‘Example is one of the most potent of instructors though it teaches without a tongue.’

Samuel Smiles
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Chairman’s Report July 2019

I must apologise that this is a rather short report because quite a bit of what I was going to report on is in Elizabeth Porter’s Regional Trustee report.

The last three months seem to have been predominantly focused on networks and the advantages of networking. The new Regional networks, Group Convenors and Membership Secretaries, are doing well. Anyone interested in joining any of the existing networks can find meeting dates and contact details listed in the calendar on the Regional Website, in the Events section.

It has been brought to my attention that we do not allow enough time for networking at the Quarterly meetings. At this next meeting we have allowed some extra time after the lunch break.

Another issue which has cropped up recently is that it is possible that some U3As are making too much information available to prospective new members. Newsletters are being handed out with contact details of group leaders and even committee members. This practice is in breach of GDPR. It will be brought up for discussion at the meeting.

Sandi Rickerby, who will be taking over from Elizabeth Porter as Regional Trustee, will be at the meeting, now that she is back from her travels, so will be available to chat to any of you who would like to introduce yourselves to her.

For a while now we have been looking for a venue for our Quarterly meetings in the south of the region. We have found a very nice venue in Darlington but as with all the venues that have been considered there is a downside – Parking is £4 a day. Please think about this and we will listen to your comments at the meeting.

Summer School arrangements have been put on hold at the moment because, although Kirkley Hall confirmed our booking, they have now told us that they have amalgamated with Sunderland College recently so they will not have enough residential accommodation for us. We will continue to look for another venue. If anyone has any suggestions please let me know. It needs to be as central within the region as possible.

Jill Haistead, Chair, Northumbria Region U3A
A third year as Regional Trustee

It has been a very eventful year as the region’s Trustee on the Board of the Third Age Trust.

In the summer of 2018, I ran two Committee Forum Days, one in Darlington and another in Alnwick, in order to give Committee members, the opportunity to share good practice and discuss solutions to problems. As part of the day I was interested in hearing their views on what would be useful for them in the next year from the perspective of support and development and they produced 5 priorities which led to me offering workshops in the region in the period Oct 2018 – July 2019.

Topics covered in the 5 workshops were Valuing Volunteers; Financial Matters; Good news (improving newsletters, websites and communicating with the media); How to be a good Chair; and Interest Group Matters. The take up of places at these workshops, supported hugely by the Regional Committee, has been good, culminating in 52 members (involved as Interest Group leaders or Group Coordinators) attending the final workshop on July 4th.

The response to the offering of workshops, delivered in the main by our own Trust Volunteers, encouraged me this year to ask all the U3As in our region to identify their development priorities for 2019-2021. I am in the process of receiving and analysing their responses and I will report to the Regional Committee, the Trust Volunteers, and the next Regional Trustee later in the summer. The information gathered, using the “Have Your Say” document, should enable us to offer a support programme which will be designed with the intention of meeting the needs of U3As as expressed by those U3As.

This “bottom-up” approach is favoured by the Trust who depend on advice from members in the Trust’s working groups, sub Committees; and the Regional Trustees. The resultant advice is passed on to the Board who ultimately pass on advice to member U3As via the website and mailings to Business Secretaries.

Those Trust Volunteers trained by the Trust specifically to address start-ups, problem solving, and workshop delivery have been very busy. With a new U3A at Cramlington and another in Jesmond in the pipeline, we are eager to hear of opportunities for others. If your U3A is getting too big, or is too small, please contact me and we will endeavour to find a solution.
This year has also seen a significant increase in the number of **networks** in the region, with an emphasis on “role- specific” networks e.g. a network for Treasurers, a network for Group Coordinators. Networks of U3As who come together are not new, but role specific ones are, and the future looks exciting with networks not only working together to solve problems but also having the opportunity to consider organising joint events and study days and targeting training and development opportunities.

In my role as Chair of the National research sub Committee, I see a step forward too for the region with a Trust Volunteer opting to be a coordinator for **Shared Learning Projects**. These projects take place along with Research Projects; the difference between the two types of projects is small, with SLPs usually completed in a shorter time frame. In the future, the region needs several **Research Ambassadors** to work alongside the Regional Trustee and raise the profile of enquiry-led learning across the region.

My term as Regional Trustee ends at the Conference in August. It has been a pleasure to work with such committed and enthusiastic people across the U3A movement in our region. I am grateful for the support I have received from the Regional Committee and wish you well in the future.

*Elizabeth Porter*

*Regional Trustee, eporter99@yahoo.co.uk*

**Elizabeth Porter Thank You**

We would all like to say a big thank you to Elizabeth Porter of Tynedale U3A who is about to hand over the reins as Regional Trustee after being in office for three years.

It has been a time which has seen many changes. At National Office there was the appointment of our new Chief Executive Officer, with an alteration to the Role Description of the Regional Trustees. We also have had new legislation...
from HMRC, The Charity Commission and the government. These changes have not always been welcomed in the regions and much negotiation has had to be worked through in the last few years.

