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### **Message from the Chair**

I am pleased to say that we will be holding our February meeting in the Abbey. There will be tea and coffee available at the start of the meeting, as in pre-Covid times.

For those of you unsure about meeting up while Covid figures are still high in Northumberland, it will be possible to join us on Zoom. On this occasion the speaker, Oliver Dixon, will also be on Zoom. I believe the experience for those on Zoom should be better than in recent meetings.

In March, our AGM will again be a hybrid meeting, live from the Abbey and also accessible on Zoom. After the formal meeting, we will have refreshments and time to socialise, as well as hear the results of the story competition.

We have two vacancies on the committee, the role of Publicity Officer and the role of Events Secretary. I will be delighted to hear from any member who is interested in discussing the roles further.

If a committee role feels too onerous but you would like to do more to support your u3a, we are also looking for members who would be prepared to help with the organisation of a Garden Party in June or an Open Day in September. Again, I would like to hear from you.

#### **Flash fiction challenge**

The closing date for submissions of a 200-word story is 4 February. Please don't miss it.

I am hoping for a few more entries; if you haven't started yet, there is still time. Remember there can be fewer words but not more than 200. The count does not include the title. Please send me your completed stories by email to [tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com](mailto:tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com), or hard copy to 21 Hencotes, Hexham NE46 2EQ. The stories we receive will be anonymised and sent to a judging panel at Prudhoe u3a. You are not restricted to one entry. The best will be read out at the AGM and will feature in future newsletters.

#### **Sage Gateshead**

Thank you to those of you who expressed an interest in the possibility of a transport service to the Sage for classical concerts. Unfortunately, the response has not been big enough to start discussions with the Sage or transport providers. I am however pleased to learn that the bus is back for some of the concerts.

Wendy Dale

# Monthly meeting, Tuesday 1 February 2022 at 2pm in the Great Hall, Hexham Abbey - and on Zoom

**Topic:** Geograph: Photograph every grid square

**Speaker:** Oliver Dixon

The Geograph Britain and Ireland project is an internet-based community project which aims to collect geographically representative photographs and information for every square kilometre of Great Britain and Ireland.

After a varied career, Oliver Dixon finally chanced upon his dream job as Chief Surveyor for Sustrans, which for some twelve years involved travelling extensively by bike around the British Isles. Shortly after retiring, he came across the newly-established Geograph project which provided the perfect incentive and framework to encourage him to continue to travel widely throughout the British Isles with his camera. After an earlier presentation to the Tynedale branch about twelve years ago, he will be giving a further account and update on how the project has evolved more recently.



The hamlet of High Westwood in the foreground. Also seen, the villages of Hamsterley NZ1156 in the dip and Chopwell NZ1157 on the far side of the Derwent Valley.

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## Tynedale Desert Island Discs

My castaway for January's Desert Island Discs was Gill Mellars. The following were her eight choices of music:

1. I Should Have Known Better – The Beatles
2. American Pie – Don McLean
3. Papa Was A Rolling Stone – The Temptations
4. I Need Your Love So Bad – Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac
5. In a Broken Dream – Rod Stewart with Python Lee Jackson
6. Have You Ever Loved A Woman – Eric Clapton
7. I Lost My Heart To A Starship Trooper – Sarah Brightman's Hot Gossip
8. Fare Thee Well Northumberland – Mark Knopfler

## This month's Desert Island Discs



Steve Rozario

The next Desert Island Discs will be on Tuesday 15 February at 2pm, when my castaway will be Steve Rozario.

Mike Worthington

## Annual general meeting

The annual general meeting (AGM) will take place on Tuesday 1 March 2022 at the usual time of 2pm. It will take place in the Great Hall, Abbey Buildings but will also be on Zoom as a hybrid meeting. We hope you will be able to join us.

We are not aware of any motions at this stage, but if we get notice by 6 February we will ensure that all members can participate. We learned from last year that it was possible to facilitate postal votes and electronic voting.

