

Northumbria Region u3a
The Messenger
Newsletter – Magazine for January 2024



Birdwatching Network – taken on a trip to the Solway Firth.

The English winter – ending in
July.

To recommence in August.

Lord Byron 1788 - 1824

Chair's Report

A Happy New Year to all Northumbria Region u3a members.

Northumbria Regional Committee and the new North East Trustee Jean Cubbin are pleased to announce that Liz Thackary, Chair of the Third Age Trust is coming to the Northumbria Region for a five day visit at the beginning of April 2024. A programme, where she can visit u3as in the North and the South of the Region, will be planned.

Information has been sent to all Chairs, Business Secretaries and 'leads' of Networks, as well as being placed on the Regional website with regard to Liz Thackary's forthcoming visit. They have been invited to register their interest if they would like Liz to visit their own u3a.

It's the start of a New Year and behind the scenes the Northumbria Regional Committee and the Regional Events Team have been organising many social events, workshops and meetings for 2024. One of the objectives in the Region's three-year plan 2023- 2026 is to enable members to network, so providing support for all members. Organising events, workshops and meetings enables everyone to come together from every part of the Region.

There have been many discussions at the Third Age Trust since the National AGM in October 2023 about 'Fit for the Future' and the formation of a Pilot Council. If you would like to find out more about this venture please click on this link. [u3a - Fit for the Future](#)

The Third Age Trust has four strategies to support the u3a movement.

1. To promote a u3a collective identity (**Single u3a**)
2. To maximise the benefits of u3a membership to current members and to attract the next generation (**Next Gen**)
3. To advance an exciting u3a learning experience (**Enjoy**)
4. To collaborate with like-minded organisations at all levels of the movement (**Emerge and Collaborate**)

A new initiative by Northumbria Region is to create more Interest/Subject Group Networks. In November 2023 a new Art Network held its first meeting via Zoom, hosted by Catherine Stevenson of Newcastle u3a. In January 2024 a Geology Network is to hold its first Zoom meeting hosted by Elizabeth Devon of Duns and District u3a, Scotland. Elizabeth runs the Wooler u3a Geology Group. This will

be our first cross border Network. Anne Walsh, Chair of Scotland u3a is delighted this project is taking place.

Our next Regional Quarterly Meeting will be held at Brunswick Hall, Newcastle on January 25th 2024. If you do come along to the meeting which will be full of news, networking and of course fun please say *Hello* to me. It would be great to put a name to a face or vice versa.

There's such a lot going on ... look out for the Celebration of Music Event on June 6th 2024 included in this online magazine.

Cecilia Coulson, Northumbria Region u3a Chair 21/12/2023

Liz Thackary, Chair of the Third Age Trust (National u3a)

Liz Thackary will be visiting our Region- the Northumbria Region u3a from 7th April 2024 – 12th April 2024.

She is wanting to meet as many members as possible, visiting the whole Region.

Would your u3a like Liz to visit during the week she is visiting?

She doesn't want any special groups or events arranged. There will be no financial implication, as Liz will cover her own costs.

She is interested in creative writing, crafts, German, coffee mornings, lunch groups, and any innovative or unusual groups.

Please discuss with your committee and reply to this invitation by 16th February 2024. There will be no guarantee that if your u3a puts their name forward, she will attend as we're aiming to put together a comprehensive programme covering both the North and the South of the Region.

Please send your details to Cecilia Coulson, Regional Chair cecu3a@gmail.com and/or Jean Cubbin, North East Trustee jean.cubbin@u3a.org.uk

Once a programme has been organised the u3as involved will be contacted, with up to date information.



Regional Birdwatching Network



The group had its beginnings in 1998 with half day excursions held after the Wearside U3A monthly coffee mornings, the embryo idea being that members could travel to meet up with birdwatchers from other u3a groups in the region at their local nature reserves etc.

Thus, after prior contact by Wearsides, John Lloyd, the first get together was arranged with Whickham u3ain May 1999, when four of their members were met at Shibdon Pond Nature reserve in Blaydon, and the combined party viewed the birds present.

The next joint excursion was held with two members from Ryton and district u3a, with Wallsend Swallow Pond as the venue, soon followed by meetings with birding groups from Newcastle and Washington u3a s in January 2000.



Subsequently as the word spread, the number of u3as with participants mushroomed, the half day outings became full day trips and the frequency of visits increased.

From these modest beginnings, although in the main the group continues to visit local venues, over the years trips much further afield have been arranged requiring

overnight or longer stays, e.g. three days at Bamburgh, four days at Southport, and an almost annual visit to South West Scotland to see the geese and birds of prey, 5 days on the Island of Mull and a week on Majorca.

At different times over the period, birders from a dozen u3a groups have participated, including members from Cockermouth, Chester, and Newquay u3as.



