the problem of getting people to make a commitment to lead a group. The rapid expansion in member numbers over the past year has resulted in the Committee thinking about a new venue for Monthly Meetings. So far we have not felt the need to restrict numbers or limit entry to any Activity Group.

Tony Daniels



A sign spotted outside a toyshop in Norwich:
"Superman Returns Toys." -- He quite obviously wasn't satisfied with them.



Washington U3A 2007.

Membership at Washington U3A is held at 127 due to a combination of the size of hall we use for our monthly meetings and good attendances.

About 50% of our members are involved in the 15 activity groups which are:

Digital Photography	Relaxation
Computing	Scrabble
Dominoes	Singing
Family History	Strolling
Gardening	Travel
Ladies Swimming	Walking
Luncheon Club	Whist.
Pergamano	

Our own newsletter gives full details of our activities during the previous month and any future outings along with items from the region.

Washington U3A is not directly involved in the community as not all of our membership is from Washington, however, some of our members are active in other community organisations but as individuals.

We have taken part in the Northumbria Region U3A 25th Anniversary Celebrations but we have not planned our own event, as our speakers are planned well in advance. We may attempt something once the summer holidays are over.

We are making up a team to help with the checking of "Shoebboxes" for the charity Samaritans Purse. This starts in November for 3 or 4 weeks in a warehouse in Durham. We have no other plans at the

present time as we have just moved premises used for the activity groups, and have now got a regular outlay that we previously didn't have.

We are a little stagnated as we have no room for expansion of groups or membership. The possible outcome may be to form another U3A. The formation of Cestria U3A at Chester-le-Street did take the weight off a little bit, but it was not a cure only a temporary easement.

Our monthly speaker meetings are well attend by about 80 people each month. Some members we rarely see from year to year and we wonder why they renew. We did try gently asking if they really wanted to be members when we had others waiting to join, which resulted in several not renewing. In one case they had not attended anything for 3 years and their daughter just paid the money even though they were unfit to attend, and we didn't know.

We have our own website but it is not always up to date.

Pat Gauntlett

Wear-Tees U3A

Wear-Tees has 241 members. with about 200 involved with at least 1 group of which we currently have twenty one, these are:

Art Appreciation, Bowls, Bridge, Computer Studies, Garden Visits, History, Luncheon Club, Music Appreciation, Play Reading, Photography, Poetry, Reading, Strollers, Theatre Visits, two Walking groups, one with 4 to 6 mile walks and another with longer 7 to 10 mile walks, and Wildlife. Additionally, three new groups very recently formed are French Conversation, Italian and Current Affairs.

Unfortunately our newsletter has fallen by the wayside so to speak, it being too much for one person and no volunteer to replace her. However, we do have a PowerPoint presentation at each of our General Meetings.

Our U3A is not involved with the local community as a group, but many of our members are individually involved in other local organisations.

We will be actively involved with the Northumbria Region U3A 25th Anniversary Celebrations on 19 July so we will not be celebrating the anniversary separately.

Whilst we feel that we are reasonably successful at the moment, our Committee is presently considering ways in which we can improve and hopefully encourage more members to become more actively involved in Wear-Tees U3A.

I have been told that our members feel special because of the friendly atmosphere we have tried to create.

Norma Robinson

Anybody can win unless there happens to be a second entry.

George Ade



Wearside U3A

A Very Brief History of Wearside U3A in 150 words.

Wearside U3A has changed and grown since it was founded in April of 1993. After initial meetings in a members home, we moved to a church hall, a community centre and then to the Bangladeshi centre where we currently have a membership of 300 and 25 activity groups.

The University of Sunderland has enabled us to host a number of conferences, including a two day event on 'Romans and Religion', when delegates came from as far as Ireland and stayed in student accommodation on the banks of the River Wear.

We are fortunate to rent, within one of our venues, an office, which enables us to hold small group meetings, computer studies and store equipment for groups activities.

This year, 2007, as a result of funding from the Learning and Skills Council, we have purchased a video, DVD and CD player, a projector and loudspeakers. We are currently training group leaders in the use of the new technology.

