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## Monthly Meeting, Tuesday 3 May 2022 at 2pm in the Great Hall, Hexham Abbey - and on Zoom

**Topic:** Tales out of school life in rural Northumberland schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

**Speaker:** Chris Tipple

About the speaker, in his own words:

*In 1958, the idea of a school leaver working overseas was very strange. My own parents never went abroad in their entire lives. They weren't unusual in that respect. I'd never been outside the country before I stepped on the plane to fly to Accra.*

*I found myself teaching in a town called Akropong, which was about 40 miles north of Accra, the capital of Ghana.*

*It may sound very challenging to go out into another country and start teaching English, having never done it before. But it all really fell into place very easily, because the students were so keen.*

*At the time, education was thought of as the passport to a better life for everybody in Ghana, and it was presented in the form of Shakespeare and English culture. Sadly there was no African dimension to what was taught in the curriculum. I hope that's changed since.*

*When I returned to the UK after my year in Ghana, I went on to work in education for the rest of my career. I eventually became Director of Education for Northumberland County Council in 1983, a position I held for 16 years. One thing that really influenced me to work in a service industry like education was my time volunteering with VSO.*

In this talk Chris stays local, focusing on schools in rural Northumberland, but travels back in time to the 19th century to give us an insight into what our schools were like at that time.

**Tea and coffee will be served after the meeting.**

## Message from the Chair

### Last month's monthly meeting

If you attended the April monthly meeting, you will be aware that we experienced several problems. They began when our speaker, Frances Smiles, informed us 50 minutes before the meeting that she would not be able to get to us in time. She offered to do her presentation by Zoom instead, but was only able to log in at the last minute, which caused some uncertainty and raised our anxiety levels. We then experienced internet problems in the hall and had to abandon the talk.

The talk was clearly not what had been expected and I apologise for this. I want to reassure you that we have taken steps to address the technical issues we encountered, and that the problems associated with Zoom at the April monthly meeting will not be repeated in May.

### Coffee morning for new members

We are holding a coffee morning for new members and potential members on Thursday 5 May in the Prior's Hall in the Abbey buildings at 10.30am. If you have joined our u3a in the last year and have been unable to attend a coffee morning, you are very welcome to join us. If you know someone who may be interested in joining the u3a, please invite them along.



Wendy Dale

## Garden party

On Tuesday 14 June we are having our first big social event since the pandemic, so do come along to this year's garden party if you can. It will be a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old friends, meet new people and enjoy an afternoon tea, music, quoits, croquet and more. The garden party will be held at Corbridge Cricket Club from 2 to 4pm. More details will be available nearer the time.

You can register at the May monthly meeting, or contact Sarah Bowen at [tyneu3a.events@yahoo.com](mailto:tyneu3a.events@yahoo.com) or 07926 394334. Please register early to help us with catering and other planning.



Our last garden party before lockdown

## Treasurer's role

### Your u3a needs you .....

As many of you will be aware, I will be stepping down as Treasurer of Tynedale u3a in March next year. So we now have a vacancy on the committee for our next Treasurer.

The role of Treasurer sits at the heart of all the activities of the u3a and covers a wide range of tasks - from processing membership fees, paying for the u3a's core activities and for our groups' venues, to managing the bank account, claiming Gift Aid and putting the accounts together for the committee and for the AGM.

If you'd like an interesting and pivotal role within Tynedale u3a, have an eye for detail and aren't phased by a spreadsheet or the internet, then becoming Treasurer could be right up your street. You don't have to be an accountant, after all I'm not an accountant myself, but being interested in numbers would certainly help.

The new Treasurer will have the opportunity to shadow me over the coming months to learn the role so that they will be in a position to fly solo from next March.

If you'd like to find out more about the duties of the Treasurer and learn what the role entails, please contact me at [tyneu3afindavid@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3afindavid@gmail.com).

David Pattinson

## Third Age Matters magazine

Please note that the spring edition of the Third Age Matters magazine is expected to arrive on doorsteps early in May.

This slight delay is due to the Trust moving to a new printer following the issues experienced with the winter edition. We hope this move will limit any further delays in delivery in the future.

The spring issue is another fantastic read, with tasty recipes to make your u3a 40th anniversary Picnic in the Park go with a swing, 40th anniversary events, members' inspiring stories, your favourite walks and much more.....

Thank you for your understanding and patience - it is very much appreciated.

## Groups liaison update

A reminder to convenors that I have compiled a new list of possible meeting venues in Hexham and in towns and villages within a 10 mile radius, most with access by bus or train. If you are considering a change of venue and would like a copy, let me know.

I do not foresee a change to the current arrangement in which groups organise their own venue. Having reviewed the market, we have concluded that this arrangement is the cheapest and most flexible option available to us. I appreciate some of the problems experienced by small groups, but it quickly became apparent that a move to block booking would increase room costs for everyone.