Elizabeth, we expect will be relieved that this busy period of her life is coming to an end and that she will soon be able to stand back and take stock of what she has achieved.

We wish her well and of course every happiness in her ‘retirement’.

AGM Stannington

At the April 2019 NRU3A Quarterly Meeting and prior to the AGM, in Stannington Village Hall, there were two very interesting contributions from National U3A Chief Executive Sam Mauger and Honorary Treasurer Richard Teare.

A copy of the full PowerPoint presentation by Sam can be accessed on the Meetings webpage of the NRU3A website. Richard answered lots of intriguing questions from those present.

As the meeting was held in Northumberland, shortly after the launch of the new high profile publicity campaign, 'Discover Our Land', NRU3A Chair Jill Haistead and Vice Chair Mo Brown presented Sam and Richard with 'Discover Our Land' badges and booklets.
Although the blossom tree outside Stannington Village Hall was glorious, the breeze was somewhat mischievous, causing havoc with hair!

Kelvin Rushworth

**SHARED LEARNING PROJECTS (SLPs)**

**SHARED LEARNING PROJECTS** started in 2002 with a 17 member team. They began by trying to find out how older people, 'Approach learning in Museums', at the end of 10 weeks they reported back with a 15-minute presentation. What had begun as 'The Museum Project' was then retitled, a 'Shared Learning Project'.

There are currently 17 SLPs around the country, and 900 projects have been carried out.

The outcomes from SLPs are wide, with presentations, exhibitions of photography or art etc., leaflets are produced, which can be used in schools as has happened in the South East.

**ROLE OF THE SHARED LEARNING PROJECT COORDINATOR**

Promote SLPs in the Region and advise and help U3As on setting up projects, briefing the leader, attending the first meeting and the final presentation. Speaking about SLPs at meetings and making contact with outside organisations.

**IDEAS FOR SLPS IN THE REGION**

I would welcome ideas from you for future SLPs, either within your U3A working with an outside organisation, groups of U3As wanting to work together or from networks within the Region. **I have a project in mind for 2022, which is the 40th anniversary of the U3A, which I would hope all the Region's U3As may like to participate in.** If you would like some help or more information please contact me, we can then share the projects with the rest of the Region as I feel few are known about after all LEARNING is what the U3A is all about.

**THE SHARED LEARNING PROJECTS START-UP LEAFLET**

This leaflet is intended to give U3As and outside organisations a brief introduction to SLPs and how to set up a project. Copies are available from National Office.
SETTING UP A SLP WITH AN OUTSIDE ORGANISATION
You could contact the Lifelong Learning Officer of the organisation to ask if there is a research or assessment project you could undertake for them or to discuss a project you have in mind where they may be able to help your U3A or group with your project. You should tell them about the U3A and your U3A in particular and arrange to visit them to discuss the details. The learning will be ‘shared’ between all the parties involved. There are various points to discuss and agree including:

- The length of the project, the number of meetings and the dates.
- Will you have access to photocopying facilities/library/computers?
- What will be the final outcome, e.g. a report, leaflet, or web entry?

ADVERTISING THE PROJECT & APPLICATIONS
Once the initial contact has been made and a project has been identified, you would advertise the project to the membership. Fix a date by which members have to reply by, and an application form can be produced for them to complete.

THE MEETINGS
At the first meeting, the leader and the organisation contact will outline the project and the work to be undertaken by the group. Regular meetings are an integral part of the shared learning experience as is carrying our research between meetings. Perhaps a guest speaker might be invited to provide useful information at one or two of these meetings.

FINAL OUTCOME
Depending upon the requirements of the organisation or your U3A members, a final document may be produced. This may take the form of a report, a leaflet or a page on the organisation’s website. Some examples of outcomes can be found on the SLP pages on the national website – www.u3a.org.uk, https://www.u3a.org.uk/resources/u3a-research/research-network

SETTING UP A SLP WITH OTHER U3As
Using the Start Up Leaflet, adapting the above and using the help below, you can produce your own SLP format.

HOW DO I GET HELP?
You can contact your North East Region SLP co-ordinator, Jane Mathieson, or the North East Regional Trustee, details can be found on the Northumbria Region Website.
SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR SHARED LEARNING PROJECTS

U3A policy states that you can apply for funding as long as this does not affect the integrity of the U3A. A good first point of call is your local voluntary sector organisation. It is a good idea for your U3A to be listed on your local Council for Voluntary Service database when you will then receive mail-outs from them letting you know the type of training and funding opportunities they have on offer. The CVS can often offer assistance in applying for grants and will know of local funds you may be able to apply for, as well as giving assistance with making applications for Heritage Lottery Funding. To apply for Heritage Lottery Funding look at their website (www.hlf.org.uk). These local representatives hold workshops and drop-in sessions at venues across their regions.

There may also be a local Wildlife Trust which may be interested in a joint project and resulting publication to sell in shops at their centre’s. If you are interested in funding for a Community Website look at the information on the pages of The Community Archives and Heritage Group at www.communityarchives.org.uk under 'Resources' and then under 'Funding Advice'.

