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**Monthly Meeting**

**2 April 2024 at 2:00 pm**

**at the Mart**

**'Cramlington Train Wreckers'  
given by Ed Waugh**

North-east based playwright Ed Waugh's work includes the self-penned national hits 'Wor Bella', 'Carrying David' and 'Hadaway Harry', as well as the co-written 'Dirty Dusting'.

Ed has national and international hit plays in the UK, New Zealand and Ireland. Also, he has more than 21 professional full play credits to his name,

His co-written film script 'The Liquidator' won the Gotham Screen International Film Festival award for Best Comedy Screenplay in 2010 in New York and was also shortlisted for the Best Screenplay award.

During the 1926 General Strike, miners in Cramlington accidentally derailed the Flying Scotsman. No one was killed and only one person was slightly injured. However, eight Northumberland miners were sentenced to 48 years' penal servitude.

The story is one of high dramatic tension and has become an important part of British history, although largely forgotten today.

## **Chair's Report 2024**

It has been a privilege to be chair of Tynedale u3a, none so much as last year when we celebrated our 40-year anniversary.

We have gone from strength to strength. Last year I was proud to say we had 468 members and now we have 571, an increase of 22%. A busy year for the membership secretary, who held 4 well attended coffee mornings in the Abbey for new and potential members.

I would like to remind you of significant events.

### **40-year celebrations**

We launched our 40th anniversary at our 2023 AGM and heard from three key long-standing members about some of the transitions. Several members of 10 years or more shared their memories in written form or agreed to a recorded interview. These were included in our newsletters and appear in our 40-year history.

Our Afternoon Tea at the Mart on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July was the climax and an enjoyable occasion for those who came along. We are grateful to The Mart who made it a special occasion.

We gained publicity from the celebrations. There was an interview on Hexham TV with Margaret Jacot one of our older members and Adrian Woolley a recent active member. A consequence of inviting the deputy mayor to our Afternoon Tea, I was invited to a Town council meeting (which spawned a meeting at the Community Centre) and a Rotary Club lunch. There was also a piece in the Courant.

Tynedale u3a now has a stronger profile and we are recognised by other groups in the community.

At the beginning of the year, we did not have an events secretary but when Margaret Earl stepped forward everything took off. There were trips to the following:

1. The Glasshouse/Sage
2. West Yorkshire Sculpture Park
3. Edinburgh Botanic Gardens
4. Recycling at West Sleekburn
5. Teesside Waste Recovery Centre
6. 5 Jewitts Coach trips; including the Great Scottish Tapestry and Christmas at Castle Howard.

We had a successful quiz in March, and you only need to read the newsletter to realise there have been many more fun excursions run by our groups. Also, this year there was a national event held in our area, "Off The Wall -Hadrian's Wall Festival" to which we contributed and participated.

### **Monthly meetings**

Our monthly meetings have continued with a range of speakers and attendance figures have risen. It has been necessary to look for a new venue as we do not want to turn people away. We have switched from zoom to recording the meeting and the feedback is that the filming is much preferred. There have been two extra talks during the year which is a trend we would like to continue.

### **Interest Groups**

The annual Convenors lunch was a very enjoyable occasion and an opportunity to share group issues. Accommodation has been a key issue as groups for new groups and established ones.

The growth in membership has resulted in either much larger groups or the creation of a second groups. We are hoping there will be new groups like Modern Greek, Carpet bowls and French Cinema. New ideas are always welcome.

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## Chair's Report continued - The Committee

It might appear that I have been careless in losing a few committee members during the year, but that has not been the case. We have had 3 treasurers who all have done a great job and Barbara Redpath and Susan Turnbull both did far more than the Treasurer's role during their time on the committee.

Sally Hewitt who has only recently left the public relations post is responsible for much of the growth and raised profile. Kate Stephenson and Ally Forster have already made a significant contribution and have been very welcome.

Ann Atkinson, Tim O'Brien, and Margaret Earl joined the committee this last year and Lesley Parsons and John Dark have maintained some continuity. They have all shown commitment and brought energy to the committee.