Thank you to those who replied to my email about possible problems getting to meetings. I know that some of you do not have email, so I am now inviting you to let me know of any issues you have in gaining access to group meetings and the monthly meetings. I can be contacted on 07498 798020.

Finally, an apology to convenors for not meeting you all at the recent lunch, but the risk of Covid infection seemed an undesirable addition to the menu. I do hope you all enjoyed the event and, budget permitting, we hope to repeat the lunch next year.

Colin Argent

## Group news and activities

### Blue Remembered Hills group

We had an excellent meeting in early April, when Richard Walker charmed us with his presentation on 'Strolling through Tuscany'.

May is the best month for getting out with boots, on hill or in dale, so we will not have any meeting - lots of people are away.

But the next meeting will be on 20 June in the Resident's Lounge at the County Hotel from 7pm onwards. Mike Worthington will give a talk, title yet to be finalised. Watch our slot on the u3a Tynedale website for up-to-date details.

Anyone with an interest in walking, now or in the past, is very welcome to come along. We are a very convivial group.

John Dark



### Environment group



#### Navigating Environmental Attitudes

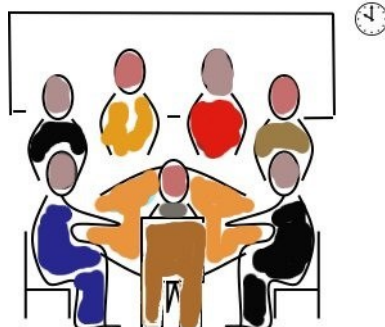
THOMAS A. HEBERLEIN

In April the group examined Thomas A. Heberlein's book, *Navigating Environmental Attitudes*. The book argues that it is all too glib to say that the way to solve environmental problems is to 'educate the public'. It shows that there can be a huge gap between what we say and what we do.

When we look to scientists to provide solutions, we ignore the social science behind attitudes, particularly environmental attitudes. *Navigating Environmental Attitudes* provides a realistic understanding of why and how attitudes matter when it comes to environmental problems; and how, by balancing natural with social science, we can step back from false assumptions and unproductive, frustrating programmes to work towards fostering successful effective environmental action.

With only 167 pages, the book is easy to read, with illustrative stories and a conclusion at the end of each of the chapter. Heberlein keeps the momentum by using the analogy of travelling through uncharted waters. The book was a good basis for lively discussion, which will continue in our May meeting.

Wendy Dale



## From our members

### Memories of Kiev 32 years ago



Margret Jacot on the river Dieper at Kiev with founder member Betty Bamber

Twelve of our Tynedale u3a branch joined a party organised by national head office to the then Soviet Union, a visit to see the splendours of Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev. We found a country in great turmoil, with empty shops, food shortages, long queues, and still reeling from the recent Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

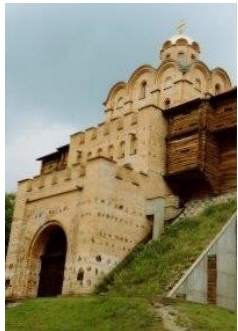
Our local guides were secretly attending political protest meetings. There was a sense of foreboding. The Soviet Union was in its last dying years.

It was mid-August 1990, and our Soviet-style high rise hotel in Kiev was in the main avenue. Our guides cynically called this grand avenue 'Hymn to Stalin'.

One Sunday we woke up to a huge demonstration below our window - a sea of blue and yellow flags - demanding independence for Ukraine. It was finally granted a year later. We soon got swept away by the peaceful crowd, where a stranger gave me the Ukrainian badge shown on the right, a souvenir I have treasured over the years.



My heart goes out to this nation, besieged, ransacked and destroyed again and again.



The great gates of Kiev, a fortification built in 1037 by the first leaders of the Russ, bear witness to Russia's first capital in Kiev. It was there that their ruler Vladimir was converted to Christianity in 988. Even now, Kiev is the cradle of all the Eastern Orthodox Churches - what the Vatican is to the Roman Western Church.

I fear even these later reconstructed Great Gates (immortalised by Mussorgsky's music 'Pictures of an Exhibition') can now not save this brave, proud nation from total devastation – just like the Golden Gates could not stop the Mongol onslaught and destruction of Kiev in 1140.

All we can do now is to wait in trepidation.

Margret Jacot

### Radioheads

A couple of radioheads have emerged in the branch who love BBC Radio 4, 4X and 5, together with podcasts. We share news of upcoming programmes and reviews of what we've heard which, with the benefits of technology, we can catch up with at a later time. So if you want to join these email stalwarts, please contact [mikef@wowu.co.uk](mailto:mikef@wowu.co.uk).

