

In Contact



Welcome to the very last edition of Durham u3a In Contact, as we and Dunelm prepare for the new merged u3a from April.

In this issue, there's a special message from our outgoing Chair, Tina. Thank you to her for all she's done for Durham u3a, including her work behind the scenes with colleagues to make the merger a reality.

To celebrate our u3a we take a little look back, too, not just at the past month, but at some scenes from over the years, that many of you will no doubt remember.

Don't forget the open meeting on **14 March**, when there'll be an opportunity to toast our u3a with wine (or juice) and a special cake.

Finally, with the start of Durham and District u3a, next month will also see a new name for the newsletter - watch this space! One thing's for sure: the group meetings listing will be quite a bit longer...

STOP PRESS

GIFT AID: Please remember to hand in a Gift Aid form for the new D&D u3a by 31 March (see Tina's email of 16 Feb).

New groups: if you're interested in Bus Pass Safari (Tina) or Singing for Fun (Mike Forrest), do get in touch with them.

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1 Chair's message

The End of an Era

Dear friends and members

It is with rather mixed feelings that I sit down to write this valedictory note for the final issue of In Contact.



I have made some good friends over the years, as I'm sure you have as well. I've also learnt a lot from our various activities and enjoyed all the good company, not to mention the cakes and lunches.

We have had some terrific speakers to inform and entertain us and have provided the wonderful groups that we all enjoy. This will all continue and will provide an even wider opportunity for members to "Live, Laugh and Learn".

At this point I'd like to thank all those who have acted as Group Leaders over the years. It is your work in keeping these groups going that has kept our u3a going.

In Contact has changed as well from the A5 hard copy to the on-line versions that we enjoy today. This shows how most members have embraced the use of technology, particularly in the use of email. I remember enveloping large amounts of documents whenever we had to have an AGM or communicate with members. If we had to pay today's postage costs, we would soon be out of business.

I looked on the Charity Commission website to find that we adopted our inaugural constitution in 1993 – 31 years ago. A lot has happened in those 30+ years. Durham u3a proved to be so popular that it became too large for the then committee to manage. And so, a new organisation was formed, with some help and funding from Durham u3a, which became the Dunelm u3a that we know today. And now the wheel has turned full circle, and we are amalgamating again. Our new membership of around 300 people is still very small in comparison to some – one has just welcomed its 2000th member!!

We do still need officers and committee members for this new venture, so do please think about whether you can do your bit in helping to make the new Durham & District u3a a success. I should like to pay tribute to all those who have served on our committee over the years. Likewise, the many members who have helped in other ways. There are too many of you to name individually. A heartfelt thank you to you all. None of the things we enjoy

happen without a great deal of time and effort on their part. For myself, it has been a great privilege to serve as your Chair and in other positions. I am convinced that we have a bright future ahead.

No need to be apprehensive about the future. As Julian of Norwich said under totally different circumstances "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well".

Tina Naples
Chair

2 New members

A special welcome, as always, to new u3a members this month: **Sandra Cave** and **John Risby**.

3 March Open Meeting – Let there be cake

The next open meeting on **14 March**, the last one for Durham u3a, will be an extra-special one. Do try and make it if you can.

Our guest speaker will be Andy Hampson of the NE Regional Organised Crime Unit (NEROC). The unit works across police borders in Durham, Cleveland and Northumbria to protect our communities from serious and organised crime – including cybercrime.

Andy will be providing some good advice on measures we can take ourselves, particularly when it comes to spotting and avoiding scams. Well worth hearing.

And following Andy's talk, everyone's invited to stay on awhile to celebrate over 30 years of Durham u3a with a little toast, some very nice cake and a bundle of warm memories. A nice way to say goodbye to the old and hello to the new. Hope to see you there.

*PS: Don't forget that from April, in our new incarnation as Durham and District u3a, we'll be meeting on the **last Thursday of the month** (still at Bowburn Community Centre). There's a full programme of talks and presentations already lined up for the rest of the year.*

4 A soldier's life for me

February's open meeting saw a lively presentation from former soldier Terry Fade about his eventful 25-year army career and subsequent work in the protection industry.

From jungle tours in Belize, covert surveillance in Northern Ireland (where his Grandma made him flout every rule in the book by demanding a weekly get-together over a cup of tea) and peacekeeping in Bosnia, to driving clunky Green Goddesses during the Liverpool firefighters' strike, Terry has filled a huge range of roles and had many adventures – some quite a bit hairier than others. A five-month tour in Afghanistan, where fighting was intense and continuous and colleagues lost their lives, was particularly arduous.