I want to mention Barrie separately because he is my successor and in the last year he has been programme secretary, technician and vice chair. He is always a willing volunteer.

I have left Colin Argent to last because he is leaving the committee this year. He has done a big job and brought fun to the work. He has done more than just liaise with convenors.

Δ He has produced PowerPoint loops Δ Helped with the 40-year history Δ Organised the Convenors lunch  
Δ Helped with the afternoon tea Δ Attended the Coffee mornings Δ Produced an Accommodation data sheet.

The year before he was key to a very successful open day. He is the sort of person who has done the work before I have got round to thinking about it.

### A Vote of Thanks for the Committee

Finally, I want to thank all members for being **tolerant** when things haven't gone well and **kind** with words of appreciation at very important times. I hope that this remains a strength as the organisation grows.

Wendy Dale

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## Address from Incoming Chair

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those members who came to the AGM and to those who saw fit to elect me as Chair, I will try to ensure that the high standards of my predecessors are upheld and on that subject I would like to give a tribute to Wendy Dale our outgoing Chair for all the effort she has put in and for the excellent guidance she provided especially given the issues of the recent past for us all.

Looking forward we are going to our new monthly meeting home at the Mart in April which will provide us with a venue that allows everyone good access and a good view of the talk. To this end we have also invested in a modern sound system which should cover all parts of the hall. All this together with far easier parking should make the monthly meeting a very enjoyable experience.

I would also like to welcome our new Group Secretary Michael Brockway who takes over this month from Colin Argent who has put in so much work over the past 3 years we have worn him out! Thanks Colin for all your splendid work.

Coming up we have the Convenors lunch at the Mart on the 10th of April which is in the capable hands of our new Group Secretary and later in the year we plan to have another Summer Garden Party, date and venue to be announced.

Let's hope that Spring arrives soon and presages a good summer.

Barrie Mellars  
Chairman

## For Your Diary

### Egger

We have vacancies for our third visit to the Egger plant in Hexham on **Thursday 25th April, 2 - 4pm**. Sturdy shoes are necessary as there is quite a bit of walking involved, inside and out, stairs and high places with varying temperatures. This trip is not suitable for anyone with a pacemaker,

### Blenheim Palace Flower Show, 21 -23 June

Set in the surroundings of one of England's finest stately homes, a show full of beautiful plants and garden designs shown at their best to activate and inspire you.

21 -23 June, £289, single room supplement £70

B&B plus dinner, 4 star Courtyard Marriott Hotel, Oxford South

### Barton Grange, 15th May

A scenic country cruise offering stunning views of the Bowland Hills and sightings of resident bird life along the canal and afterwards explore the beautiful Barton Grange Garden Centre, cost

**£34.50**

Events Secretary: Margaret Earl at [tu3aevents@yahoo.com](mailto:tu3aevents@yahoo.com) or call on 01434 689123

### Coffee Morning for new and prospective members on April 19th, at 10.30 in the Priors Hall at Hexham Abbey

There will be series of brief presentations about what the u3a does, so if you've joined recently and not been to one of these before, please do come along. Also, if you know of anybody who might be interested in joining, they will be made very welcome.

Ideally, let John Dark, the membership secretary, [tyneu3amemsec1@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3amemsec1@gmail.com) know you are coming, but this is not essential

## Reminder of Additional Talk

### Cleaning the West Allen river of metals from the mining past in the North Pennines

A talk by **Hugh Potter** (the National Water and Abandoned Metal Mines programme lead)  
and

**Janet Brand** (coal authority project manager)

**2.00pm on Tuesday April 30th Priory Room at the Abbey**

#### The talk will include:

Landscaping choices  
Procurement  
Surveys across the seasons  
Landscapes - peat/national landscapes  
Architecture and aesthetics  
Traffic and weather  
3rd party engagement  
Dynamic rivers  
Partnership working and aspirations

There are still spaces, but you must register online through the Tynedale u3a website 'What's On' section or by contacting Wendy Dale [w.dale381@btinternet.com](mailto:w.dale381@btinternet.com) or calling her on 01434 606215

## Hear Here

Old age seldom comes alone and one of its travelling companions is hearing loss. 900,000 Brits have poor hearing but fortunately though, there is a lot of help and devices to support us.