Mike Foster

### Dealing with loss and grief

Dealing with loss and grief is an essential part of being a human being. So I was drawn to a radio/podcast conversation in BBC Radio 4's *Guidebooks* series - guidebooks to help us navigate lifescapes as well as landscapes and the physical built environment. You can delve for yourself at *Lost and Found with Stella Duffy and Cathy Rentzenbrink* who, together with the facilitator, Damian Barr, have journeyed far. Some excellent books are also suggested. You can listen to the podcast [here](#).



Damian Barr

Mike Foster

## Downsizing

In the April issue we published advice from our members on what to do with belongings we cannot keep when downsizing. Most suggestions were about books, furniture and other household items. But what about documents and other paper-based items we do not want to just put in the recycling bin? Wendy Dale has some interesting suggestions.

It is very satisfying to find a new home for things. When a friend died recently, her husband found she had a large collection of programmes for theatre, concerts and shows dating back to 1952. He asked me what he should do with them. As many of them were from local theatres, I approached them. I was pleased to find that the Theatre Royal, Sunderland Empire and Northern Stage all had archives and welcomed them.

On a recent visit to the Northumberland archives at Woodhorn Colliery, I learned that they are interested in deeds to houses, particularly old ones. In this electronic world, there is no need for paper copies of deeds, and they are being destroyed together with other useful historical information. The additional historic information found with deeds does not get entered on to the electronic systems. If you live in an old house in Northumberland, you may wish to donate your deeds.

Wendy Dale

## More flash fiction

Last month we published the stories that won the first, second and third prize. But there are other very good stories that we aim to publish in the next few issues. Here are two of them:

### **How we came to prefer the devil to the angel**

An apprentice chef was told to make a hundred Angels on Horseback for a banquet that night. These were succulent oysters wrapped in streaky bacon, then cooked and served before the main meal. Oysters were usually very plentiful but that day there were none to be had. He knew he was in deep trouble as he slowly trudged back. What could he do? His eyes frantically darted round the kitchen until he espied a large bag of dried prunes on the storeroom floor. He counted out a hundred of them and soaked them in brandy until they were very soft and looked like precious jewels. Stuffing them with almonds and wrapping them in bacon, he roasted them in the oven. They looked magnificent. But he was well aware that this night could be his last. He felt like a prisoner awaiting his verdict. As the meal began his trepidation increased. He heard shouts, followed by stamping, and he quaked in his shoes. Was this the end? Then up went the cry, 'More Devils on Horseback. We want more.' That was two hundred years ago. The apprentice lived to become a fully-fledged chef. And the devil is still the winner today.

Joan Sykes

### **New Look**

"Don't you think his outfit is, well, a bit minimalist?" ventured the Under-Secretary.

"Oh, no" replied the Minister, surprised. "It's so elegant, so in keeping with the times. My dear fellow, do try to keep up, everyone else is raving about it."

They walked out onto the steps, taking their allotted places by the podium. The crowds below were hushed, awaiting the promised spectacular appearance of the First Person. The sense of anticipation was electrifying. And when he came, doffing his high hat, swishing his rainbow-coloured cloak, adjusting his snow-white cuffs, the roar of acclaim was deafening. It went on and on until he raised an arm to quieten it.

In the hush that followed, young Tommy Brown, wriggling his way between the legs of his betters to reach the front, stared for a moment in utter disbelief. Then, into the silence, he let out a piercing hoot.

"Cor-blimey! Look! Look at him! He's stark naked!"

A stunned silence. Then the crowd roared again, now laughing, mocking. "Ridiculous! Presumptuous! How stupid! Away! Take him away!"

So Men In White Coats came and took him away, young Tommy Brown, protesting, weeping. Meanwhile, order restored, the parade went on its splendid way.

Michael Crick

## Your committee

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## Membership

We currently have 428 members, including eight associate members.



Tynedale u3a is a registered charity (number 515733).

# welcome

A very warm welcome to Stephanie Ferguson, Jennifer Graham-Armstrong, Valerie Mills and Russell Mills, who have recently joined our u3a.

## Dates for your diary

### Monthly meetings - June to December 2022

#### All meetings start at 2pm

7 June:	Jenny Elliott, Tyne Rivers Trust
5 July:	Professor Mike Bentley, Living, working and doing scientific research in Antarctica
6 September:	Tony Flynn, The Brasilia of the North?
4 October:	Richard Young, Buildings of Northumberland
1 November:	John Richards, Flora of Northumberland
6 December:	Chris Pollock, Plants that kill you

## Next issue of the newsletter

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

We welcome contributions from groups and individual members.

**Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor, Alicia Cresswell, by 26 May. Email address: [tyneu3aeditor@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3aeditor@gmail.com).**

Thank you