On a lighter note, laugh-out-loud moments included his accounts of using a bread van to smuggle Kate Middleton's wedding dress into a hotel on the eve of the ceremony to avoid the press, and being dropped into a Trooping the Colour



Telling us how it was in Bosnia

Parade at the eleventh hour with no rehearsal, and absolutely no help from his mates. His work as a consultant since leaving the army has taken him to many places across the world and brought him into contact with some truly famous names. The life lessons he's learned along the way are salutary for us all. An engaging and thought-provoking talk.

5 Northumbria Region

Did you know that as a u3a member you also belong to a wider, Northumbria Region group? The region runs networks on a range of subject areas (birdwatching, geology, art appreciation, creative writing, real ale, anyone?), and u3a members from Berwick to Saltburn are welcome to take part. There are also a number of local u3a groups that welcome members from elsewhere.

The latest regional newsletter, Messenger, is available [here](#), and to find out more you can visit the website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/northumbria/home>.

6 A u3a retrospective

(i) In Contact

It's been a delight to look through past newsletters (thank you, Janet Thackray) and see how much members have done over the years. So much knowledge and enthusiasm, so many friendships created.

Did you know, for example, that past groups included Chinese Civilisation, Jazz Appreciation and Philosophy, as well as a Writers' Group? Many new groups have sprung up in their place, of course. Other stalwarts, like the Pub Lunch, Discussion and French Groups have stayed the course.

For Harry Morgan, who's been part of the Topical Discussion Group for over 10 years, its success is down to the fact that members pick the topics, which are always stimulating and absorbing. Lynn Bilsborough, leader of the long-lived Book Group, sees a major benefit, besides the enjoyment of books per se, in going beyond your comfort zone and broadening your reading experience. These three things – enjoyment, being member-led and stretching the mind – sum up what u3a is about.

Finally, here's a little newsletter gem that was irresistible! Give it a go...

Irritating – but true

While sitting down, lift your right foot off the floor and make clockwise circles. Now, at the same time, draw the number 6 in the air with your right hand. Your foot will (always!) change direction.

(ii) WW1 Commemoration



November 2018 saw the commemoration of 100 years since the ending of World War 1. Durham u3a was lucky enough to secure a place in the procession of wreath laying in Durham Cathedral.

I offered the opportunity to be the wreath layer to any ex-servicemen in Durham u3a, subject to drawing lots. In the event, only the late Jo Thackray and Charlie Callus entered, and Charlie was selected. On the day he looked resplendent in his beret and medals and did us all proud.

The Cathedral was packed with lots of service representatives and others and it was a privilege to have Charlie to play a part on our behalf.

Afterwards, a huge parade gathered on Palace Green before setting off to go down Owengate to the city centre. Bands playing, banners flying and crowds of people all respectful of this important day. I doubt we will ever see anything like this again in our lifetimes.

Tina Naples

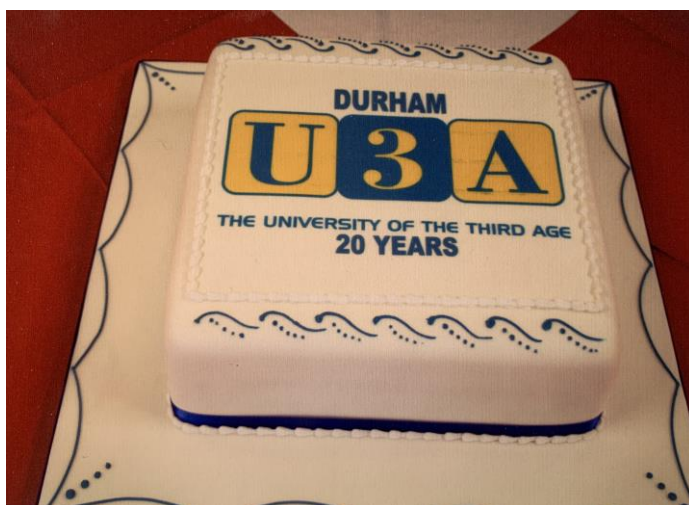
(iii) A u3a in pictures

With thanks again to Janet, who has taken and kept many photographs over the years, we have some lovely records of past Durham u3a activities, including anniversary celebrations. The gallery below is just a small selection. More photos will be on display at the open meeting on 14 March.



Taking the helm (left) and admiring the workmanship (right) at Hartlepool Tall Ships, 2010

Below: Celebrating 20 years of Durham u3a with buffet, games and, of course, cake! (There was another cake for the 25th anniversary)



Below: Absorbing lessons in cider production at Ampleforth on a sunny day in 2017



More lovely weather for a visit to Alwick Garden, 2018



7 Hail and Farewell

Here's a (very easy) local knowledge quiz. Use the first letter of each answer to form a short message. Solution below.