Finally, involve your members; ask for ideas and find out if they know of any sources of funding. The organisation may also relish the prospect of some publicity for themselves! You may have members who have applied for funding in the past and know how to write a good application. When considering funding for a SLP, remember to use all means at your disposal!

The full version of this article can be found on our website.

Jane Mathieson
Shared Learning Project Coordinator North East Region

Air Pollution Event

"Wearside U3A have fixed a topical/unusual event on Air Pollution for Wednesday 14th August at 1:30 pm by Monica Price and her post graduate Nigerian student Christabel from Sunderland University. It will be in the Bangladeshi International Community Centre, Sunderland. Cost will be £1:00 and full details at Stannington."
This lady loves a challenge.

With a ‘let’s give it a go’ optimism, Saltburn District’s Wind Band is off to an enjoyable and enthusiastic start. Group leader, Pat Ryan (the lady in question), is moulding and encouraging a group of lapsed, self-doubting, and fledgling instrumentalists to form what is fast becoming a functioning group of musicians. With only a few months under their belts, the band are starting to make a very acceptable sound together.

There is no pressure. Bum notes are applauded. Timing issues are understood by fellow strugglers. The aim is enjoyment, and this they are doing in spades. Calling all musicians – new starters, those who haven’t picked up an instrument in 30 years, and those lucky few confident players – please come along and give us a go. 2.30/4.00 on a Tuesday afternoon in the Methodist Church Hall on Milton Street, Saltburn by the Sea. Find the Band group details on the Saltburn District U3A website. All welcome.

Deb Barwick – Saltburn District U3A

Northallerton U3A

The U3A Northallerton are launching a campaign to promote and advertise the different groups and activities that are available for members and prospective new members. Over the recent months they have produced some of the work they have been doing and are displaying it at the monthly meeting when an invited speaker gives a talk or demonstration.
The Lunch and Learn Group meet at a member’s house who acts as the host for the meal once a month. Individuals make starter, main course and desert. Discussion on menus and ingredients and the enjoyment of the friendship and food.

Creative Cards meet monthly a very interesting activity in a relaxing atmosphere. As group members are concentrating and producing very intricate and individual cards for every occasion with a personal touch.

The Painting and Sketching Group meet fortnightly there is usually approximately 8 to 10 members. Everyone has a speciality they enjoy, perhaps a portrait of a member of the family, a favourite flower, a building or landscape they have visited. Their pet at home. Members sketching, and others painting. The Group Leaders are available to give advice to the members.

Preparation is ongoing for advertising. A poster has been designed and will be displayed in various locations and venues. Also advertising in a local magazine which has a wide distribution area. We are hoping to encourage new members to join the U3A Northallerton and enjoy the activities we have to offer.

Susan Dodsworth – Northallerton U3A
**Painting on wood.**

When I lived in France, to help me with my French I joined a French group nearby and they were Painting on Wood. I found it fascinating, the other members helped and advised me, passing on their knowledge. Some of whom had painted for many years. They did paint on metal too such as a watering can, milk churn, lamp stand, etc.

When I returned to England and joined our local U3A, I decided to begin my own group for Painting on Wood. I took my own painted wood to a monthly meeting to show members and asked if anyone was interested to sign a list. We are a small group so meet at our house here in Dinnington each Tuesday afternoon for two hours. I pass on my knowledge and it is such a rewarding hobby. We clubbed together to buy acrylic pots of paint and keep a kitty for any expenses such as tracing paper. Everyone supplies their own brushes.

I think all our group would agree it is very relaxing and rewarding and that was some people saying "I can't paint". They can. We do have a break half way for tea and biscuits. Anyone can do it, I did without any qualifications apart from painting at school - and that was a very long time ago.

Marian Pope – Ponteland U3A

**Whickham and District U3A Local History Group**

When the oral history group was formed it was looking at changes which had occurred during the Twentieth Century in the old Whickham Urban District Council, which consisted of Byer Moor, Dunston, Marley Hill, Sunniside, Swalwell and Whickham.
Many local people were interviewed about these changes and their memories recorded. As a Millennium Project, it was decided to publish the vast amount of information which had been collected before it was lost to future generations.

It was decided to put all the finding onto a website. As there was no sophisticated software in those days, four members went to night school to learn HTML. We managed to produce a very basic website which was put onto the internet. Since then the site has grown into a vast source of information, which can be viewed at whickhamdistrictmemories.co.uk We now use very up-to-date software.

There is information about people, buildings, industry, leisure, education, sport, wartime, health and many more.

Well worth a look!

Ann Kean – Whickham and District U3A

Bird Watching at Lindisfarne

It’s a long drive to Holy Island from Saltburn, but it was worth it for the sight of a short-eared owl quartering the fields at fence height. We were walking the Straight Lonnen on the island which cuts between fields to dunes leading to Coves Haven. There we had close views of nesting fulmar, a pair of herons on the rocks and eider ducks across the bay.

