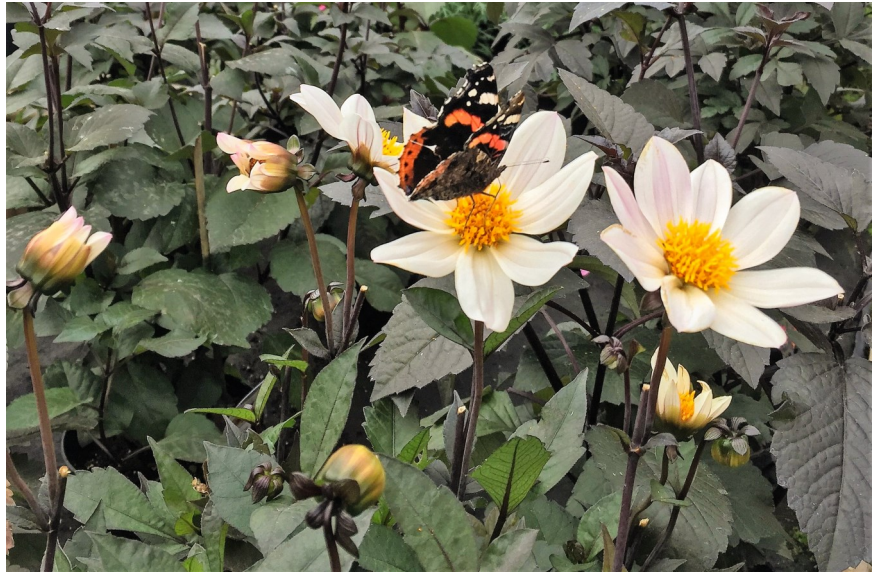


In this issue

- ◆ Monthly meeting
- ◆ Welcome back to the Great Hall
- ◆ Coffee morning for new members
- ◆ Group liaison update
- ◆ Group news and activities
- ◆ Desert Island Discs 2021
- ◆ Renewing your membership
- ◆ Committee and membership
- ◆ Dates for your diary



Monthly meeting, Tuesday 7 September 2021 at 2pm in the Great Hall, Hexham Abbey - and on Zoom

Topic: Central Asia, where steppe and mountains meet

Speaker: Margret Jacot

Let me share with you my latest adventure to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan before the Covid epidemic hit us all.

This adventure to Central Asia follows part of the Silk Road, a crossroad of many nations with rich histories of invaders and settlers. A land of vast steppe, stunning mountains, ancient kingdoms and remnants of Russian rule.

This talk follows other recent presentations I gave to our u3a on the treasures along the Silk Road in Iran and Uzbekistan.

Margret Jacot



Welcome back to the Great Hall

We will be holding our first face-to-face monthly meeting in eighteen months on 7 September, and hope to have a good turnout. Everyone on the committee feels a sense of excitement tinged with anxiety. We are concerned that some members may not feel ready to mix in a large social setting so, to be as inclusive as possible, we will also make the meeting available on Zoom.

We do appreciate Margret Jacot's willingness to be our first speaker as we launch the return and hope she will be well supported.

The Abbey is taking the Covid pandemic seriously: sanitiser will be available at strategic points throughout the building and we are asked to wear masks where possible, particularly when moving round the building.

The committee have given some thought to facilitating social distancing. To help with this, we ask those planning to attend to register in advance of the meeting. This is how registration will work:

- I will send out an email with an invitation for you to register in advance. If you can respond electronically, please reply to the email. If you are unable to respond electronically, please phone me on 01434 606215 (if you get the answering machine, just leave a message).
- If you have let us know in advance that you will attend, you will not have to register again on the day, and we will usher you into the Great Hall to take your seat. This should eliminate the need to queue and reduce the problems of managing social distance.
- If you have been unable to register in advance, you will need to go into the Annex, where we will try to make the process as quick as possible.

On this occasion, we have decided not to provide refreshments as we want members to feel as safe as possible. We will return to having refreshments once we have had the opportunity of taking soundings from members and have an idea of the numbers we may come to expect.

John Dark, our membership secretary, will be sitting in the Annex to receive cheques from those wanting to renew their membership. Members who have already renewed can collect their membership cards in the Great Hall.

