

Northumbria Region u3a
The Messenger
Newsletter – Magazine for July 2023



Who is this person and what has he been doing?

I remember your name perfectly,
but I just can't think of your face.

William Archibald Spooner
1844 - 1930

Chair's Report

In April 2023 Northumbria Region u3a held its AGM at the Angel View Inn, Gateshead. It was an excellent turnout, so thank you to all u3as that sent a representative either in person or on Zoom. The Regional Committee elected two new members, Ted Watt from Seaham and District u3a and Trevor Robinson from Alnwick u3a. Welcome to both.

The next Regional Quarterly Meeting will be held on Thursday July 20th 2023 at Stannington Village Hall, near Morpeth. Details and the agenda are on the Northumbria Region u3a website, as well as the Registration Form under the tab 'Meetings'. At the Regional Quarterly Meeting in July the format is being changed slightly. The Regional Support Team (RST) will be having a face to face meeting first. All u3a members are invited to attend this meeting as an observer. Members can meet the RST, put names to faces and listen to what we discuss eg items about the Region's 3 year plan, organisation of workshops and events etc.

A National Event called 'Off the Wall – a Festival of Learning' was held at The Sill, Northumberland in May 2023. It was a very successful and well organised event with 170 members from around the UK attending; many members coming from u3as in the Northumbria Region such as Blyth, Prudhoe, Whickham, Newcastle, Durham, Morpeth and others. There was charcoal drawing, circle dancing, guided walks and cycle rides, creative writing, talks about the eco system, presentations from University lecturers. Over 20 different activities to participate in. The week before the actual day nearly 800 members signed up for online presentations. If you would like to see the YouTube video about the day please go to [u3a off the Wall | Be part of something bigger | u3a UK - YouTube](#)

A revamped Regional Events Team has been formed. Five u3a members from around the Region are working hard to produce some exciting events for everyone. If your u3a is holding an event that would be suitable, please open it up to all u3a members in the Region. The South of the Region held their yearly Quiz near Durham in June. It was very successful. The North of the Region are holding their first ever Quiz in July. 100 members have registered, members coming from as far afield as Berwick. Another event has been organised to visit Ad Gefrin, Wooler in September. Please see advert in this magazine and on the Northumbria Region u3a website [u3a: Northumbria Region U3A: Home \(u3asites.org.uk\)](#)

The RST continues to visit and say 'Hello' to u3as and Networks, give advice, support them if they have a query. Wearside, Derwent Valley u3as and South Durham Chairs Network at Sedgefield, being just three examples over the past months. Next planned visits are to Coquetdale and Houghton le Spring u3as. If your u3a would like a visit by a member of the RST please contact Cecilia Coulson, Chair cecu3a@gmail.com

Northumbria Region u3a now has a Facebook Page. If you have a Facebook account please join us and post events from your u3a. You can view it at <https://www.facebook.com/Northumbria.Region.u3a/> Please see article.

Cecilia Coulson 24/6/2023

'Off the Wall' – a festival of learning.

A u3a National event took place at The Sill, Northumberland in May 2023. Many u3a members throughout the UK came to celebrate u3a's message of learn, laugh and live. Members came from as far afield as Islington, London to Scotland, a 170 in total. The online learning opportunities the week before the actual day attracted nearly 1,000 members.



Northumbria Region u3a members represented our Region coming from Prudhoe, Newcastle, Durham, Whickham and District, Washington, Morpeth and others.

There were over 20 activities that members could sign up for on the day, such as charcoal drawing, walks, circle dancing, roman food, talks by

Newcastle University lecturers and members of the Vindolanda Trust and Creative writing.

Five members of the Northumbria Region Creative Writers (NRCW) held two workshops, one on characters within prose and one on poems.

The publicity from this event will promote the u3a movement far and wide.