We were joined on our walk by Richard from the North Northumberland Bird Society who volunteers on the island manning the Window, a visitor centre designed to give visitors the opportunity to see a variety of birds and so very knowledgeable about the birds.
on the island. He was first to identify a goldcrest in the hedgerow and to spot an owl several fields away to our right. We were approaching the dunes when we saw another owl, much closer, flying over a field containing a flock of curlew and a group of roe deer. It was this short-eared owl that gave us the closest view, buff coloured with a wavering flight with glides on long crooked wings.

Then the flock of curlew flew over us and their wild bubbling call was heard as they passed. On our return walk we paused by the farmyard which had a variety of hens, Silkies, and Buff Orpington among others. Altogether on the day we saw twenty two species of bird and as we parted from Richard a kestrel hovered overhead in farewell.

Ann Alstead - Saltburn District U3A

Berwick U3A Help to make the town greener.

There are many reasons to visit the walled border town of Berwick-upon-Tweed but its U3A Environmental Group are about to add another. It all started with a litter pick along the river, which got us talking about how we could help more people appreciate the unique flora, fauna, seascape and geology of the area, even in the windy conditions that often prevail! A Tweed and Coast Nature Trail struck us as the best way to bring home to tourists as well as the local community what a fascinating place this is. Having agreed on a route (following the river over the seventeenth-century Old Bridge, past the docks into the Victorian seaside resort of Spittal), we split ourselves into sub-groups to deal with certain tasks such as content, design, project management, and fund-raising. We also consulted and gained the co-operation of a number of local organisations with an interest in the environment. Now that we have firm funding from various trusts, individuals and Berwick town council, we are poised to go ahead this with exciting project.
The most original feature of the Trail is that all 14 (butterfly-shaped) information boards will be changed according to the season, detailing (often surprising) facts about land and sea creatures, plants, the weather, and man’s impact on the environment. This is where we come full circle because we started out concentrating on litter, and it is the thoughtless discarding of litter that is one of the biggest threats to wildlife and indeed the survival of the planet.

Hilary O’Shea – Berwick U3A Environmental Group

The U3A follows the rubbish to West Sleekburn

In June two groups of U3A members visited the West Sleekburn Recycling Plant operated by SITA for Northumberland County Council since 2006. SITA operates a number of such plants in the U.K. under a private finance initiative (PFI).

It was good to find out what actually happens to the items we place in our bins. The sorting of course starts with ourselves, separating those items we are told to recycle and placing the rest in the rubbish bin. The rejected items go to Teesside to be burned and the heat generated used to make electricity. All items collected in Tynedale are compressed and repacked in large lorries to go for processing.

The Sleekburn recycling plant separates the items from our bins at incredible speed. Powerful magnets and strong induction currents rip steel and aluminium off the conveyor belt whilst paper and light materials are blown off by jets of air for collection. Other ingenious sensors watch the items flying by and blast any chosen into a collection bin.
Unfortunately, the present technology stops there and the human eye and hand are needed to remove unwanted or unrecognised items from the remaining materials. These workers are called pickers. There are about 17 on each of the two eight hour shifts.

They stand beside a moving conveyor belt grabbing any offending items and sending them down the appropriate chute. Most pickers are men but three are women. Although it might seem boring and unpleasant, they seem to enjoy the work and generally stay employed with the company.

Northumberland recycles 97% of the recyclable waste collected. This is one of the best rates in the UK. Part of this success is down to us placing the correct items in our bins. Other authorities have a poor success rate and include some very unpleasant articles.

SITA recycles 50,000 tonnes a year at Sleekburn but they can only recycle that which can be sold on the open market for reuse.

The number of items we recycle could be extended if the manufacturers could standardise the type of plastics used and make products from more acceptable and easily-separated raw materials.

This was a very interesting visit. We were dressed in high visibility jackets and safety helmets walking along high-level narrow catwalks surrounded by fast moving conveyor belts filled with rubbish. Our entertaining and informative guides explained the process and even allowed one of our party to shut the whole factory down. We were however glad to eventually come out into the fresh air and quiet of the outside.

Incidentally we can now leave the tops on plastic bottles but it would be helpful if they were rinsed and squashed.

Our thanks to Wendy for organizing the visit.

Kevin Stephens – Tynedale U3A
Raising A smile

Members of the group The Knicky Knack Knitters from Seaham & District U3A have spent a busy year creating all manner of marine type creations, from seaweed to mermaids.

The work was displayed at Seaham Marina this June and has been huge success with locals and visitors to the area.

Janice Leach – Seaham and District U3A

Kagyu Samye Ling Monastery and the Tibetan Buddhist Centre

Incredibly, as long ago as 1967, Kagyu Samye Ling Monastery and the Tibetan Buddhist Centre was founded in Easkdalemuir, near Langholm in the peaceful countryside of the Scottish Borders.
Members of the Wooler U3A International Group were welcomed by the typical fluttering prayer flags when they paid a visit to Samye Ling, beginning with light refreshments in the Tibetan Tea Rooms before wandering through the Memorial and Peace Gardens to admire the Victory Stupa, Prayer Wheels and statues of Guru Rinpoche, Green Tara and Nagajuna.