For those joining us on Zoom, we will send out the link the weekend before and ask you to approach it in the same way as previous Zoom meetings. However, the experience will inevitably be different because Margret will be addressing a live audience. The technology for hybrid meetings has been tested, but there could still be teething problems which we will be keen to address without causing disruption to the live meeting. Your feedback will be appreciated. Margret has kindly said that if the experience isn't good, she will repeat the talk via Zoom for you later.

If you have any concerns about the arrangements for the meeting in September, please get in touch with me.

Wendy Dale
Chair

Coffee morning for new members

Despite having little opportunity for social engagement, we have still attracted some new members. The committee are aware that the experience of new members will have been poor and want to put that right. We will be holding a coffee morning on the 20 October for all those who have joined in the last eighteen months to make them feel welcome and encourage further participation. New members will receive an invitation to the event in the next month.

We hope to reinstate regular coffee mornings for new members later in the year to coincide with our planned initiative to attract new members.

Wendy Dale

Group liaison news

Meeting rooms

Two key venues, CORE Music and Newcastle Building Society, have not yet reopened their meeting rooms. CORE Music plan to reopen in September but we have no date yet. Newcastle Building Society are waiting for Head Office to remove social distancing instructions before they can reopen their meeting room. Both organisations will be letting me know when they are ready to resume meetings, and I will circulate convenors and members with all the necessary information when I get it. Hexham Business Hub have limited capacity at the moment due to social distancing, but will be getting back to me in October with an update, hopefully to say more room options have become possible.

Tynedale u3a Facebook page

Mention Facebook in any gathering and you get three responses: "Love it!", "Hate it!" and "What?". Regardless of which category you fall into, please be aware that our u3a now has a Facebook page. It has been set up as another way to advertise our existence, so maybe you could all mention it to your friends, and even enemies - in fact to anyone who may be a prospective member. The name of the page is 'u3a Tynedale'.

If you are not familiar with Facebook and do not know how to find our page, do not worry. Any grandchild over the age of about six will be able to put you right.

If you do visit the page and consider it is a bit thin, I would agree. What it really needs is pictures, comments, questions etc from our members to reflect what we really are - a friendly, intelligent and sociable bunch. All contributions will be gratefully received but only a few of us can post entire articles on the main page, so send them along and we will take care of posting them on the site.

Landscape group

Some of you may have seen this proposal for a new Landscape group on the website:

What makes a landscape? A simple question that requires a multitude of disciplines to arrive at a satisfactory answer. There is the underlying geology and soil which, with climate, strongly influence the vegetation. All of this is overprinted with land clearance and farming patterns dating back to the earliest settlers. Within the last ~400 years, large scale industry has played a role (e.g. lead mining in the Pennines), as have Parliamentary Acts for land enclosure.



I have enough expressions of interest to kick start this group in the autumn, but I am now looking for a few more prospective members. Please get in touch if you are interested.

Italian group



I am delighted to say that we have a volunteer convenor, a replacement for Edward, for this group so the job now is to kick start activities. I am aware that the member list we have is out of date so I am asking anyone interested in participating in this group to let me know so we can create a new members distribution list.

Colin Argent
Groups Liaison Secretary

Group news and activities

Environment Group

Our group wished to find out more about the local and grassroots reaction to the climate crisis, so we met in a quiet corner of the Sele with a member of Tynedale Extinction Rebellion.



Rebellion may suggest that this is an organization of radical young militants, but in fact supporters come from all generations and the founding principles are to be peaceful, law-abiding and to take responsibility if the law is broken. Extinction Rebellion has three main objectives: for government to agree and announce that there is a climate crisis (already achieved), to bring forward the date of net carbon zero from 2050 to 2025 (many local councils including Northumberland have set a target of 2030), and to set up citizen assemblies (already achieved).

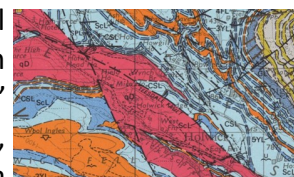
We briefly discussed the ability of demonstrations and direct action to influence local and national government policies, a complicated question with no easy answers, but there was no disguising the genuine fear for the future, and the frustration felt by many of all ages at the slowness of the response to the climate warming that started decades ago.

Richard Bentley

Geology Group

Having completed a programme of Zoom meetings through the Covid lockdown, the group is returning to something like normal, at last meeting face to face and not on screen.