This VBH was composed by Janet Chalmers who précised it from our 25th Anniversary leaflet which was prepared by Doreen Lloyd, Freda Mason and Barbara Vaughan in June of 2007

Wooler U3A

Like Alice Through the Looking Glass, Wooler U3A is finding that you have to go forward to stay in the same place!

Being a rural group it's a boon to many members, particularly those who have moved into the area, giving them a starting point for making friends and getting to know what's going on but with a membership of less than 100 we need to keep an eye on our future viability.

The downside of being a rural group is that we have a smaller—or at least less populated—'pool' from which we can attract new members and, to be honest, the title University of the Third Age tends to discourage rather than encourage interest—even abbreviated to U3A.

But we take heart from the vibrancy of our older members who set up the group more than ten years ago and who still actively run and support many of the 14 established groups which cover a wide range of subjects from art, drama and music to bridge, table tennis and history.

Several of us would like to start a language class, but don't have anyone within our numbers fluent enough to lead sessions. We're beginning to wonder if the time has come to rethink some of the basic tenets of the U3A so we could perhaps pay a language teacher to set us off on the right lines.

Last year we tried our hand at producing a play and our subsequent production about local heroine and social reformer Josephine Butler was, as the critics say, 'well received'. We are still pondering on what to follow it with.

One successful innovation this year has been the setting up of a film appreciation group. Being out in the sticks, we have to travel at least 16 miles for a once a week film night at local playhouses or nearer 50 miles to the nearest cinema.



But one of our number has access to a projector and screen and we've discovered that by getting an annual public viewing licence costing £88 we can run a monthly film show of relatively new films.

Licence limitations prevent us publicising the showings or charging admission but so far word of mouth has brought in enough people willing to make a £2 donation which covers the cost of the licence, hire of the hall and purchase of the DVD. We don't turn away members of the public and in August we're putting on a children's film for the local youngsters and their families.

So we're in the market for ideas about new groups and are interested to see whether other groups experience the same problems.

Our current groups are: Music, Desert Island Discs, Play Reading, Discussion, Exercise, Table Tennis, Art group, Art Appreciation, Science, Reading for Pleasure, Gardening, Bridge, Crafts, History, Film Appreciation.

Jenny Pollock

All generalisations are dangerous, even this one.
Alexandre Dumas



English Heritage and free days out

Because of U3A's status as a charity and an educational body, did you know that we qualify for free entry to over 400 English Heritage sites?

There are two conditions: Firstly, the visit must be booked at least 14 days in advance, and secondly, the visiting group must do some active study on the site with a nominated leader, all three of which can be easily arranged with a little planning. Get a booking form and contact details from:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/conWebDoc.2155>

There are a lot of English Heritage sites in the North East, quite a few of them are already free of charge to enter. Those with entry fees include Tynemouth Ppriory, Aydon Castle, Warkworth Castle, Barnard Castle, Berwick on Tweed Barracks, Belsay, Dunstanburgh Castle, Brinkburn Priory, Lindisfarne Priory and Prudhoe Castle.

On Hadrian's Wall, you can visit Chesters, Vindolanda and Housesteads Forts and Corbridge Roman Site..

Yorkshire has a long list of properties that could be visited. For example: Clifford's Tower in York, Helmsley Castle, Rievaulx Abbey, Whitby Abbey, Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, Brodsworth Hall, Middleham Castle, Mount Grace Priory, Pickering Castle, Richmond Castle and Scarborough Castle.

Get organised and have some summer (sic!) days out to some great places in the North East of England. Some of the ones are not too far away from any of our regional U3A's and are readily accessible. Get your bus passes out and a totally free day out could be yours.

A Dutchman was explaining the red, white, and blue Netherlands flag to an American. "Our flag is symbolic of our taxes. We get red when we talk about them, white when we get our tax bills, and blue after we pay them." The American nodded. "It's the same in the USA only we see stars too!"



We need a name for your regional newsletter!