An amazing vegetarian buffet lunch was enjoyed in the under-floor heated Refectory, together with the resident monks, nuns and volunteers.

Then, walking past the glowing stained glass window, International Group members entered the open courtyard where the unforgettable sight of the huge imposing Samye Ling Temple greeted them.

Inside the magnificent Shrine Room, visitors were able to join the monks, nuns and lay people for 'Protector Prayers', Mahakala Puja, before concluding their visit in the Samye Ling Shop with its treasure trove of books, DVDs, CDs, colourful Tibetan and Nepalese arts and crafts and a veritable cornucopia of very unusual gifts.

Kelvin Rushworth - Wooler U3A

U3A on Tour in Devon and Cornwall

Our first ever coach tour in the UK has given us not only interest and education but entertained us in the company of lots of lovely people. We chose this trip because it was taking us to the places we have always wanted to visit.

The Eden Project came up to our expectations and it was made more interesting by our knowledgeable guide who explained the projects emphasis on biodiversity and how it was tackling problems across the world caused by intensive agricultural methods.

Our second day was a full day starting with an excellent guided bus tour of Plymouth, followed by a boat trip up the river Tamar to view the naval dockyards and the Cornish bank of the river. The comment when we got off the boat by
one of our number (who had not taken the trip) was that it made us look 50 years younger – the school party was not amused.

The last day was to Buckfast Abbey which I think, talking to people, was the highlight of the trip for many of the group; possibly because it was so different to how it had been anticipated. The building is relatively modern, having been consecrated in August 1932 and the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament is awe-inspiring and very special with its stunning stained glass window where many of us were moved by the relaxing atmosphere created. This was followed by a steam engine hauled train ride down to Totnes on the South Devon railway from where we went down to Brixham for a short stay. Brixham reminded some of us of Whitby on a bad day.

Many thanks to our careful driver, David and to our very efficient Tour Director (alias Maureen) for a wonderful, interesting and educational holiday.

Rosemary and Robin Willows - Saltburn District U3A

Wooler U3A Summer Outing to Bowhill

Deep in the heart of the Scottish Borders, beside winding glens and heathery hills, an enchanting country estate awaited Wooler U3A members on their annual Summer Outing.
And at its centre is the magnificent country home of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, Bowhill House, reflected in a loch with rooftops framed by rich forestry. This majestic House and its grounds have been the centre of life in this rural area for more than two hundred years. Bowhill enjoys a regal seat in the heart of the ancient royal hunting forest of Ettrick and is blessed with an abundance of glorious scenery.

In the Minstrel Tearooms, Wooler U3A members were welcomed on their private visit with coffee, tea and biscuits still warm from the oven mmm. Then, their first tour of Bowhill began. The present house dates mainly from 1812 and was greatly expanded during the 19th century. Sir Walter Scott, a kinsman and frequent visitor, admired the house so much he christened it ‘Sweet Bowhill’ in his famous poem, ‘The Lay of the Last Minstrel’.

Bowhill House served as a military hospital in the first World War and was also occupied by the Army from 1939-45 during World War II. The House suffered after, with dry rot and general wear and tear taking their toll. It has taken the concerted efforts of a team of skilled and devoted craftsmen and volunteers to save the original structure. The House’s superb art treasures, including 18th century hand-painted Chinese wallpapers, numerous famous paintings and thousands of books are now safe for future generations.

The painting collection is outstanding ranging from an exceptional series of family portraits by Thomas Gainsborough and Sir Joshua Reynolds, including the latter’s iconic Lady Caroline Scott as ‘Winter’, to fine landscapes by Claude and Ruysdael, including a set of Italian views by Guardi and Pannini and an exceptional Canaletto of London.
Following soup and sandwiches, Wooler U3A members began their second tour of Bowhill, including a number of private rooms not usually viewed by members of the public and spectacular samples from the huge collection of Portrait Miniatures, including works by Hans Holbein, Nicholas Hilliard and Samuel Cooper, including the latter’s famous unfinished portrait of Oliver Cromwell.

Finally, some Wooler U3A members just could not resist afternoon tea whilst others wandered through the gardens, we all give huge thanks to visit organisers Jennie and Colin Milne.

Kelvin Rushworth, Wooler U3A

Who Needs Rocky?

I’ve sat through a panoply of good plays and a dash of mediocre ones then there are the plays I could not wait to end. Yawn.

However, there is now a fourth category which is amazingly outstanding and it was on a Newcastle U3A theatre visit that we had this experience watching, ‘Carrying David’. Of all the places to see one of the best productions we had to go to Stanley, Co. Durham. In the Louisa Centre, next door to the theatre, where on June 3rd 1989, a major, world, sporting event took place as Stanley born Glenn McCrory fought for the Cruiserweight Boxing Championship of the World.

Glenn told his story through the one man play, written by Ed Waugh, who also wrote other successful plays such as ‘The Amazing Joe Wilson’.