Wall – a collection of contributions

A group come together
Held by a philosophy,
To learn, laugh and live -
Reflecting on words
To share in this place,
Creative images to recall:
Whether of mists and rain;
Of mossy stones and green covered gates;
Of stone structures – built to last;
Of messages sent - so long ago;
Travelling straight roads
That hug the hills
On the edge of an empire;
Yes, wild and remote, under big skies
But not isolated:
Many, many feet have tramped this way
Journeys of a life time or a day trip –
Our touch with history.

by S Fall with thanks to Elizabeth, Debbie, Serena and Lesley.

Article by Cecilia Coulson, Chair Northumbria Region u3a and 'lead' of Northumbria Regional Creative Writers. If you would to join the NRCW please contact Cecilia at cecu3a@gmail.com

Wearside u3a Celebrate 30 Years



The event was held at The Grand Hotel at Seaburn where after lunch the Rock Choir came to entertain 100 members and guests.



The occasion was very much enjoyed, and 3 Founder Members were in attendance, all in their mid-90's, one even getting up to join in the dancing!

Figure 1

Guests included the President of Seaburn Rotary Club, John Lipscombe, as The Rotary Club were exploring the possibilities of supporting the development of u3as nationally and a member of the club, John Lloyd was tasked with following up on the idea. This led to funding to hire a venue for a first meeting held on 24th May 1993.



Figure 2

Abu Sharma, Manager of Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre, where we hold our regular monthly meetings and some of our activity groups, leads a team of staff and volunteers. Amazing support was offered during the pandemic when our members were added to the list of their members to receive regular



Figure 3

telephone contact and any additional support needed. This support continues with the knowledge that any of our members can ring up to have support with a chat, shopping or whatever may be required.



Figure 4

Northumbria Region Chairman Cecelia Coulson was the 3rd guest, she is doing a great job as a volunteer leading a team to organise regional meetings, events and networks with nearly 50 U3As.

As well as our own members the event was attended by members of Houghton Le Spring and Sunderland U3A's. Our photographer on the day, George McVitie,, did a great job in capturing images and creating a slideshow enjoyed by our members.



Figure 5

Thanks were given to the subcommittee doing the hard work which included, Hilary Shaw, John Lloyd, Carol Donald, Gwen Crosby and Wendy Kisby as well as all those whose help ensured a great time was had by all not least our Chairman Mike Hampshire.

Photos of people: 1 John & Doreen Lloyd founder members; 2 John Lipscombe, President of Seaburn Rotary Club, 3 Abu Sharman (SBIC Manager), Christa Lloyd (Business Secretary), Freda Mason founder member; 4 Northumbria Region Chairman Cecelia Coulson; 5 Mike Hampshire, Chairman Wearside U3A.



Rock
Choir

Christa Lloyd – Wearside u3a

Wednesday 21st June 2023 –

Visit to the Newcastle Reform Synagogue



A very warm welcome awaited us when we arrived for our visit to the Newcastle Reform Synagogue in Gosforth. Thirty five members attended from around Northumbria Region.

We had a very friendly, informative and at times humorous talk given by two lady members of the community. They both were knowledgeable and enthusiastic as they took us through the rituals and festivals of the Jewish faith.

Many objects were displayed on a table for us to peruse, the Menorah candles, Mezuzah (a cylindrical shape which contains writings in Hebrew from the bible)– which is placed on the door frames to all Jewish homes, the Yad, the finger pointer for the Torah scroll (no one is allowed to touch scrolls which are written on parchment), prayer shawls and more.



We were free to explore the room – a bright airy building (no balcony for the women to sit – as in orthodox synagogues) this was a reform church i.e., the women are equal to men. Various Jewish symbols were arranged around the room, Verses in Hebrew, plaques depicting the six days of creation, the Holocaust memorial stone and a beautifully bright woven

tapestry to name just a few. I was particularly drawn to the Torah Scroll, which we were allowed to view, and told of the rituals and history behind this particular one. Written on parchment in ancient Hebrew, read from right to left. I believe one of the ladies said it had taken a skilled craftsman 5 years to restore the ancient writing when the scroll was sent for restoration. Fascinating.

