

Northumbria Region u3a
The Messenger
Newsletter – Magazine for October 2023



Chair's Report

I write this report with some sad news.

John Lloyd sadly passed away a few weeks ago. He was a founder member of Northumbria Region u3a and was a member of Wearside u3a for 30 years. His work for the u3a movement was tireless, questioning decisions made by the Third Age Trust with gusto. The u3a was his life.

He will sadly be missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts go to Doreen, his wife and all his family.

Sandi Rickerby, North East Region Trustee will be standing down from her role in October 2023. She has represented our Region and stood on many National Committee Working Parties. We wish to thank Sandi for her assistance and expert knowledge about procedures from the National Office.

She will be followed by Jean Cubbin from Whitley Bay u3a, who will be voted as our Regional Trustee on October 18th following the Third Age Trust's AGM. We welcome Jean to her new role.

At the last Regional Quarterly Meeting in July at Stannington Village Hall the format for the meeting was slightly changed. The Regional Support Team held their meeting in the morning and all u3a members were allowed to sit in and listen to the discussions. Many positive comments about this new format have been received e.g. it was a breath of fresh air hearing what goes on behind the scenes, have learnt such a lot, didn't realise how much is discussed. In the afternoon all u3as were able to ask questions about the items discussed in the morning and to ask anything that was of concern for them and their u3a. The Regional Support Team answered questions and offered support to all present.

As it's very difficult to find suitable venues for Regional Quarterly Meetings with all conditions required eg accessibility, transport, cost, the Regional Committee have decided to hold future meetings at u3a venues throughout the Region. Therefore, the January Regional Quarterly Meeting will be held at Brunswick Hall, Newcastle...Newcastle u3a's main meeting venue. A FUN element is also a priority. A presenter called Pat Hodgson from Stocksfield, who is very like Victoria Wood will give us all laugh.

Would any u3a in the Region like a Regional Quarterly Meeting to be held at their main meeting venue? If so please contact Cecilia, Chair cecu3a@gmail.com Northumbria Region covers a vast area, but the Regional Support Team are

committed to meeting all u3a members from every corner of the Region. If any u3a would like a visit, just to say 'Hello', or to offer support please contact Cecilia.

Last but not least the Regional Events Team are working hard, behind the scenes, to bring a varied event's programme for 2024.

Cecilia Coulson

John Lloyd

Initial letter to the Regional IT group



When we were joking about John Lloyd not being with us on Tuesday morning, (26th Sept 2023) little did we know that he would die that day.

I'm so sorry to have to tell you this very sad news, I know some of you will have heard already. I'm sure we will all miss his quick wit and badgering banter in the IT group.

He's been around in u3a all the time I have and much longer. He was instrumental in starting Northumbria Region u3a, Wearside u3a and worked very hard to eventually get Newcastle u3a up and running at 1 Pink Lane with that glorious view over the Central Station and up towards the St Mary's Cathedral, that many of you will remember. It was in those very rooms where Barbara Herring, Tynedale and past Regional Chair, was his Secretary when he had his architecture firm's office there.

We used to hold the Regional website monthly get-together in there in the early days of this century, when each u3a would come to update their web-page, long before the existence of Sitebuilder.

John was always claiming to be such a luddite, but certainly kept himself up to date.

There are so many stories involving John, it won't be long before he is the stuff of legend!

If you have any that you can add, do let's make a collection of them.

We will surely remember him.

Mo

Here are some of those responses:

So sorry to hear the sad news.

I had a tremendous respect for John and always enjoyed conversations with him. He will be a sad loss to us all.

Mike W. Newcastle

Mischief is what I valued most about John, I didn't know him well and most of my recent contact with him was via Zoom. He was always able to find a thought-through, disruptive comment and deliver it in a challenging but friendly way. Admirable.

Regards

John M. Prudhoe

So sorry to hear the sad news about John. He will be greatly missed as he was so respected in the region. When matters concerning the Trust were being discussed his knowledge about u3a meant he always had a considered point to make. My thoughts are with his family.

Best wishes.

Pam Morpeth; Regional Support Team

Sorry to hear about John Lloyd's death. He always kept us on our toes.

Regards.

Watson W. Morpeth

Hi Mo,

I am so terribly sorry to hear the news about John. He was a wonderful man, so generous with his time and with his views, too. He seemed to mine all those years of experience and use his razor-sharp mind to cut directly to the real problem at hand; an architects training, perhaps.