The actor engaged the audience from the start and held it there throughout the performance as he played the role of Glenn whose quest was to win the championship. Young Glenn’s perseverance, determination and skill enabled him to reach this pinnacle of his career that June night.

However, tension was created between Glenn fighting to be a world champion while his younger, disabled brother, David, was fighting for his life. Glenn and David were very close from when Glenn had brought some joy into David’s life by carrying him on his back and running around the house!
David was to become Glenn’s inspiration. When he was 15 years old, David was expected to have six months to live but his fight to live took him way beyond that expectation and led him to see Glenn box that June night. We laughed aloud as the actor delivered lines illustrating Glenn’s sense of humour which was evident on the night of the championship when Glenn entered the Louisa Centre and wondered what was happening in Stanley that evening. TV cameras and crowds were everywhere.

Glenn entered the ring. His opponent was Patrick Lumumba. They fought 12 rounds at the end of which Glenn was declared the world champion! A world, boxing champion there in Stanley where many still talk about the night they saw it and a piece of history unfold. The audience itself was on its feet cheering and chanting, ‘McCrory! McCrory!’ We felt we were actually there along with David, Glenn’s mother and his siblings.

We were worn out after going 12 rounds with Glenn! We were shedding tears of emotion and joy for the rise to such heights for an ordinary, Stanley lad. There was a lot to learn from this very inspirational story.

Who needs an American Rocky when there was one on the doorstep?!

Catherine Stephenson – Newcastle U3A

Tynedales Lively AGM

Tynedale U3A decided to liven up its AGM with a poetry competition. Entrants were asked to write either a limerick or a short poem up to 20 lines, all about the U3A. The judges were colleagues Jean Thomas and Gwen Tuck from nearby Prudhoe U3A.

The result was a record attendance of over 100 at the meeting where the results were announced and some of the winning entries were read out, to great amusement.

Here is the winning poem, by Anne Priestley.

We’re members of the U3A, the third age university
We study topics various with various ability
You don’t need 3 starred A’s to come
Although this may apply to some
There’s something happening every day to suit all tastes and every sway
There’s book groups, bridge and music too
There’s sure to be something for you
Watching birds or craft or art, you really don’t know where to start
There’re languages of every kind,
Latin for a brainy mind
Garden visits, history – painting and geology
Come and do Tai Chi or yoga
Walk the wall and look it over
Poetry reading or a play or even go on holiday
Sunday lunch clubs, tasting wine
Conversation as you dine
Come and join improve your brain
Or join a group to entertain
It really is the place to be
Just come to monthly meets and see.

And the winning limerick by Steve Crozier, convenor of the Geology group.

Geologists like looking at rocks
In waterproofs, boots and wet socks
From wading in rivers
That give us the shivers
But Ah! The pint at the end is the tops

Kevin Stephens - Tynedale U3A

Whickham and District U3A

In May 2019 Whickham and District U3A, in conjunction with the British Red Cross held a workshop learning about First Aid a practical workshop so all could have a go. A defibrillator had been purchased by the local Rotary Club and installed outside Whickham library, but nobody knew how to use it. So, during this 2-hour First Aid workshop, how to perform CPR and use a defibrillator was explained and people could practice the techniques. Also, how to recognise a stroke, a heart attack, broken bones and manage bleeding after a fall was talked about in a group setting and feedback was given. This workshop was so successful that another one has been arranged for the autumn.
A photograph of the workshop. Nikki the Adult Group Coordinator for the British Red Cross, explaining about Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation.

**Some comments from our U3A members**

'Good course, everyone should attend'

'Have learnt so much in a 'common sense' presentation' Very clear delivery which gave confidence'.

In June 2019 two Creative Writing Workshop were organised for Whickham and District U3A, working in conjunction with Arts Diamonds and Gateshead Library Services.

What a success these two workshops, turned out to be. There were seven of us working with a local writer called Ellen Phethean. Didn't matter if you'd never attempt creative writing before, it was a case of 'have a go'. We met in Whickham Library and each session was for 2 hours...the time just flew. So successful were these workshops that more dates have been arranged for September and October.

**Some comments from our U3A members**

‘ Totally enjoyable! Sharing thoughts and ideas, which usually I keep written’. ‘Thoroughly enjoyed the creative writing course, long may it continue.’ ‘I have thoroughly enjoyed these two sessions. Ellen cleverly drew out our thoughts and memories came flooding back.’

Cecilia Coulson – Whickham and District U3A
Geography Competition (2018-2019)

Final of the 2018-2019 Geography Competition took place on the afternoon of Thursday, 20th June, 2019, at Richmond Cricket Club. The Final was between Teesdale and Bedale U3As. The teams were treated to a splendid buffet by the club and, coincidently, the event was enhanced, on a beautifully sunny day, by an U15 ladies cricket match between Yorkshire and Northumberland. Yorkshire were triumphant much to the pleasure of both teams! The cricket match lasted throughout the Final but it did not deter or distract either team from the ‘task in hand’ to win the Trophy. Teesdale were the defending champions of two years but it wasn’t to be their day as Bedale were ‘on a mission’ and proved too good for Teesdale, winning by 86 points to 71. The Bedale team were delighted to win and, after a really happy atmosphere all afternoon, will receive the Trophy at their Open Meeting on Wednesday, 21st August, 2019, in Bedale.

