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Chair's Address to the 2023 AGM

There is new energy in our u3a as we have learned to live with covid and it comes from an increase in the membership. From 418 members last year to now 468, this is nearer the pre-covid figures.

There are 3 events that stand out.

1. The Garden Party held in June, organised by Sarah Bowen and Vivien Hubbuck and supported by many members who volunteered. It was a lovely day. 65 people attended and we raised £305 for St Oswald's Hospice.
2. The Open Day held in September to coincide with National u3a week was a memorable success.
3. Our new Facebook page - Thanks to Sally Hewitt's efforts we are raising our profile and in touch with new people. We have 104 members, and it is growing. We would like more members to post pieces particularly photographs of activities.

Last year we set out to hold regular coffee mornings for new and potential members. We held 6 this year which proved to be a lovely opportunity to get to know new members. Also, last March we held a lunch for convenors as a thank you for keeping the groups going and plan to repeat it this year.

During the year new groups emerged while a few that didn't survive covid closed. The range of group activity has been diverse, including residential outings and day trips. Reading about them in the newsletter suggests we are having fun.

All our monthly meetings have been in person, and we have heard some inspiring speakers. We switched to having refreshments after the meeting to provide more opportunity for socialising which has been welcomed.

We are into our third season of Desert Island Discs thanks to the commitment of Mike Worthington, Barrie and Gill Mellars, and our Castaways. This month will be our last, so we will end on a high.

I am fortunate to have chaired a committee of competent and committed trustees. We are losing only two members this year so continuity will be maintained. Susan Turnbull who has been Business Secretary for the last 3 years and in her quiet way kept things ticking over is changing role to that of Assistant Treasurer.

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Chair's Address to the 2023 AGM *continued.*

The two people leaving us require a special Thank you.

Our newsletter editor of the last 3 years Alicia Cresswell. We have had some great newsletter editors and Alicia is one of them. She began at the start of covid lockdown and isolation. She recognised the importance of communicating with members and stepped up to the challenge. She inspired the rest of us to think differently.

David our treasurer of three and a half years has done it fastidiously. He has been transparent and accountable. He led annual budget discussions which have assisted our planning. Replacing him with two roles recognises both the size of the job and our vulnerability in only having one finance trustee.

A current weakness of Tynedale u3a is our engagement with the national and regional structure. Having been key players in the past we now contribute little and do not involve members in the machinations of these structures. I hope we can improve in the coming year.

In looking at the Year ahead

We are celebrating our 40th Anniversary which will be launched after the AGM. We have a special event in June, and we are not confined to two, we are open to ideas. We will badge everything we do in the year as a 40th anniversary celebration. We are collecting lots of memories and we hope to put these together in a small publication.

Chair, Wendy Dale
and David Pattinson delivering his final
Treasurer's Report



Reminiscing over the history of Tynedale u3a

Mike Worthington compered the session after the AGM when Margret Jacot, John DeStefano and Sue Loader delighted, amused and informed the audience about the early days of Tynedale u3a and the various growing pains as it slowly matured into the vibrant and dynamic body it has become.



Desert Island Discs

My castaway on March Desert Island Discs was Ian Diggory, who shared with us stories of his life, from growing up in rural North Wales, to a career first in academia and then in the gas & oil industry.

Ian's 8 choices of music were the following:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Red River Rock. Johnny & the Hurricanes | 2. Penny Lane. The Beatles |
| 3. Waterloo Sunset. The Kinks | 4. The Levee Breaks. Led Zeppelin |
| 5. Honky Tonk Woman. The Rolling Stones | 6. NaCl Song. Kate & Anna McGarrigle |
| 7. Mississippi. Fred McDowell 8. Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau. Fron Male Voice Choir | |

March was the last of this third series of Desert Island Discs and will probably be the last Tynedale u3a Desert Island Discs.

The three series have been very successful and have served us well through the winter months of the Covid pandemic. My thanks to Barrie & Gill Mellars for their help throughout the three series, to all the castaways, who have willingly shared their varied and enjoyable choices of 8 pieces of music, as well as telling us about their fascinating lives, and lastly to all our members who have tuned in to be educated and entertained by our castaways.

Mike Worthington

Sage 'Behind the Scenes' Visit

A group of 20 of us spent a lovely morning being guided around the usually unseen areas (as well as the performance areas) of the Sage, Gateshead. The two guides were very knowledgeable and informative and they explained the innovative technology which made the venue so acoustically and visually remarkable. The designers went to great lengths to perfect the sound performance and apparently there are very few square rooms there. Sage 2 is 10 sided. Sage 1 looks rectangular but on inspection actually has wavy walls to control sound reverberations and floating, movable ceiling panels that can be raised and lowered to change the acoustics of the room. Northern Rock Foundation Hall has one curved wall, and all walls are lined with what they called 'barcodes', wooden slats to improve the acoustics even further.