The AGM is the time when we confirm the committee for the coming year. Members can stand for any of the roles, but we are keen to have nominations for the roles that become vacant.

The role of Groups Liaison Secretary has been filled by Colin Argent since the last AGM and we are required to confirm the appointment.

The committee has decided to reinstate the role of Beacon Administrator, and as a member has already expressed an interest in this, we hope to appoint at the AGM.

## Vacant committee posts

At the AGM on 1 March one committee member will be standing down, and we have one vacancy that has not been filled from last year.

### Publicity Officer (and Website Manager - optional)

Current postholder: Kevin Stephens

The current postholder is responsible for both publicity and website management. The incoming postholder could perform this dual role or, if this is not possible, be responsible for publicity only.

Responsibilities:

#### Publicity

You should try to persuade local publications, especially the Hexham Courant, the various village publications and Tynedale Express, to accept short news items about our u3a. This is, perhaps, the most difficult part of the job since there is not a lot that we do which could be regarded as 'newsworthy'. You will also need to design and write advertisements for any of these publications as required by the committee. Recently, we have focused on display adverts in the Courant, but this could change according to budgets and the need to attract new members. The current officer will provide you with a list of contacts for each of the publications and for the advertisers.

#### Website

Our website is run centrally by u3a site administrators who host the site. It is very simple for local u3a officers to operate, but very limited in terms of the variety of images, text display and videos that it can host. But it is the 'shop window' of our u3a and has recently been partially redesigned to appeal as much to new members as to existing members. This redesign could continue and develop. The current postholder will set you up with an administrator's password so that you can access all areas of the website. Several individual group pages are edited by group leaders or members and you will control their access. The busiest time of year is just after the AGM, when you need to put the new committee members onto the contact page and help them set up a u3a email address.

## Events Secretary

Current postholder: Vacant

Responsibilities:

- ◆ To facilitate a programme of events open to all members
- ◆ To be responsible for the organisation and administration of each event

Members are invited to stand for election. They should complete the nomination form on the back page of this newsletter and send it to Susan Turnbull, Business Secretary, Hydro Bungalow, Allendale Road, Hexham, NE46 2NB, or email it to [tyneu3abus@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3abus@gmail.com). Nominations to the Committee should be submitted to the Business Secretary no later than 6 February 2022.

## Members' motions

Any motions for discussion at the AGM should also be submitted to the Business Secretary no later than 6 February 2022.

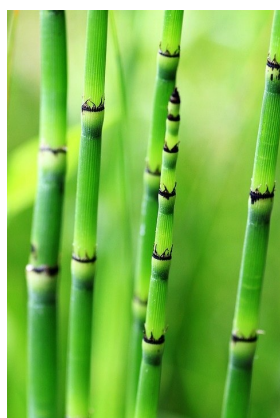
## Group news and activities

### Environment group

#### Is bamboo eco friendly?

When the Environment group met in January via Zoom, it considered the sustainability of bamboo.

Bamboo products are promoted as environmentally friendly and have arrived on the market in different guises: toothbrushes, toilet paper, fabrics, mugs and many more.



Bamboo is a fast growing and naturally renewable tree-like grass. It needs little maintenance to farm and very little water to grow; it doesn't need to be replanted, and thrives without pesticides or herbicides.

One of the biggest environmental benefits of bamboo is its ability to absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. Compared to an equivalent tree mass, bamboo produces 35% more oxygen, and research has shown that bamboo can absorb as much as 12 tons of carbon dioxide per hectare per year.

The downside is that increased demand for bamboo has turned it into a monoculture, currently in China. It therefore creates problems for diversity and negatively impacts on ecosystems.

The group discussed some of the products currently available, and considered their merits against their carbon footprint, processing and chemicals used.

Wendy Dale

### Easygoing French group



Our first meeting of 2022 started *à plein air* with a walk in the woods - a good way to revise the names of trees in French while exercising and taking in the views.