The two photographs show the Teesdale team, Annie Clouston; Phil Clarke; Ian Hodgson and David Yeadon and the Bedale team, John Bailey; John Dewhirst; David Shaw and Philip Young, in action.

Jeff Armstrong (organiser)
13 – Unlucky for some but not Dunelm U3A Quiz Team

13th of May was the day 6 teams who took part in the Northumbria Regional Quiz competition gathered together for lunch and an afternoon of fun quizzes. This followed a season where each of the teams had pitted their wits against the other 5 teams, both at home and away. A total of 10 matches each between September and April. The accolade for winning the most matches is a small trophy. This year Dunelm u3a were the winners of the trophy. Well done to Dunelm.

Mike Forrest, team member for Dunelm and also Vice Chairman of Dunelm U3A, graciously accepted the trophy on behalf of the team. He gave a witty speech about the nuances of 'quiz-speak'. For example, when the words Well Done are uttered when a team member has answered a particularly tricky question what is really meant is 'how on earth did you know that' or 'that was a bit of a lucky guess'!

Thanks go to Morpeth u3a for being hosts for the occasion and organising a delicious buffet lunch. On the day a team of members from Whitley Bay u3a had success for the colourful general knowledge rounds. A team from Newcastle u3a lifted the prize for identifying football teams from Cryptic Clues. So, spoils all around following a good afternoon of thought provoking quizzes. We are all looking forward to the 2019/2020 season.

Jennifer Banks – Dunelm U3A

“An age old problem: what causes ageing and is there anything we can do about it.”

(Voice : www.voice-.global.org)

If you insist, as most of us do, on surviving into old age, Newcastle is a good place to be. The Institute for Ageing has an international reputation and works to understand the ageing process and do whatever can be done to ease our inevitable way through it.

“Voice” brings members of the public into this and other areas with lectures, workshops and opportunities to volunteer making use of people’s experience and ideas. Join to get details of what you can do.
So, I went to learn if there is anything we can do about ageing.

The graphs and diagrams, the facts about ageing, and the efforts of many to fight or prevent the results of a body in the process of wearing out were as you might expect impressively complicated. But in the end the conclusions seemed quite straightforward.

First antioxidants. Cells are aged and damaged as a result of the activity of free radicals. Are these the baddies and how can we fight them? Shall we buy tablets, medicines or creams, all of which are widely advertised as the answer? We were shown trial after trial of their benefits but in the end, there seems to be no direct evidence either that free radicals affect longevity or that the remedies are effective against them.

What is effective are our old friends Five Fruit and Veg. These contain the Vitamin E that is the natural foe of oxidation that produces the free radicals. All trials show this: a diet low in fruit and veg (as in Scotland) lets the free radicals do their damage, whereas the familiar Mediterranean diet full of different coloured fruit and veg is a great diet. Along with what we eat is the amount we eat…. being overweight is not the route to blooming health in old age nor to a long life. And, as always, we were told the benefits of exercise.

So, throw away the pills, bottles and creams and visit the greengrocer.

This was reassuring to those who were doing this, but what about Uncle Bill who preferred meat, smoked like a chimney and lived to 95? Was it his genes?

Genes apparently can be blamed or praised for all sorts, but only ¼ of our health is due to genes. Surprisingly there seems to be a health lottery and all that can be said is that some people are lucky.

This is a summary of some of the things we learned.

Professor Malcolm Jackson gave an introductory talk with all those wonderfully complex statistics. Then members of the audience asked for the wisdom of the three panellists: Professors Tom Kirkwood and John Mathers, and Dr Joao Passos, posing a variety of questions about what we can best do to keep healthy and live well and as long as we can.

Marjorie De’Ath – Newcastle U3A
Conference presented by Alzheimer’s Research UK and Newcastle University  
**Venue:** Newcastle Civic Centre on 14 May 2019

The conference was opened by **Professor Johannes Attems of Newcastle University** who introduced each speaker:
Dr Katy Stubbs, Alzheimer’s Research UK  
Dr David Koss, Institute of Neuroscience  
Dr Riona McArdle, Institute of Neuroscience  
Dr Lauren Walker, Institute of Neuroscience  
Councillor Karen Kilgour Newcastle City Council

**The aim** was to give short talks aimed to the general public about dementia, current treatment and research.  
Alzheimer’s Research UK is a charity based in Cambridge dedicated to improving diagnosis, prevention and treatment of dementia.

We learned that many new facts and ideas such as Dementia is an umbrella term for degenerative brain disease. Several specific types are known with different symptoms but all are progressive. The cause(s) remains unknown. It is a disease, not part of normal ageing. This damage begins years before clinical signs. If it was diagnosed at an early stage then it may be possible to design treatments to stop further deterioration.