My hearing started going some 15 years ago and I had NHS hearing aids up until a couple of years ago when the misnamed Specsavers in Carlisle gave some excellent aids in exchange for a lot of plastic. But perhaps Specsavers is not badly labelled. Morpeth-based Vision Northumberland, formerly the county blind association now has a Hearing Support officer who travels around the county. So, they can be a useful point of contact via <https://vision-northumberland.org/>. They also come to Hexham now and then to answer questions.

Perhaps of more immediate benefit for some are devices. A Loop System has helped many when in meetings in larger rooms. Sadly I was disappointed with the BT phone I bought designed for the hearing impaired as it didn't have the whoomp I needed. So it was great to learn about Connevans, <https://www.connevans.co.uk/viewPage.do?id=index> which offers a wide range of practical devices. Mobile call quality varies and like Joanna Lumley I find them intrusive. I therefore have a great new landline handset with an adjustable volume control.

Hopefully, the future will bring us automatic rejection of all spam calls but I'm not crossing my fingers yet. Of possible interest and to help family harmony, Connevans also do other devices such as special amplifiers allowing you to hear the TV without overwhelming others in the room.

And finally, when your ear buds won't flower when listening to the radio, good headphones do make difference and are worth the investment for radio heads.

Mike Foster



## GOVERNMENT NOTICE

**To help save the economy in this economic crisis, the government will announce - next week - that the Home Office and the Immigration Department will start deporting Pensioners instead of illegal immigrants as a means of lowering welfare benefits and NHS costs.**

**Older people are easier to catch, and will not remember how to get home.**

**Be sure to send this notice to all your relatives and friends, so they'll know what happened to you.**

**See you on the bus!**

*Note from Editor - this confidential notice was leaked exclusively to the Tynedale u3aNewsletter by a whistleblower going by the code name of Charlo.*

## Group News



### Join the new Carpet Bowls Group



After the successful session at the Hexham Community Centre we are planning to start a carpet bowls group. Check this space for updates in the coming days as we get the details sorted out. For more information please click [Carpet Bowls](#) to contact the convenor William

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### Take the Lead!

The **Walking With Dogs Group** is open for new members, so if you and your canine chum fancy a regular walk in good company, usually followed by the essential coffee stop, then please do join us.

You can contact Mon by emailing her at [Dog Walking](#)



## Environment Group: Northumberland's Border Mires

For our March meeting we were treated to a presentation by Bill Burlden, also a U3A member, who not only explained the process of peatland formation for carbon sequestration, but identified an area containing a series of deep peat 'lenses' in Northumberland, known as The Border Mires.

The area of Border Mires stretches approximately between the Stanegate and Bellingham, and to the East from Brampton to Rothbury. Geologically, the mires were formed as hollows in the north - south orientated scarp and dip-slope landscape in this area were deepened during the ice age. When the ice retreated, over the following 10,000 years the hollows filled with peat. Each 'mire' contains an especially deep peat deposit, of up to 10 metres, or 35 feet.

As concern over global warming has mounted in recent years, the value of peatlands like The Border Mires has been widely recognised as a sink for carbon dioxide. In fact, carbon stored in peat equates to over half the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Furthermore, the mires support variety of Sphagnum mosses and rare bog plants which have a high value in terms of conservation.

From 1945 to 1970, however, peat deposits were largely threatened by agricultural drainage schemes and forestation, as these contributed to drying the peat, and so releasing carbon dioxide. Long term, plantation forests are nevertheless a valuable and sustainable wood resource, and they sequester as much carbon as is emitted from cultivated peat. The focus now is therefore to remove slower growing tree species, and to block drainage ditches to encourage the peat to re-wet. In Kielder Forest alone, some 52 peatland sites covering around 2000 hectares are now being restored in this way, to re-activate the process of peat formation and so allow carbon sequestration to continue.