A lunch of French onion soup followed by a selection of French cheeses with a glass of *vin rouge* was just what we needed after all that exercise on a freezing cold day. A big thank you to the hosts, Lynn and Adrian, for a fun start to the year.

Alicia Cresswell

## Group liaison news

Hi everyone, Happy New Year! Omicron, the latest variant of Covid, has been disrupting group activities for the last few months but hopefully we can get back to something 'normal' in the next few weeks. If Omicron has caused problems for your group and you think I may be able to help, do get in touch.

When we judge it to be safe, we will be organising a convenors' lunch; at the moment I am thinking in March as we should be well past the Omicron peak by then. It will be an opportunity for us to say thank you, in person, for your contribution to group activities and for you to provide us with feedback. If you have comments or suggestions about group activities, you do not need to wait until the convenors' lunch, just email them to me or give me a ring.

Some of our language conversation groups have commented to me that the groups work best with no more than about six members. More than that and the conversation gets difficult. I do have some frustrated French linguists hoping to join a group, so I am looking to start new groups. If you have an interest in this, do get in touch and we will explore what is possible.

I expect you have all taken the opportunity to prepare something for Wendy's 200-word writing challenge. If not, you still have time before the February deadline. After you have sent in your entry, please do NOT put the quill pen away but keep it to hand. Starting from March, I would like to explore whether we could create as a 'Living History' project. I will put some examples in the newsletter from March but I would be asking for short contributions (e.g. 200 words) about your experience of life. One example might be what your experience of 1950s primary schools was like.

The marble run challenge is still open. Over the Christmas period I built some with my grandchildren using whatever we could find in my sheds. In truth, it was an excuse for them to try out all my power tools when their parents were not looking, but some marble runs were built. If you look at the pictures, I expect your immediate thought would be 'I can do better than that'. So, why not have a go. Ignore the previous specification and just have a go and send me a photo of the result.



## Your committee

### Chair

Wendy Dale - 606215

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### Business Secretary

Susan Turnbull - 607264

[tyneu3abus@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3abus@gmail.com)

### Treasurer

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### Programme Secretary

Barrie Mellars - 07831255520

[tyneu3aprogsec@yahoo.com](mailto:tyneu3aprogsec@yahoo.com)

### Events Secretary

Vacant

### Groups Liaison Secretary

Colin Argent - 07498798020

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### Joint Website Manager and Publicity Officer

Kevin Stephens - 01661 843347

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### Newsletter Editor

Alicia Cresswell - 608170

[tyneu3aeditor@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3aeditor@gmail.com)

## Membership

We currently have 400 members, including seven associate members.

## Next issue of the newsletter

The next issue of the newsletter will be published in March 2022.

We welcome contributions from groups and individual members.

**Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor, Alicia Cresswell, by 17 February. Email address: [tyneu3aeditor@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3aeditor@gmail.com).**

Tynedale u3a is a registered charity (number 515733).



A very warm welcome to Pat Hirst, Barbara Wardle, Josie Bush and April Martin, who have recently joined our u3a.

## Dates for your diary

**Desert Island Discs Tuesday 15 February at 2pm**

### Monthly meetings - March to July 2022

1 March at 2pm: AGM

5 April at 2pm: Frances Smiles, Northumberland Wildlife Trust

3 May at 2pm: Chris Tipple, Tales out of school life in rural Northumberland schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

7 June at 2pm: Jenny Elliott, Tyne Rivers Trust

5 July at 2pm: Professor Mike Bentley, Living, working and doing scientific research in Antarctica

## NOMINATION FORM FOR THE COMMITTEE (Please print/cut out)

Position/role:.....

Name of nominee: .....

Proposed by: .....

Signature: .....

Seconded by: .....

Signature: .....

Please send to Susan Turnbull, Business Secretary, Hydro Bungalow, Allendale Road, Hexham, NE46 2NB, or email to [tyneu3abus@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3abus@gmail.com).