We saw the dressing rooms and heard some interesting backstage gossip about the various performers!

This was all rounded off with hot drinks and cakes (included in the price), and time to chat. All in all it was a very enjoyable experience.

Susan Turnbull



GROUP NEWS

New French Discussion Group

Bienvenue à notre nouveau groupe

ALLONS-Y!

On se réunira toutes les 2 semaines pour bavarder et discuter - en français bien sûr!

1ère réunion: le 25 avril, Caffè Nero, Fore Street, Hexham, 10h30.
Achetez un café en bas et puis montez au 1er étage.

A bientôt! Mon and Margaret



Possible New Book Group

Ally and Celia are looking at the feasibility of starting a new book group because the existing groups are full, do not meet at a time they can make, etc. So this is your chance to get in at the start of a new group and help decide the what, the where and the when.



Cycling.

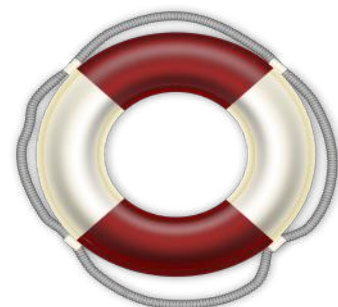
One of our new lady members told me she cycled regularly and, I suspect thought I was joking when I said we need a cycling group. There must be a number of cyclists out there, enough to start a group maybe. Get in touch if you are interested.



For the non-cyclists a cycling group will function a bit like the walking with dogs group but you do not have to clear up after the bicycles.

Underwater Pole Vaulting.

Oh well, it was worth a try!



Projects with the Grandchildren



The big kids amongst our readers will notice this item is missing. We have had no expressions of interest in our activity day so we are stopping the newsletter entry. We are still looking at the idea of a projects with grandchildren activity event but more on this at a later date. Contact the group where details are provided or get in touch with the group fixer.



Environment group

In March we met with the Senior Waste Management officer for Northumberland who talked to us about the different waste management operations that occur in the North East and the reasons we have ended up with inconsistent practices. In Northumberland mattresses are the only item of waste that regularly end up in landfill as other general waste goes to Teesside to a SUEZ plant that produces energy from waste. We have identified this as a possible trip for later in the year after members have visited the Recycling plant.

The focus of much discussion was on recycling and again we learned the importance of getting it right. **If in doubt put items in general waste.** There is a huge cost if recycled material is found to be contaminated and must be despatched to Teesside. The most frequent contaminants are nappies and dog waste.

We learned about the intention to have kerbside glass collection and food waste collection and the challenges this poses to local authorities, and particularly Northumberland.

Wendy Dale



You will be interested to know that the Committee is currently looking at a u3a Tynedale Environment Policy and will be seeking the views of members on what issues should be

WINE APPRECIATION GROUP 2



We had our first meeting in January , unfortunately people have dropped out for a variety of reasons, so we are down to 4/5 , therefore we need to recruit additional people.

The planned relaunch is May on a day and time to be decided once we have definite numbers.

Below is a summary of the wines we tasted to give people a feel of what we did, you do not have to be an expert, it is a fun group where we learn together.

All wines were sourced from the wine society.

White Burgandy- £12.95 Unoaked and fresh Pale Gold Nose was apple,stone fruits and lemon. Taste was rounded, slightly floral with apple overtones.

White Rioja - £9.25 Oaked Blend of 90% old-vine viura and 10% malvasia Lemony Gold Nose was vanilla and spice , with a hint toast,nuts and ripe apple Taste was similar to the nose with a balanced acidity

French Syrah - £7.95 Rhone Valley Dark Red /Crimson A berry aroma from Cherry and cracked black pepper(?) Nose similar to nose + blueberry and damson Medium acidity, with Tannins firm and dry

Australian Shiraz - £8.95 Deep red with a purple tinge. Nose ripe berries and a hint of vanilla and spice Full flavour of berries and a good taste with a hint of vanilla and oak. Tannins are present but ripe and sweet with a medium acidity which gave a good balance to the wine.

The consensus of the group was that the **White Rioja** and **Australian Shiraz** were the superior wines

if the above tickled your tastebuds please contact Mike Bewick 07794781975 - bewick.mike@gmail.com



Putting the World Right Group

The Group kicked off the month discussing The Nanny State and when there was over-nannying and under. This brought us into the World of Woke and the need for education to show life isn't always a bed of roses.