- 1 Village whose Anglo-Saxon name means "haunted bank" (10)
- 2 A part of the city that yielded Roman remains in the 30s and 40s and now houses restored 17C gardens (3,6)
- 3 Former pit village, once home to Boyne and Littleburn collieries, now housing the answer to Q13 (7,4)
- 4 Small rural settlement and conservation area off the A181, 4 miles SE of Durham (3,6)
- 5 Site of the famous battle in 1346 (8,5)
- 6 Area named after the second oldest church in Durham and home to Hild and Bede College (9)
- 7 19th century part of town, thought to be named after a pub and now housing an industrial estate and retail park (11)
- 8 Former seminary that's now a heritage and cultural attraction (5,7)
- 9 Site of Durham Miners' Union HQ (8)
- 10 Former hamlet housing an agricultural college (8)
- 11 Saint after whom the Basil Spence-designed college is named (5)
- 12 First name of City of Durham MP (4)
- 13 Durham organ builders (8,3,8)
- 14 Part of Durham City that's home to the prison and crown court (5)
- 15 It was known as Longovicium in Roman times (10)

- 16 Where the monks came from with Cuthbert's body (11)
- 17 He's reputed to have stayed in a room in the Royal County Hotel (did they have en-suite in those days?) (6,8)
- 18 Durham pub, named after a milkmaid's charge (3,3)
- 19 Once the infamous gallows site of Durham City (7)



One thing that stood out from earlier In Contacts was the large number of member contributions – so it can be done! Why not put pen to paper or at least digits to keyboard and have your say? All contributions for April by 27 March to lauramw100@gmail.com – thanks.

SO LONG DURHAM,
HELLO D (&) D OTEH

Meetings	Group	Contact
4 Mar (Mon), 10 am Venue may vary	Book Group: <i>Regeneration, by Pat Barker; Wilfred Owen poems</i> First Monday of month	Lynn Billsborough via u3a contacts page
5 Mar (Tues), 10 am Beefeater, Broomside Park	Topical Discussion First Tuesday of month	Janis Goodson via u3a contacts page
5 Mar (Tues), 2 pm Sacriston Methodist Church	History Group Topics agreed by members First Tuesday of month	Kim Jennings via u3a contacts page. All welcome. £2 room hire; refreshments
6, 13, 20, 27 Mar (Wed), 2 pm Gala café	French: Français Amical Every Wednesday	Mike Gibb via u3a contacts page Group full
7 Mar (Thurs), 21 & 28 Mar, 9.45 am	French Every Thurs (except 2 nd Thurs)	Elizabeth Morgan, 0191 384 6874 Group full
7, 21 Mar (Thurs), 10.15 Gala café	Shakespeare Group Every other Thursday	Sue Childs via u3a contacts page Members select extracts/poems
7 Mar (Thurs), 2 pm Sacriston Methodist Church	Circle Dancing First Thursday of month	Linda Murdie via u3a contacts page ; £2 for room hire
11 Mar (Mon), 2 pm Gala café	Poetry Group: Travel Second Monday of month	Ivy Hudson, 0191 384 4317 New members welcome!
14 Mar (Thurs), 1.30 for 2 pm – extended time Bowburn Community Centre	FINAL MONTHLY MEETING Andy Hampson (NEROC) + Celebration toast and cake!	If you need a lift, contact Maureen Craik: 0191 371 9521/mcraik-40@hotmail.co.uk
18 Mar (Mon), 10.30 am	The Monday Crime Club: Night School, by Lee Child Third Monday of month	Tina Naples via u3a contacts page Group full: waiting list
18 Mar (Mon), 2 pm Sacriston Methodist Church	Quiz	Via u3a contacts page
20 Mar (Wed), 1.30 pm	Scrabble Third Wednesday of month	Maureen Craik 0191 371 9521 for details
25 Mar (Mon), 10 am Sacriston Methodist Church	History Too: The Harrowing of the North Last Monday of month	David Willock via u3a contacts page. All welcome. £2 room hire; refreshments
30 Mar (Sat), 2 pm Carrville Methodist Church	Music Appreciation: A LITTLE of what I fancy (John L) Last Saturday of month	Stephen Brand via u3a contacts page
Every other Tues, 2 pm Gala café	Spanish	Mick O'Sullivan via u3a contacts page
Every month, as arranged	Pub Lunch	Sylvia Buxton 0191 373 1644 for details
As arranged	Film Club	Paul Newby 07814 518100 or via contacts page