Next month, we are welcoming another guest speaker who has set herself the task of answering the question: *Can we grow plants in a way that is sustainable?* If you'd like to join us, please contact me for more information: [lizjbarnes@hotmail.com](mailto:lizjbarnes@hotmail.com). We are always happy to welcome new members.

Bill Burldon & Liz Barnes

**Minutes of Tynedale u3a Annual General Meeting 2024**  
**held at 2pm on Tuesday 5th March in the Great Hall, Hexham Abbey**

1. Welcome: The Chair, Wendy Dale welcomed all members to the 2024 AGM
2. Apologies were received from Geoff Holdcroft, Ray Bather, Sally Hewitt, Sarah Walsh, Adrian Woolley, Julia Woolley, John Harrison, Averil Harrison, Jacqui Kerr
3. Minutes of 2023 AGM which were published in the March newsletter were accepted as an accurate record.
4. Matters arising: Wendy informed that as a result of a change in the Treasurer, the examiner of accounts had changed from that stated in the minutes.
5. Chair's Report: Wendy stated that she was privileged to be the Chair and was proud to be a part of the organisation. She detailed the key activities that had taken place over the last year and the support that had been provided by the committee. Wendy's full report will be published in the April newsletter.
6. Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer Kate Stephenson informed that the accounts were in a good condition generally. Savings had been made not renewing membership cards which saved on postage and not using the Hexham Courant for publicity had also been a saving. Inflation costs did not materialise and general running costs are being covered. A new sound system for the Mart monthly meetings and associated furniture costs will be bought from reserves. There is £19,000 in reserves and the current £14 subscription is enough to cover the general running costs.

The accounts were agreed unanimously.

7. Election of Chair: The election of Barrie Mellars as Chair was agreed unanimously. Barrie took over the meeting and stated he was privileged to work with everyone. He informed about his background and made a special vote of thanks to Wendy for all the work that she had done for u3a.

#### 8. Committee Motions

73 attendees voted and 45 electronic votes and 13 postal votes were received from non- attendees.

It was proposed that Tynedale u3a will adopt a revised constitution that is in line with the model recommended by the Third Age Trust. The benefits are that the revised document is more comprehensive and accessible. The current constitution has been subject to piecemeal revisions and is limited in scope. The change is not anticipated to have any consequences for the running of Tynedale u3a.

The motion was agreed by a significant majority.

It was proposed that Tynedale u3a will rent office accommodation at the community centre in Hexham for a period of 12 months when an office becomes available. The purpose is to support small interest groups who are having difficulty accessing appropriate accommodation and to assist the development of new groups. The benefits will be assessed after one year and if the committee is satisfied that the arrangements are cost effective the rent period will continue and be kept under review.

Colin Argent, Group Liaison Secretary spoke in support of the motion indicated that we have an increased membership and currently 54 groups and there was a need to encourage new groups as well as providing a venue for small groups which were struggling to find somewhere to meet. Having a small meeting room in the community centre would make it easy for the spawning of groups. There would also be reduced rates on bigger rooms so current groups could expand. There were options for three other rooms, a boardroom, a room for up to 50 people and another for up to 100 people. The community centre would be a trial for a year. Barrie informed that the golf club had served us well, the room layout was not ideal but he believed that this was a step forward.

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Questions from the membership included the criteria for success. It was stated that there would be monitoring of the rooms used and constant assessment, looking at the percentage of membership using it. A member stated that there is a need to look at evaluating objectives in terms of measuring the development of groups and new groups. This was agreed.