A very well worth, informative, warm and inclusive visit. One not to be missed.

Helen Page - Whickham and District u3a.

Sunderland u3a History Group



We're a lively group who meets the second Thursday of the month.

We normally have a speaker with a historical themed topic. However, in May we had a field trip to Hylton Castle.

This was a very interesting and informative visit and we all thoroughly enjoyed it. We learned a lot about the history of the castle and saw all of the new work that has been done to renovate and improve the almost derelict structure.

The guides were well informed and gave a good insight to the history and importance of the castle. We were also able to go onto the roof and view the surrounding area.

We had lovely weather and a delicious treat and coffee in the on-site cafe before the tour.

I think the whole group would recommend a visit.



Joyce Ferry – Sunderland u3a

A Laugh A Minute



A number of our members attended the African Djembe Drumming Workshop. Our very patient instructor was Brendon.

The beautifully carved drums are a work of art in themselves. They ranged from small to large, each giving a different depth of sound.

The drum is held between the knees. This caused some fun, as well as difficulty for some. Brendon suggested that perhaps those finding it a problem, could do what small children do, he has them kneel on the floor with the drum in front of them. A chorus came back, “if I get on my knees I might never get up”. Surprisingly everyone could hold the drum between the knees! We were shown six different hand movements to strike the drum, sorry, their names were too hard to remember. After practising ways to strike the drum, accompanied by much laughter, we were split into three groups. We finished our session by playing the drum with eyes closed and then a round of three different rhythms. We sounded very professional. Everyone worked extremely hard, and the concentration had to be seen. The smiles and joy on members faces showed just how much fun and enjoyment people had from this new experience. Coffee and squashy cream cakes finished the morning. Cries of,

“Can we do this again?”, rang around the hall. Those that didn’t attend missed a wonderful morning.

Thank you, Carol A, for organising this unique event.

Malcolm Wilkinson – Seaham u3a

**Whickham and District u3a coach trip to
Alnwick and Howick Hall and Gardens**



In May 2023 Whickham and District u3a visited Alnwick and Howick Hall Gardens. 46 members joined in the coach trip. Howick Gardens is the ancestral seat of the Earls Grey since 1319.

Gardens were magnificent, azaleas and rhododendrons in full bloom, church tapestries inspiring, and the hall was inspirational ... a piano playing classical music in the Chinese room.

Cecilia Coulson - Whickham and District u3a.



Northumbria Region Creative Writers working with the Veteran Tree Project

Northumbria Region Creative Writers were offered an opportunity to work with the Veteran Tree Project, in association with the Woodland Trust.

Nick Johnson, a volunteer of the Veteran Tree Project met with three creative writing members at Belsay Hall, Northumberland.



An app is being developed so families and individuals can walk a trail and identify trees. The trees tell a story (that's where the creative writers come in) about their lives, thoughts and experiences. You can download the app now, called the Veteran Tree Project. There are 2 trails available already- Heaton Park and Rothbury. The Belsay Hall trail will be available in the near future. It includes trees such as the monkey puzzle tree (shown), Magnolia, Japanese Cedar and many more.

By Cecilia Coulson, Northumbria Creative Writers, contact cecu3a@gmail.com if you would like to join in our adventures

Northumbria Region u3a are becoming social media savvy



With the assistance of Mike Cook (Newcastle u3a) Northumbria Region have recently constructed a Facebook page. Mike is the moderator for this page, with the assistance of Trevor Robinson, a newly elected Committee member of Northumbria Regional Committee. All u3a members will be able to post events on the Region's Facebook page that are happening within their own u3a. This publicity adventure will serve as another outlet, so enabling individual u3as to reach more of the general public. There is a link from the Facebook page to Northumbria Region's website and vice a versa.

We would also like members to consider posting events that have already taken place, so showing the diverse activities that u3as organise. We would also like individual u3as, if they have a Facebook Group to link in with the Region's Facebook page.