Initially four of us led the outings, but illness and the pandemic caused the group to wither on the vine, but it is hoped to revive the group in 2024 with 3 leaders, as one of the original leaders is now in a care home. (We sorely miss her expertise).

The group would not have functioned so well without other members helping by giving lifts to people without cars, and helping to arrange accommodation, the Xmas lunches and occasional birthday parties.

On trips abroad, we use a local guide who knows the best places to look. We have been to Spain, Hungary, Bulgaria, Morocco, Estonia, Menorca, Poland and Finland.

We desperately need some younger members as many of the original members are now octogenarians and not fit enough to go out other than to watch from a car.

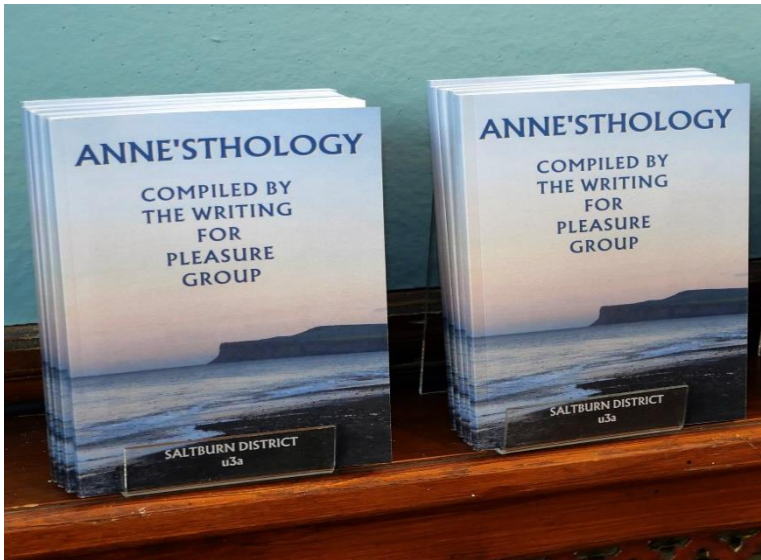
Photographs taken on a trip to the Solway Firth.

Contact details: - col.free54@gmail.com

Colin Freeman - Boldon u3a

Definition of a Garden – A free outdoor restaurant providing healthy balanced meals for insects, birds and animals.

Anne'sthology Book Launch



For those who knew Anne, she was a fascinating person. She loved walking her dogs on the beach and nearby woods of her hometown in Marske. She loved to write and we loved to hear her stories. She was such a valued member of the Writing for Pleasure Group, and sadly missed.

With kind permission of her family, this anthology was created as a tribute to Anne's life. The book contains a wealth of stories and poetry, as well as Anne's work and poetry from her beloved brother Jim.

It took almost a year from start to publication. Pat Atkinson, who is group leader, and several members worked hard to bring it together. At Christmas Update, the book was launched and nearly all copies of the anthology were distributed to Saltburn u3a members.



Enjoy the book and the work of these talented authors. Get your free copy from Pat Atkinson. All we ask for is that you are a member of the u3a.

Howard Leake – Saltburn u3a

CHRISTMAS QUIZ in the South of the Region

On a very cold Thursday at the end of November, ninety-three u3a members gathered at Hurworth Grange near Darlington for a friendly quiz. Teams came from across the south of the Northumbria Region – Durham, Dunelm, Bishop Auckland, Darlington, Middlesbrough, Stockton, Hartlepool, Bedale and Teesdale to join us (**South Durham u3a**) in attempting to answer questions on a Christmas theme.

It was a friendly and enjoyable afternoon, led by our quizmaster Dave Tucker and supported by the ‘catering volunteers’ in the kitchen who provided half-time refreshments. Bishop Auckland were the final winners, closely followed by Stockton, trailing only one point behind. Well done to those teams and thank you to everyone who took part.

We are planning to arrange two more quizzes in 2024 – summer and winter, so keep an eye on the Regional Website and their Facebook page for details.

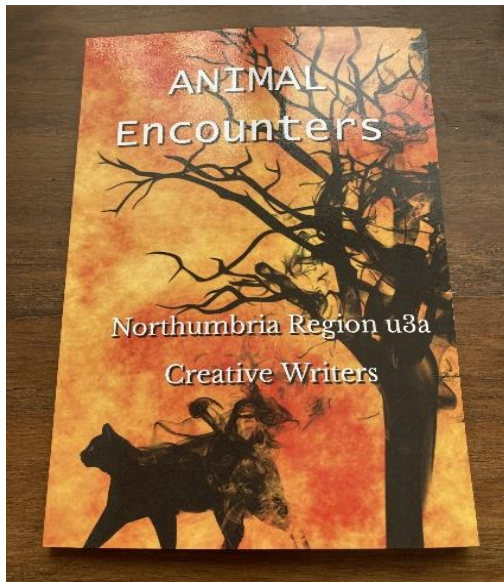


Ruth Beckett – Chair South Durham u3a

Northumbria Region u3a Creative Writers

Northumbria Region u3a Creative Writers (NRCW) is a Subject Interest Network. Members are from Alnwick u3a down to Saltburn u3a and many u3as in between. We normally meet via Zoom once a month, but occasionally we have a social outing, with lunch.