Currently in the UK about 850,000 people have dementia. The most common type, 65%, is Alzheimer’s. The second most frequent is vascular dementia which may follow stroke.

However, there is no treatment as yet. Several drugs can relieve symptoms in the early stages. Definitive diagnosis is only possible by post-mortem examination of brain tissue.

The main risk factor for dementia is age. Genes influence risk but having a close relative affected does not mean disease is inevitable. Other risk factors are similar to those for cardiovascular disease.

Alzheimer’s Research UK has a website giving information about current research. Website: [www.alzheimersresearchuk.org](http://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org)  
They have a range of free booklets on different types of dementia which should be useful to U3A members.
Many **U3A members** will be advanced in years and many will have family or friends affected by dementia. Although ageing is unavoidable, modifying lifestyle can reduce the risk.

Advice includes:

- Exercise regularly
- Do you smoke
- Eat a healthy diet
- Control High Blood Pressure
- Maintain healthy weight
- Consume Minimal alcohol
- Monitor blood cholesterol and take statins if prescribed,

The U3A can tick several of these as our principles are about learning and in so doing using our brains. Some groups offer exercise e.g. walking groups which

Janet Devoy - Newcastle U3A

**Get Networking!**

Need some ideas? Want to share a problem? Need inspiration? Want some support or do you just want to find out more about a committee role you’re thinking of doing? Then come along to Northumbria Region U3A Treasurers’ Network, the Northumbria Region U3A Business Secretaries’ Network or the S.E. Northumbria Region U3A Chairs’ Network to get some answers. These informal networks are there to help you and by helping you they also help U3As. Meetings are every 3 months and topics are led by the members. You are very welcome to come along.

Catherine Stevenson (Newcastle U3A)

Editors Note:- Information on the various other Networks we have can be found on [https://u3asites.org.uk/northumbria](https://u3asites.org.uk/northumbria) Networks button.

**Art and Photography Group Exhibition**

An Exhibition of Paintings and Photographs produced by the members. Will take place at All Saints Church Hall, West Boldon on **Tuesday 15th Oct 2019**

Provisional times **4.30pm till 7pm**

Tea & Coffee plus cake will be available to purchase for a small fee.
**Unilinks**

If readers have had a minute to access and read the relatively new link, ‘External Events’, on the Events Page of the NRU3A website...apologies, as you will have read this before...

“In due course (and, hopefully by the start of the 2019-2020 academic year), NRU3A will have recruited Unilinks for each of the five universities. Their prime roles are to ensure that many and varied ‘Public Lectures’ and events open to the general public, organised by ‘their’ university, are well publicised to U3As in membership of NRU3A and to encourage greater knowledge and understanding of U3A, at every level, by a range of individuals and departments in ‘their’ university.”

I am delighted to report that, already, three Unilinks have been recruited...one for each of Durham University, Newcastle University and Northumbria University. Great news and many thanks, from NRU3A, to Fliss, Ruth and Tina.

However, Unlinks are still needed for Sunderland and Teesside Universities. Interested volunteers, with just a few hours to spare each month, should request a copy of the simple Unlink Role Description from me, on kelvinregnat@outlook.com

Kelvin Rushworth

**Alnwick U3A Research**

Hoping to counteract negative stereotypes of older people, Alnwick U3A have carried out a research study into the positive contribution to society made by their members.

Obviously, the number of respondents is relatively small, and it would be good to extend the research to a greater number of people.

If your U3A would be interested in replicating the study, please contact Maureen Stephenson, mesteph7@aol.com

Maureen Stephenson – Alnwick U3A
Volunteering Opportunities

See Around Britain are a registered charity which has set up a website, www.seearoundbritain.com with the intention to provide photographic and detailed written information regarding a large variety of public venues throughout the UK. The information they provide gives a brief description, along with contact details, transport information and accessibility information so that potential visitors, including those with disabilities, can decide whether or not a venue is suitable for their particular needs.

The charity currently has several exciting volunteering opportunities available and feels they could be of potential interest to our members. In particular, they are looking for volunteers to write venue descriptions to accompany the backlog of photographs of various venues and/or submit photos or videos of new venues themselves, all of which can be done from home and online via their website. There are online video tutorials available to help volunteers, but they can also provide additional support via email if needed.

If you feel this would be of interest, you can register your interest and join directly via the website’s volunteer section at the bottom of the About Us page, www.seearoundbritain.com/about-us. Alternatively, if you have any further questions you can contact us via email on support@seearoundbritain.com and someone from our team will be happy to help and answer any queries that you may have.
Members of the committee can be contacted by email through the website: https://u3asites.org.uk/northumbria

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From the Editor.

May I thank everyone who has taken the time to provided articles and assistance for this edition of The Messenger especially as it was over a busy holiday period. I do hope that you have enjoyed reading what yourselves and other members have been doing and that it gives you inspiration for the future. May I please have all contributions for the next edition in by Sunday 20th October 2019. Thank you.