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**Monthly Meeting.**

**Tuesday 5 September at 2pm**

in the Great Hall at Hexham Abbey

**Topic: 'Tynedale Through Maps' given by Paul Nash**

The Landscape and History of the Valley:

How the landscape of the Tyne Valley, with its deep cut denes and flat plains, came into being. It's a story, which started over two million years ago and continues today, involving glaciers thousands of feet thick and lakes hundreds of feet deep, and the development of settlements from pre-Roman times through the Anglo-Saxons, Normans, the Black Death and the Industrial Revolution to the present day. A tale of changing fortunes, a repeating cycle of growth and decline

**The Autumn Supper and Quiz Night**

The Autumn Supper & Quiz night will be held at Hexham Golf Club on **Tuesday the 10th of October** at 7pm. There will be teams of 4 (don't worry if you are more or less as we will allocate on the night) and there will be prizes for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd teams. One of the rounds will be one you are highly unlikely to have encountered before but it is fun! Come hungry as the supper is substantial. Further details and booking details will be announced at the September monthly meeting.

The Blue Book was available to all members at the monthly meeting in July. It is a useful resource particularly for those in Northumberland supporting people with dementia. If you want to see more it can be accessed digitally [www.the-blue-book.org.uk](http://www.the-blue-book.org.uk)



## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tea

Nearly 100 members gathered at the Mart to celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> year with a splendid afternoon tea. Our chairperson Wendy welcomed Councillor Fay Hartland, Deputy Mayor of Hexham and said how delighted she was with the turnout. It highlighted how active and vibrant our u3a is.

The party-goers were treated to live entertainment by local group Gaja, featuring u3a member Adrian Woolley on guitar, Grahame Easthope on tenor sax, Anthony Wilson on drums and John Ridley on bass. The Mart provided a spread of sandwiches, savouries, scones, cakes, and meringues, adding to the festive atmosphere. Attendees seemed to enjoy catching up with old friends and making new acquaintances.

A rolling presentation put together by group-fixer, Colin, showed u3a events over the years juxtaposed with news headlines of the time, starting with an advertisement placed in Courant by three individuals. It invited interested people to attend a meeting at the Beaumont Hotel on April 21st 1983. Eight people responded to the call leading to the formation of Tynedale Leisure Learning later renamed Tynedale u3a. In March 1984 the organisation formally affiliated to the UK u3a movement becoming one of the first nine u3as in the country and the first in the North East.



## **Members' Memories**

### **Joan Sykes**

When I first joined Art Appreciation in 2008 things were very different to how it is today. Each member was responsible for a presentation through the year using the wide resources that the U3A Resources in London had in stock. These consisted of DVDs and slides and they had to be pre-ordered and if available arrived two weeks before the presentation. Whilst multiple copies on popular subjects had been made it was quite often the case the date you wanted it would be the date others had already requested. It was a matter of the early bird catching the worm! A brief summary of what was on the DVD would be written on the box but few people saw the contents until presentation day and just had to hope it fitted in with the written words they had laboriously written. Sometimes we never found out, as technical expertise required in inserting the DVD into the TV and then actually making it play was often in short supply depending who turned up for the talk. Despite lots of shouts of encouragement failure rather than success was the usual outcome.

In 2012 Art Appreciation 2 was set up by Ruth Bramfitt and I offered to join her in this new venture. We began in the same way as before with a DVD which we managed to operate without any hitch but we were very much surprised to find ourselves looking at someone's holiday photos and not the beginning of art! It was not until this year I found that one of the new members thought they were mine!

It was time to have a rethink and to start using computers instead of the television and eventually to stop using U3A resources. The new group were younger in age, more computer savvy, and were able to make their own power point presentations. This has become the norm and most members of the group can set up all the equipment and are usually able to sort out the glitches which now very rarely arise. We have also started using Youtube clips directly from their website. Progress indeed.

### **Sonja Bailes - Ten years in U3A!**

Finding the U3A's offer of an art group, following retirement, was just what I was looking for. I had done very little art of any sort over the years and a new challenge presented itself. The 'Exploring Art Group' provided an excellent introduction to different approaches to painting using a variety of media and trying out a range of different subjects. The best bit of every class was at the end when we could stroll round the group and be surprised and intrigued at the contrast of interpretations and ideas we displayed. In 2021, after Covid struck, the group had to rethink, and some of us continued to work at home and share and swap photos of our weekly attempts. It provided an important focus for us every week.