This is a link to the Facebook page if you're not registered with Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090627092313>

For further information please contact Mike Cook on michael_j_cook@btinternet.com

Sandi Rickerby North East Regional Trustee



Sandi Rickerby North East Regional Trustee is stepping down during the latter half of this year as Regional Trustee but will remain on various National Committees.

Do you know anyone who would be willing to take on this role? Sandi is willing to meet and talk to anyone who may be interested.

Please contact her on email: sandi.rickerby@u3a.org.uk or Tel: 07792199417.

**Northumbria Region Creative
Writers**

**Creative Writing Workshop,
for all abilities.**

Open to all u3a members.

Thursday 28th September 2023.

**Brunswick Methodist Church Hall, Brunswick Place
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7BJ**

10am -3.30pm

Val Scully, North East Author will talk about how she first started writing, her involvement with the National Trust, Gibside and the Land of Oak and Iron.



Workshops will include exercises in prose and poetry.

Creative Writing creates a sense of wellbeing.

If you've never put pen to paper, here's your chance.

For further information and/or to reserve a place contact Maureen Taylor email address taylor1956.mt@gmail.com

Closing date to reserve a place 21st September 2023

(Cost: hoping to be free, but could be a small charge)



Ad Gefrin[®]
Spirit of Belonging

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

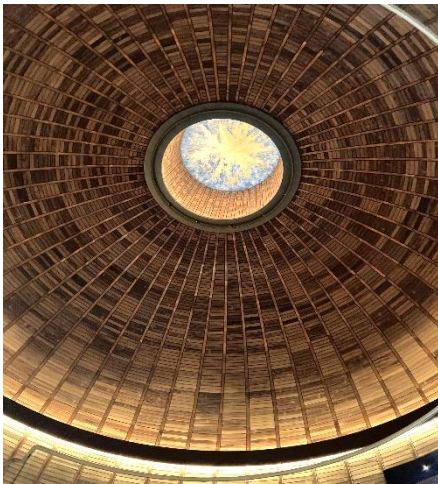
Northumbria Region u3a Events Team

Invite all u3a members to visit Ad Gefrin, Wooler NE71 6NJ

Ad Gefrin is a Northumberland Anglo-Saxon Museum and an English whisky distillery, opened to the public in March 2023

Date of visit: Wednesday 6th September 2023.

Cost: £20 per person for a 90 minute tour, including Museum, Great Hall and a tasting session.



Immediately you are transported into the inside of a whiskey barrel




The outside area, which is part of the Distillery Tour

For further information and/or to reserve a place please contact Cecilia Coulson cecu3a@gmail.com or phone 07881768301

Closing date for reservations: Monday 28th August 2023

(Photos taken by Cecilia Coulson, May 2023) <https://adgefirin.co.uk>

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

Looking for new ideas?  Need to recruit? Worried about a situation?



Then come along to a S.E. Northumberland Chairs' and Business Secretaries' Network (peer support group) meeting when members share good practice and help solve problems.

Not in these parts of the region? No problem. Like all u3a groups we welcome members from any part of the region and other regions

Come along and ask your question/s or tell us how you achieved successes with initiatives, recruitment and retention, social media, or other strategies you have used.

Then come to a meeting.

We are always ready to listen to you.



Contact Catherine Stevenson newcastleu3a@hotmail.com

Northumbria Region u3a Treasurers' Network

This informal network (peer support group) is a great support to treasurers and in their role as trustees. It's open to members considering becoming treasurers from any part of the region or other regions.

There is always lots of information to share and queries to answer by treasurers who have a great deal of knowledge and expertise and from those who don't have quite so much!

Whether you are new to the role, thinking about being a treasurer or have been in the role for some time, come along to a meeting. You'll be made very welcome.

Contact Catherine Stevenson newcastleu3a@hotmail.com

Answer to question on front cover.

John Lloyd who has been helping celebrate 30 years of Wearside u3a.

Regional Committee April 2023 - 2024	
Chair	Cecilia COULSON, Whickham 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

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 29th September thank you.