I met him only relatively recently when you introduced us so that I could find out more about the TAT and the u3a movement. I found immediately a common

view, one that gave me hope that there were still long-term members and, in myself, new members who share a common purpose and wish to keep the original integrity of the movement alive. And, of course, I came to appreciate his cynicism in the face of aimless and ambitious plans to change the TAT into a commercial organisation with only the limited support of its u3a members.

He was never afraid to speak his mind in that considered and deliberate manner of his. And buried in that slow delivery was so often a large dose of truth and reality.

I was with him at the University event the previous Tuesday where he, like me, sat through over 50 short scientific presentations, and, unlike me who barely raised my hand, asked many interesting questions of the speakers afterwards. He was engaged, alert and interested throughout when others, much more junior in years, were flagging.

I liked John a great deal and will miss him. The best of men.

Kind regards,
David P. Tynedale

While I was on Regional u3a business, he'd always been a marvelous mentor and friend, kept us on our toes, brought attention to angles of action previously unrecognised as being likely to cause trouble. He scattered, in all directions, brilliant ideas of ways to help, all with such a wry and hilarious sense of humour that so much of the time in his company was spent laughing. He arranged the initial event for setting up the first regional website via Sunderland University, the Big Event at Durham, the regional displays at Walbottle. He initiated all the contacts with Voice North and with Jim Edwardson at Centre for Ageing which led to the Rita Competition. With John Leiper they arranged all the Science events at Centre for Life, the 3-day residential Science event at Durham University, and so much more.

Mo

These are some of the written contributions from one group of people in the region, do you have any more?

We'll make a, "Memories of John Lloyd book."



THE POPPIES PRAYER

**The poppies fall.
Their crimson tears
Like shrapnel, piercing every heart
Of those who mourn the dying blood
Enshrouding friend and foe alike
On Flanders Field.**

**So scour our conscience
With your flood
Till we ensure that never more
Shall nations let Death's bloody dance
Seduce the souls of friend and foe
Like Flanders Field.**

Copyright James A Gilman, Durham u3a

September 2018

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u3a Week

On Saturday, 23rd September, members of Seaham Harbour u3a played their part in the national u3a week.



They were given permission to have a stall in Seaham's Byron Place shopping centre between 10am and 3pm to promote the u3a. Strangely, management said the members couldn't speak to visitors but had to wait to be approached.

Publicity material had been purchased from the Trust which visitors were encouraged to look at or take away and their questions were answered. It was quite surprising how many people had never heard of the u3a and most were keen to know more. Time will tell whether or not we get any new members from the day.

Nevertheless, those who manned the stall felt it had been a worthwhile exercise.

In addition to that The Trustees had previously decided to try and do something about a problem in Seaham and which is not uncommon elsewhere. That is, the lack of public toilets.

Seaham is increasingly popular with visitors, especially along the sea front, and there are plenty cafes and bars. However, from Seaham Hall car park in the north to Nose's Point in the south there are no public toilet facilities.

So, along with our stall and u3a promotional material we had a petition to be sent to Durham County Council about the lack of toilets. People were enthusiastically signing it, including people who were not Seaham residents. That day we got 355 signatures and since then the number has reached almost 500. We intend to continue with the petition for the next couple of weeks.



Malcolm Wilkinson, Chair - Seaham Harbour u3a

Pomanders for Christmas

They are a lovely way to scent a room and make good decorations.

You need: -

1 Orange

Good quality cloves, with heads intact

Ground Cinnamon

Orris Root (Iris Germanica)

Stick the orange full of cloves but leaving space between each one as the orange will shrink as it dries. Use a fine knitting needle to make the holes.

Mix the orris root and cinnamon and roll the finished pomander in the mixture rubbing it well in. Place in a warm dry place for two weeks then tie with ribbon or raffia and hang up.

Regional Event to Ad Gefrin, Wooler



Ad Gefrin, the new whisky distillery in Wooler was opened in March 2023. Members from Cramlington, Gateshead, Wooler, Washington and Wickham u3as enjoyed an excellent tour of the distillery. Isla, our guide explained about the many different processes in order to make a malt whisky. The malting barley is grown by farmers in the fields around Wooler and the water comes from the Cheviot Hills. Ad Gefrin has only been producing whisky for the past nine months and it takes three

years for a whisky to be called a single malt. A gin distillery has also been created on the site.

A reconstruction of the Great Hall of the kings and queens of Northumbria at the Great Palace of Ad Gefrin has been created. There's also a museum demonstrating the Golden Age of Northumbria. There are objects on display from the British Museum and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Of course, at the end there was a tasting session of the whisky and gin. Lots of positive comments about the tour—well worth a visit.