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There was also a question about the costs of the rooms. Barrie informed that the small room would be free and larger room free in the first instance. For bigger meetings there would be a charge. The small room would cost £273.60 per month, £3283.20 for the year and will come out of reserves. The larger room would take 15 boardroom style and up to 20 comfortably. A projector, screen and sound system are available. A monitor will be put in the small room and keys cut to enable convenors to access or they could obtain the key from reception. This will be on a booked basis. The booking of larger rooms will be dependent on availability. A member asked if it was possible to sub-let the room but it was felt that this would be unlikely.

The motion was agreed by a large majority, three attendees voted against the motion.

7. Confirmation in post  
Elections to the Committee -  
Treasurer – Kate Stephenson  
Social Media Secretary – Allyjo Forster  
Events Secretary – Margaret Earl  
Programme Secretary – Ian Diggory  
Proposer: Wendy Dale Seconder: Barrie Mellars  
Group Liaison Secretary - vacant

Committee members identified themselves and were confirmed in post by the membership and Ian Diggory introduced himself as a new member.

Barrie stated that Colin will not be continuing in his post so we need a Group Liaison Secretary. He considered that it was a very rewarding job and asked if anyone was interested to come and talk to him.

8. The subscription to remain at £14 per annum was agreed unanimously
9. Honorary Examiner for 2024: The change of examiner to Mike Bewick was agreed.
10. AOB

The Convenor of the modern Greek group which currently has three members reached out for more people to join the group. He also wanted to reach out to other groups in the region.

Another member wanted to make contact with the convenor for French speaking to share information but unfortunately they were not present at the meeting.

Margaret Earl, Events Secretary, encouraged members to join the Carpet Bowls group which provided two hours of good exercise and fun. Expert tuition was provided and lunch for £2. More people are needed and members are encouraged to speak to the convenor who would be pleased to see members at the Friday session.



*continued...Minutes of AGM 2024*

Barrie informed about some events planned for the year including the convenors lunch, quiz night later in the year and the move to the Mart.

We would keep a watching brief on the Garden Café which when it opens is encouraging community use.

He stressed the importance of the need for committee members and hoped that in his role he could live up to expectations.

Presentation and launch of the booklet 40 years of Tynedale u3a

Barrie informed that the driving force for this booklet was a reminder in 2022 that the anniversary was coming up.

Members who had been in the organisation over 10 years were asked to give their memories and interviews were carried out by Sally Hewitt, the Publications Secretary. Unfortunately there were gaps and it was important to have a story to tell.

Barrie talked of the trials and tribulations producing the booklet which included accessing paper records from 3 large boxes from Northumberland Archives at Woodhorn. Archived material ran out from 2007 until 2016. Fortunately John De Stefano had newsletters from 1992-2009 and 2011-2016.

There were constant rewrites until it was time to call a halt and turn it into a brochure.

Colin and Wendy were driving forces ensuring its completion and Barrie concluded 'recollections may vary'.

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**Dumfries House Visit - a Photographic Record**





## A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

### Your committee

#### Chair

Barrie Mellars  
[chairtu3a@gmail.com](mailto:chairtu3a@gmail.com)

#### Business Secretary

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#### Membership Secretary

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Charles Dodds  
Stuart Cessford

Robert Henderson  
Joyce Eltringham  
Elizabeth Spoor  
Sue Fowler  
Bob Pullen  
Irene Dodds

### Next issue of the newsletter

*We very much welcome written contributions and photos from groups and individual members.*

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor, Tim O'Brien, at [tyneu3anleditor@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3anleditor@gmail.com)

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.....

**DEADLINE for the APRIL NEWSLETTER**  
**25th APRIL 2024**

#### Forthcoming Monthly Meetings Topics and Speakers

**2 APRIL 2024**  
Cramlington Train Wreckers  
given by Ed Waugh

**7 May 2024**  
Beginners Guide to the Galaxy  
given by Professor Pete Edwards, Durham University

We do hope you have enjoyed this edition of the Newsletter

Please join us on the **Tynedale u3a Facebook** page to keep up to date with information on events, interesting comments from members and engaging photos.

### Membership

578 Members  
13 Associates

 Follow us on Facebook