We have recently published our 2nd anthology of poems and short stories. It's called Animal



Encounters. Personal and fictitious experiences bring to life creatures ranging from a pangolin to a shy pheasant. It costs £5.95 from FeedaRead. If you would like to purchase a copy please click on [Book Search \(feedaread.com\)](https://www.feedaread.com).

Proceeds from the sale will go towards the cost of our second Creative Writing Workshop to be held in 2024.

For further information please contact Cecilia: cecu3a@gmail.com.



Northumbria Region u3a
CELEBRATION OF MUSIC

**Calling all musicians, singers, individuals,
duos, bands etc., from around the Region.**

**Would you like to entertain your fellow u3a
members?**

Venue: Sunnyside Club, Sunnyside Rd NE16 5NA

Concert Room with Stage

Date: Thursday June 6th 2024

Time: 3pm-5pm Music
5pm-6pm Interval (Buffet)
6pm-9pm Music



**Please register your interest with
Bob Pullen at**

robertgipullen@gmail.com

by March 1st 2024

CELEBRATION OF MUSIC

We are planning a Celebration of Music for all u3a members in the Northumbria Region u3a. It will be in the concert room in Sunnyside Club, Sunnyside Road, NE16 5NA on Thursday June 6th 2024, which is close to the Metro Centre in Gateshead, see below:

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Sunnyside+Social+Club/@54.9261107,-1.7064458,13z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x487e7835af07f715:0x240ec9c79bec7f33!8m2!3d54.9261107!4d-1.6755468!16s%2Fg%2F1hc1jfrnd?entry=ttu>

This is a fabulous room with stage and PA sound system and the club has good car parking. We are hoping the event will attract many members from our region, who will attend as either a performer or spectator. The day is planned to have three parts:

Part 1: Starts at 3pm to 5pm and during this period we are hoping that many individual/solo members will contribute, regardless of level of talent. Perhaps sing a song or play a tune on guitar, violin, flute or piano (full electric piano available) etc. This will be a little like a 'Buskers Night' so please don't be shy to perform, we are all amateurs!

Part 2: Buffet, 5pm to 6pm. During this hour a buffet will be available for those who have paid for it at £7. (Details of how to pay this before the day will be made available.)

Part 3: This will be from 6pm to 9pm. During this time, it is hoped that there will be existing duos or bands or groups in our u3as that have a little more performance experience and we hope these will contribute in this Part.

Individual performers will have to be a member of a u3a, but duos or bands can also perform provided at least one member of the band is a u3a member. **I must emphasise that the day is aimed to be a fun-day with nothing too serious!** Spectators will be asked to pay an entrance fee of £5 for the day but **performers will not pay the entrance fee in return for their efforts!**

However, before we can confirm to all members that the event will take place, we first have to ensure that we have enough members prepared to perform to make the day a success.

So, if you feel you would like to contribute, please email Bob Pullen of Prudhoe u3a at robertgpullen@gmail.com to register your interest saying 'Who you are; where you are from; and what you would like to do. We can then assess the level of interest and Bob can also answer any questions you may have.

Northumbria u3a Regional Quarterly Meetings.



It is becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable venues for Northumbria Region u3a Quarterly Meetings.

There are certain criteria that have to be fulfilled eg car park, nearby public transport, disability access, WIFI, reasonable venue costs, catering facilities and so the list goes on.

Northumbria Region u3a Committee would like to use the facilities, which u3as already use, for their main meetings. These venues will have the

majority of the above mentioned requirements and will already have had a risk assessment completed.

The Regional Committee are wanting to organise Regional Quarterly Meetings in the whole of the Region, both North and South.

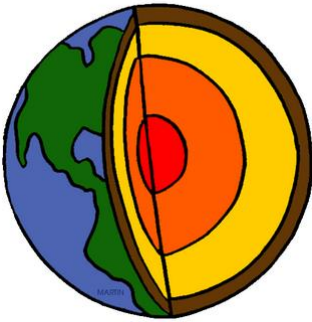
If you think your venue would be suitable for a Regional Quarterly Meeting could you please contact Malcolm Wilkinson, Northumbria Regional u3a Committee Member gilpin1@hotmail.co.uk

Next Quarterly Meeting - Thursday 25th January at Brunswick Hall (next to Eldon Square), Newcastle. The meeting will start at 9.45am and cost £5.00 which will be collected at the door. Tea and coffee will be provided but NOT lunch.