Cecilia Coulson Chair, Northumbria Region and lead of the Regional Events Team

Sunderland History Group



Sunderland u3a History group meet the second Thursday of the month and we have had some very interesting talks this year.

Our most recent speaker has been the award winning, local author Glenda Young.

Glenda has written a series of historical sagas set in and around Ryhope and Sunderland. She also has a series of "cosy crimes" set in Scarborough. She gave a very informative talk on her own background. We heard about her involvement with Coronation Street and the books she has written linked into the soap.



Glenda had some local, memorable anecdotes and historical information and references which added a lot of humour to her talk.

Everyone was enchanted with her, and everyone agreed it was one of the best talks we have had.

A local lass with a lot of well-deserved success from hard work.

Joyce Ferry – Sunderland u3a

Northumbria Region u3a Creative Writers Network Workshop



A workshop, the very first run by Northumbria Region u3a Creative Writers (NRCW) in the centre of the city of Newcastle upon Tyne was a roaring success.

Members represented many u3as from across the Region.

Four, one-hour workshops were presented by members of NRCW, two prose and two poetry.

A well-known author from the North East, Val Scully gave an inspiring talk about her writing journey and her involvement with the National Trust. To complete the picture Steve Urwin, an experienced workshop facilitator presented a workshop using poetry, as a tool for well being.



Many positive comments were received on the day...it was a fabulous introduction to creative writing... speakers, leaders were interesting and relevant...excellent information about online opportunities.



By Cecilia Coulson, lead of NRCW

Essence of Nature: Pre-Raphaelites to British Impressionists

Exhibition at the Laing Gallery



It was a cool morning as we each made our way to the Laing Gallery where we met up in the café for a warming cuppa.

We then made our way up to the two exhibition rooms and wandered around reading the notes by each painting and wondering how the artists managed to capture and paint these impressive paintings.

We saw landscapes such as *The Lake of Lucerne: Mount Pilatus in the Distance* by John William Inchold and Walter Deverall's forest scene from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, to such lovely paintings as Elizabeth Forbes watercolour of *Children in a Garden*. There were also several paintings of the local area such as *Cullercoats* and *Dunstanburgh Castle*. These paintings captured the brightness, detail, and harmony of nature. The artists must have spent many hours choosing just the right colour and composing these paintings.



Sunderland u3a Art Group.

North Northumbria u3a Regional Quiz



A fantastic time was had by all who attended the North Northumbria Regional Quiz in July 2023. Just over 100 u3a members attended this event at Sunnyside Club, Sunnyside, Tyne and Wear, which included many quizzers and helpers from a variety of u3as.

Although the weather was atrocious...it never stopped raining..... it didn't dampen everybody's enthusiasm and commitment.

Berwick u3a hired a bus to take part in this Regional Event. u3as represented were from, just as an example, Derwentside, Dunelm, Prudhoe, Dunston, Whitley Bay and many more.

Bob Pullen from Prudhoe u3a was the quiz master. During the break, when



everyone tucked into some homemade cakes supplied by the members, he enthralled all, with some table magic.

As this event was so successful it has been proposed that another North Regional Quiz be organised on similar lines.

It's a great opportunity for u3as from North of Northumbria Region to come together in a cheerful setting.

**A grateful thanks to all u3a members who made this event so successful.
Cecilia Coulson, Regional Chair**

Who knew it was there?

Morpeth had a well-kept secret hidden from us - until recently, when seven members from Newcastle u3a Poetry Group visited the little gem of the Northern Poetry Library run by Northumbria Library Services, housed since 2016 in the delightful Grade 1 listed 13th century building of the Chantry (of Bagpipe Museum fame), within the Tourist Information Centre on Bridge Street, where we were made most welcome.

This specialised collection of post Second World War poetry is the largest outside London and celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1993 with a North-East poetry festival featuring (two then yet to be, poet laureates), Carol Ann Duffy and Simon Armitage.

Julie, a self-confessed poetry lover, came from Northumbria Library to introduce us to the collection and told how she had been part of the team wearing heavy protective clothing to salvage works damaged, although sadly much was beyond saving, in the devastating Morpeth floods in September 2008.

This library had come into being with the efforts of George Stephenson, Director of Mid-Northumberland Art Group and George Laughton, County Librarian of Northumberland in 1968 with the aim of containing a copy of every volume of contemporary poetry published in Great Britain then and in subsequent years. Their vision was for the library to be a free, open access public library through a free direct lending service. Magazines and journals were acquired, many of which would have escaped the acquisition methods of other libraries.