Since May we have resumed our normal summer programme of monthly field trips to local sites of interest. The most recent of these was a trip to Teesdale to learn the elements of geological mapping under the expert tuition of Brian Young, retired Director of the British Geological Survey in the Northeast. During the day, he opened our eyes to looking for clues in the landscape, which helped us build up a picture on the OS maps of the 'hidden' geology beneath our feet. We looked for clues in hill shapes, rock exposures, abandoned mineral workings, stone walls and differing vegetation as we mapped a small area near Low Force. This gave us an insight into the science and art of map production, and the huge amount of work involved in producing these maps, which are used widely in the civil engineering and mineral resources industries. A simple walk in the country will never be quite the same again!



Extract of geological map of the area



In mid-August we met for tea and cakes to celebrate more freedom. Many of us who had only seen each other on Zoom were able to meet socially (sometimes for the first time) and to catch up on the latest news. It was particularly good to see friends who had not been able to make it on slightly more energetic outings to the coast and hills in recent months.

John Loader

Blue Remembered Hills Group

This group, which gathers to hear talks and look at slideshows of hill-walking trips and enjoying the mountains in every way, has been quiescent during the pandemic – sharing a pint of beer at the meeting is an integral part of what we do.



However, we will be restarting our meetings, probably at the County Hotel, on a day of the week still to be decided (but probably a Monday) in October. A set of topics, with dates and times, will be circulated by the end of September, both in the newsletter and on the website.

John Dark

Tynedale Desert Island Discs



The surprise success for Tynedale u3a during lockdown was our monthly Zoom Desert Island Discs. It came into being last August, as a late replacement for our cancelled Garden Party. Knowing that so many members would have the date of the Garden Party in their diaries, it seemed a shame not to do something. There were many doubts about whether Desert Island Discs would be an adequate replacement, but over 70 members joined in the Zoom session. It proved to be so popular that it went on to run for nine months, until a summer break was called after the April Zoom.

The good news is that a second series is planned and already there are volunteer castaways lined up for the first two programmes of the new series. It starts on Tuesday 19 October, when the castaway will be John Harrison. So put the date in your diary now!



With volunteers signed up for October and November, we are now looking for five more castaways to share their favourite music and something of their life story. All the castaways from the first series will tell you what an enjoyable experience it was. So please think about volunteering and if you are interested, please get in touch with me on worthington1942@btinternet.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Mike Worthington

Renewing your membership

As you should all know, the current membership renewal date is 1 September. An email went out on 18 August describing the various routes by which renewal can be achieved, and there will shortly be a reminder.

The standard form, with all the bank details and other information, can be downloaded from the Tynedale u3a website. But for the first time we have an entirely online process, which cuts out printing and scanning or posting of forms. Those who wish to renew along this route can simply [click here](#) to access the form.

The form is also accessible from the Membership section of the website, where it is called the “2021 Online Form”, and all the information can be filled in and sent directly to me. Payment can then be made by online banking or cheque. The form has been modified so that Associate membership (which is free as long as you are a fully paid-up member of a different u3a) can be indicated.

In practice, members are following the various different ways to renew. As of this week, about 90 have used the purely electronic route, using the link above. A similar number have made electronic bank payments, although some have posted cheques, whilst over 30 have sent paper forms with their cheques; I hope there is something which suits everybody.

John Dark, Membership Secretary

Your committee

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tyneu3abus@gmail.com

Treasurer

David Pattinson - 01661 842903

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Membership Secretary

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Barrie Mellars - 07831255520

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Events Secretary

Vacant

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Newsletter Editor

Alicia Cresswell - 608170

tyneu3aeditor@gmail.com

Membership

We currently have 427 members, including nine associate members.



Tynedale u3a is a registered charity (number 515733).

Welcome!

A warm welcome to Christine Seal, Margaret Bassendine, Sarah Ward and Elaine Jenkinson, who have recently joined our u3a.



Monthly meetings October 2021 to February 2022

5 October at 2pm: Colin Argent, Space Group Convenor, Hitchhiker's Guide to the Solar System

2 November at 2pm: Iain Moffat, The Somme 1st July 1916 - The Story of the Tyneside Scottish and Tyneside Irish

7 December at 2pm: Colin Argent, Whatever happened to the electric corset?

4 January at 2pm: Chris Pollock, Why I'd rather wear GM cotton underpants than live next door to an organic dairy farm

1 February at 2pm: John Richards, Flora of Northumberland



Next issue of the newsletter

The next issue of the newsletter will be published in October.

We welcome contributions from groups and individual members.

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor, Alicia Cresswell, by 23 September. Email address: tyneu3aeditor@gmail.com.