Northumbria Region u3a and Borders

GEOLOGY NETWORK

Open to all u3a members



TALKS AND DISCUSSIONS

on Zoom starting on
Tuesday 16th January, 2024
10.30 to about 12.00

WHY GEOLOGY?
**It's just rocks and fossils isn't
it?**



if you are interested in joining,
please **contact:** *Elizabeth Devon*
elizabeth@earthlearningidea.com

Calling all u3a Treasurers

Northumbria Region u3a Treasurer, Mike Wallace at the April 2024 Northumbria Region u3a AGM will have served 6 years and therefore is obliged to stand down from his position.



Northumbria Region u3a is looking for a Treasurer to take over from Mike.

Do you fancy this role?

The Regional Committee is a friendly team who work together, discuss matters and have a good rapport, in between the serious issues. **We all work together as a team.**

If you would like to find out more please contact Mike Wallace, Treasurer: mike.wallace.u3a@gmail.com or Cecilia Coulson, Chair: cecu3a@gmail.com

Northumbria Region u3a Treasurers' Network

Come along to the next Treasurers' Network Meeting for a unique opportunity to connect with fellow u3a Treasurers, share insights and stay at the forefront of the latest trends in treasury management. Enhance your skills, exchange best practices and forge valuable connections in an engaging environment.

Why not come to a meeting to discuss any issues on which you'd like some support and ideas. Don't miss this chance to contribute to the success of your u3as.

S.E. Northumberland and coast Chairs' and Business Secretaries' Network

Join our S.E. Northumberland and Coast u3a Chairs' and Business Secretaries' Network for a gathering of like-minded u3a members. This unique platform offers a dynamic space to share strategic insights, navigate governance challenges and foster peer-to-peer collaboration. Connect with fellow Chairs and Business Secretaries, stay informed and gain valuable tools to support your u3as.

Come along to a meeting to discuss your challenges and successes. This network is open to members from all parts of the region.

Northumbria Region u3a Art Appreciation Network

Join a vibrant community of art enthusiasts eager to explore the diverse world of visual expression. Immerse yourself in lively discussions, uncover the stories behind masterpieces and connect with fellow art lovers. Learn more about how to enhance art group meetings and keep the members interested and wanting to participate.

Whether you have a vast knowledge or just starting your artistic journey, our network provides a welcoming space to share, learn and be inspired.

For all of the above informal networks, please contact:

Catherine Stevenson: intoto444@hotmail.com

Are you interested in presenting Regional Workshops?

Were you a teacher, presenter or have knowledge and the skills to present workshops to our u3a members?

You will be working with the Northumbria Regional Support Team. Members organise and present learning opportunities to and for all u3a members.



The team is a welcoming group. They will be able to pass on their expertise to new members. Presentations are never presented alone. Members always work as a team.

Workshops are the backbone of learning. The strapline of u3a is Learn, Laugh, Live. It's important that Northumbria Region u3a are able to present workshops to ALL u3a members within the Region.

If you would like further information please contact Cecilia Coulson, Chair: cecu3a@gmail.com

Chinese Proverb

All the flowers of all the tomorrows are
in the seeds of today and yesterday.



u3a learn,
laugh,
live



NORTH NORTHUMBRIA REGIONAL QUIZ

SUNNISIDE SOCIAL CLUB, SUNNISIDE, NE16 5NA
(Large Concert Room)

Wednesday 20th March 2024 2pm-5pm

Teams of 4

Refreshments, Prizes, Laughter

Please bring a cake



Entrance Fee: £5 per team

Contact Bob Pullen: robertgpullen@gmail.com for further information.

Regional Committee April 2023 - 2024	
Chair	Cecilia COULSON, Wickham and District
Vice Chairman	Vacant
Business and Minute Secretary	Mary BARLOW, Sunderland
Treasurer	Mike WALLACE, Newcastle
Member	Ann CARR, Bishop Auckland
Member	Malcom WILKINSON, Seaham Harbour
Member	Peter BARNETT, Wessington
Member	Tedd WATT, Seaham
Member	Vacant
Trustee for the North East	Jean CUBBIN, Whitley Bay

Members of the committee can be contacted by email through the website:
<https://u3asites.org.uk/northumbria>

Distribution

Messenger is distributed electronically. Chairs and Business Secretaries of u3as receive a copy as an email attachment. They are asked to distribute this to their members.

If you would like to receive a copy directly from the region, please contact us through the website Messenger page:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/northumbria/page/107889>

From the Editor

May I thank everyone who has taken the time to provided articles and assistance for this edition of The Messenger. I do hope that you have enjoyed reading this issue and that it has given you inspiration for the future. Please forward your articles to regnewseditor@gmail.com May I please have all contributions for the next edition in Friday 15th March 2024. Thank you.