The second meeting brought us Money, the excessive price of housing compared to average income and people's inability to budget and save.

We didn't like the explosion of credit and cost of servicing personal debts. Again, it was the need for education and a GCSE in Personal Financial Management.

Mike Foster



Hadrian's Wall Group

Had most enjoyable lunch at Twice Brewed, then a short drive and gentle stroll to see the vallum near Walltown Country Park.



Walking With Dogs

Therapeutic walk along the river at Bardon Mill, a photo opportunity under an ancient yew tree at St Cuthbert's church, then refreshments at Bardon Mill Village Store and Tearoom.



Out and About Group

A coffee morning at Hexham Abbey Rectory Cafe' with lots of chat and laughter. A splinter faction seemed to be trying to establish a new group on Advanced Mobile Phone techniques.



From Our Members

"Any News of the Iceberg?"

The "Any news of the iceberg" line is from one of the great cartoons of the last century by the recently deceased Bill Tidy.

The scene is the offices of the White Star Line shipping company surrounded by a throng of worried people. Just joining the crows is a man and a polar bear asking this legendary question.

A brilliant cartoon but more than that, it demonstrates how our perceptions are influenced by who we are and what our values are. All very relevant given we now debate whether we see ourselves as British, English, Scottish, Welsh or a combination of two of these?

This will be partially determined by our education and our history education was put under the spotlight in a Radio 4 Analysis programme asking 'Is Britain Exceptional?' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001k7sw> And historian Zoe Strimpel presents some interesting evidence and asks intriguing questions to get the grey cells stirring.

Much easier on the brain was the delicious Irish comedy writing series Funny Bones with Mary and the Fairy read by the author Yasmine Akram <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/series/b06h8xqj>. Some lovely lyrical language with Mary having 'the asthma' and breathing like a pervert hiding in the bushes. And the twist to the fairy tale is beautifully executed.

Two programmes offering a change to overhyped indifferent TV and good listening!

Events and Dates for Your Diary



April 4 Monthly Meeting, 2pm Great Hall, Hexham Abbey - Topic 'Tales of the Tyne'

April 5 Wednesday Coach trip to Yorkshire Sculpture Park (we still have a few places)

May 10 Wednesday "Off the Wall" Hadrian Wall Festival of fun at the Sill.

(please register and support this event)

July 26 Wednesday Recycling plant visit (full)

August 1 Tuesday Coach trip to Edinburgh Botanic Gardens (we are taking names now)

August 23 Wednesday Recycling Plant visit (full)

There are a few members who are on a waiting list for a visit **Backstage at the Sage**, when we get a few more we will find a date. If you are interested, please register at the monthly meeting or email Wendy Dale.

40th Birthday Celebrations (Date to be changed)

We are trying to make this year a memorable one to mark our anniversary and we would like to hear from you if you have any suggestions.

I think it would be nice to have a cake for one of our monthly meetings so I would like to hear from you if you enjoy cake decorating and are willing to come up with a cake for a monthly meeting. We would be able to pay for the ingredients.

Our big event was to have been on June 17th but unfortunately, we seem to have been gazumped by the Kielder Forest Rally who have just announced their event will be on the same day and they will be using the Mart as the Central service point. It will impact on the car parking and other services, so we have decided to find a new date. News of which will be in the next newsletter and on the website.

Convenors Lunch

Just a reminder that this is scheduled for Wednesday 19th April between 12:00 and 14:00 at the MART.

Convenors please remember to let Colin know whether you plan to attend.

Your committee

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Membership

We currently have **470** members,
including eight associate members.

Follow us on Facebook



A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Donald MacKay, Margaret Miles, Ruth Morgan, Gwyn Thomas, Kathryn Thomas, Solveiga Liegis-Johnston and Valerie Watkins



Next issue of the newsletter

The next issue of the newsletter will be published in May 2023.

We welcome written contributions and photos from groups and individual members.

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor, Tim O'Brien, by 20 April.

Email address: tyneu3anleditor@gmail.com

Thank you

From the New Editor

To introduce myself, my name is Tim O'Brien and I volunteered to follow Alicia Cresswell as editor. As many people have told me, she is a very hard act to follow and has set the very high standard that I will do my best to maintain. I am very grateful to her for all her help and guidance, as well as to all the supportive Committee members.

I do hope you will email me your comments on the newsletter and suggest any additional content you would like included.

Fingers crossed, here we go