Come on all you U3A thinkers, we need a name for your Northumbria Region U3A Newsletter. Please get your thinking caps on and propose some newsletter names. It should have Northumbria and U3A in the title but the 'Northumbria U3A Bugle' won't hack it I'm afraid. The person submitting the best one—in the editors opinion—will be credited with that accolade.

Contributions please to the editor at: regionalu3anews@btinternet.com

Thanks a lot, I've battened down the hatches ready for your deluge of emails about this subject.

OXYDENTALLY ON PURPOSE

Some of my favourite oxymorons—the combination of two normally contradictory terms—old and new.

accurate estimate	easy labour
authentic reproduction	tight slacks
certain risk	organised confusion
living dead	assistant supervisor
science fiction	student teacher
jumbo shrimp	working holiday
thinking aloud	nothing much

Do any of our readers have any of their own favourite oxymorons to share with us all? Email the editor.

SUBARU is the Japanese name for the Pleiades or Seven Sisters. The car's logo only shows six stars, because the Japanese constellation only contains the six brightest stars in the cluster.

For all the art critics amongst you

A thief in Paris planned to steal some paintings from the Louvre. After careful planning, he got past security, stole the paintings and made it safely to his van. However, he was captured only two streets away when his van ran out of petrol. When asked how he could mastermind such a crime and then make such an obvious error, he replied, "Monsieur, that is the reason I stole the paintings. I had no Monet to buy Degas to make the Van Gogh."

And you may wonder how I've got De Gaulle to include this in our newsletter. Well, I figure I have nothing Toulouse

Family History trip to London

9 April 2008—3 days, 2 nights bed & breakfast in a three star hotel at a cost of £160.00 with visits to the Family Records Centre at Kew. You don't have to do Family History you can come along for the London Break. As some of you may know, the FHC will be moving all their material into Kew next year but I have been assured by the coach company that other arrangements can be made to access records.

To make this possible I need at least 30 people who definitely wish to go..

We will leave from Newcastle and where possible can arrange a stop further south depending on where people are travelling from.

If you are interested can I have enquiries from one person in your U3A to to contact me. I am moving house soon and will not be able to use the internet and will have a new phone number please send any queries to newcastleu3a@hotmail.com. or write to me at Newcastle U3A. 1 Pink Lane, Newcastle NE1 5DW. Single rooms are limited so first come first served.

Many thanks, Mary Dodds

Access the **Family Records Centre at Kew** with this link:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/familyhistory>

Access the **BBC Family History** website with this link:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/familyhistory>

and finally the **Genealogy UK** website will be found at this link

<http://www.genuki.org.uk/gs>

dyslexia rules : KO



Climate Change

One of our readers would like to know what U3A is doing about climate change and "powering down" in the face of dwindling oil stocks?

She says that WE represent the generation that knows how to live without plastic, and perhaps we could have a space on the national web site with ideas and information on the simple(r) life?

So many young housewives do not know how to preserve food, for example. One "freecycler" took Kilner jars from her and later announced that she had used them to hold sloe gin!

What do you think, how can we discuss this issue and spread our expertise?

Email the editor with your ideas for a Northumbria Region U3A wide discussion group on Climate Change, and its effects, also your ideas on the simpler life. Perhaps an email group due to the distances involved. Remember we really need to consider the generations in the years ahead of us. What is it going to be like for them with the legacy they are inheriting from us?

You cannot hope
to bribe or twist,
thank God! the
British journalist.
But, seeing what
the man will do
unbribed, there's
no occasion to.

Humbert Wolfe 1886—1940

Colophon

Relatively painstaking efforts have been made to ensure that all of the information contained in the July 2007 edition of the Northumbria Region U3A Newsletter is correct. But, as Alexander Pope noted, 'to err is human'. Consequently, the editor accepts no responsibility for anything whatsoever of whatever nature.

In all seriousness, well nearly, if you do have any suggestions*, corrections, clarifications, or questions please email them to the editor at regionalu3anews@btinternet.com.

* The Editor reserves the right to treat any and all suggestions as his own, and to use them in future editions of the Northumbria Region U3A Newsletter, other related or unrelated projects, or to just add colour to his conversation.

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