“The strengths of the collection are in its small press collections, especially those of writers who have gone on to national renown, its children’s collections, often overlooked and its anthologies which are attractive to new readers. Its collections of the seventies and eighties now represent an important archive to researchers”

Nichols Baumfield, Special Collections Librarian in the 1990s

From September 2015 to March 2017, the Northern Poetry Library was redeveloped, and events organised to raise its profile as it was little known and underused by professional poets and the community in general. It now holds

over 15,000 volumes including signed copies, first editions and foreign publications.

The librarians can offer a service to help with choosing suitable poetry for specific events such as for a wedding, christening or funeral.

The library is open from Monday to Saturday so please do give it a visit!

Caroline White - Newcastle u3a Poetry Group

INVITATION!

You are invited to an exciting new network (peer support group) for Northumbria Region u3a!



Be one of the first to sign up for a taster session of the new Art Appreciation/History Network.

A great opportunity to meet with other members who have an interest in all types of art as well as learning about various ways to engage members, gain participation and ensure there is a lot of enjoyment.

Don't know anything about art but would like to come along? You will be very welcome but you'll be surprised at how much you do know!

It is open to all members whether or not they are part of an art appreciation/history group.

Date of first : Tuesday 21 November 2023

Time: 10.30

Meeting by Zoom

Like to attend the taster session? For further details contact

Catherine Stevenson Newcastle u3a

email: newcastleu3a@hotmail.com

Group Coordinators

The Groups Coordinators of Northumbria u3as meet approximately monthly, having resumed now after a summer break, to discuss anything groups-related that is of interest or concern to those present, i.e. the agenda is set by the participants, and the answers come largely from our pooled ideas, plus advice as necessary from Mo Brown, a u3a Regional Support Volunteer, who chairs the meetings and keeps us on the rails!

Those who attend find the meetings very useful. We meet on Zoom, and notes are always circulated afterwards.

The next meeting will be on Friday 20th October, from 1.45 for 2pm until approx. 3.30. Email u3a.prudhoe@gmail.com for the Zoom joining details. All welcome!

Northumbria Region u3a Treasurers' Network

Don't miss out on another Treasurers' Network meeting! June's meeting was extremely informative and it's a pleasure to be there. All manner of issues, questions and problems centred around u3a finance is discussed as well as matters concerning being an officer in a local u3a. We learn a lot from each other and enjoying doing it! We welcome any treasurer, assistant treasurer or member considering being a treasurer.

Contact: Catherine Stevenson Newcastle u3a email newcastleu3a@hotmail.com

SE Northumberland and Coast Chairs' and Business Secretaries' Network

Find out new and exciting ideas to use in your u3a. Keep up with what's happening in the wider u3a which may affect local u3as. Discuss good practice and challenges. All matters related to being committee members also arise and any other issue which members would like to air.

You will be made very welcome at the meetings.

Contact: Catherine Stevenson Newcastle u3a email newcastleu3a@hotmail.com

Early Notice

South Durham Quiz

Calling quizzers an important note for your diaries

Date – Wednesday 29th November

Time – 1.30pm

Cost - £2.00 per person

Venue – Hurworth Community Centre, Hurworth on Tees

Please email dahardy@hotmail.co.uk asap with numbers.

Coming up in 2024

To: An exhibition of a National Treasure from the National Gallery.

'The Fighting Temeraire' by J.M.W.Turner.

This is to be exhibited with other works by the artist which illustrate the North - East as well as other work depicting the North-East's heritage

Venue: Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne

Date: Visits take place between 10th May – 7th September 2024

Cost: Entrance to the exhibition

Details about date, times, cost and tickets will be issued nearer the time as not all information is available yet from the Laing Art Gallery.

Contact: Catherine Stevenson Newcastle u3a

email: intoto444@hotmail.co

REGIONAL EVENT
VISIT TO THE NATIONAL ROYAL NAVY MUSEUM,
HARTLEPOOL



You are cordially invited to a day event at the Royal Navy Museum on Friday 15th March 2024.

Come along with your u3a colleagues and friends to spend time exploring the world of a typical seaport and life in the British navy during the 18th century.

- Guided tour of the HMS Trincomalee, the oldest remaining Royal Navy ship to be built in India and the last of Nelson's frigates
- Take part in handling objects from the period
- Find out how to make a rope!

To book a place at £12 pp and for any enquiries please send an email to Pat Marcus on patricia.a.marcus@gmail.com before the deadline of 1st March.

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	Trevor ROBINSON, Alnwick
Trustee for the North East	Sandi RICKERBY, Morpeth From 18 th October - 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 provide 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 12th January 2024. Thank you.