Tynedale U3A, of course is not just a conglomeration of small interest groups. A bonus, after I joined, was to discover the monthly talks. Such a plethora of subjects were on offer, and continue to be arranged with some excellent speakers.

There were also the U3A visits over the years. For instance, with the art group we went to the Laing Gallery in Newcastle and visited the Unison pastel colour factory, tucked away in the beautiful Tarsset valley. Tynedale U3A has not been just a local, insular organisation. It has branched out at various times in various ways to be involved, and participated in joint activities with other organisations. A prime example of this was a Shared Learning Project with Northumberland National Parks (NNP) in 2018/19. This was a Digital Archive project which sought to provide U3A volunteers with experience working in a shared capacity with NNP. This involved archiving the many NNP's photographs stored away in their attic! It involved a lot of time, co-ordination and learning the systems for collating the vast amount of material, and sharing outcomes.

This has just been my experience of Tynedale U3A over the years and is just one of many. I'm sure the organisation it will continue to thrive and be a positive influence for all of us in the future.

### Colin Argent

When I joined Tynedale u3a all meetings were held in the Methodist Church. Interest groups met in the top floor rooms in which we had dedicated storage space and the only competition for booking the rooms was with other groups. We do aim to be an inclusive organisation but the meeting rooms were at the top of two steep flights of stairs and with an elderly membership this arrangement did exclude the less mobile of our members. We now leave groups to organise their own meeting rooms. This is not without problems but it does largely resolve accessibility issues.

Originally I joined the Geology and Science groups. The geology group has shown an interesting evolution. When I joined the meeting format was a lecture, of 45 - 60 minutes, from a member or an invited speaker. In order to encourage a greater participation the meeting format has changed to typically three shorter talks. As a result more members now feel able to contribute.

In the Summer months the geology group runs field trips and these require recces to be carried out to check site accessibility, parking, lunch venues etc. Each year a number of these recces prove fruitless and this has led to the creation of at least two new groups. In the long drive back Steve Rozario and I have dreamt up the Space Exploration Group and the Landscape Group.

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### Courier Fraud

**Detective Inspector Phil Thoburn from Northumbria Police** states: "Northumbria Police are supporting victims in the areas of Hexham and Corbridge targeted by callous fraudsters responsible for **courier fraud**."

**The scam involves cold calls** to residents' home numbers in which **offenders impersonate police officers** from outside our region.

The offenders provide plausible officer names with collar numbers and the name of the police station and force. This is to build credibility with the victim; the offenders provide a fake account of internal fraud at the bank which ultimately closes with advice that the victim should make an urgent counter withdrawal from their bank, in the region of £6K - £8K.



Offenders encourage victims to use a cover story whilst at the bank as they are aware that staff are monitoring for suspicious activity. Once the funds are withdrawn the offenders dispatch a courier to the home address of the victim to collect the money for safe keeping.

**Northumbria police urge residents to be vigilant. Police and bank staff never ring customers to request a cash withdrawal.**

Residents should hang up on such calls and leave the receiver down for several minutes to clear the line. **Do not take accounts on face value** and do speak to your family, the bank on an official number and the police to discuss any concerns.

**Under no circumstances should you make a counter withdrawal to hand over to a complete stranger.**

Police advise residents visit the Take5 website to understand how to keep safe from fraud - [Take Five - To Stop Fraud | To Stop Fraud \(takefive-stopfraud.org.uk\)](https://www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk)

## Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh

The first day of August, the outlook was grey, but the mood was bright as we boarded our Jewitt's coach for the journey to the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh. Once off, the bonhomie and anticipation inside the coach set the tone for the rest of the day. The buzz of conversation was matched by the enjoyment of our coach-eye views through the border countryside, and we arrived with two surprises. The weather was still grey, but it was dry, and, with the trip's surplus funds, Wendy had arranged refreshments served by the friendly staff at The Terrace. So far, so very excellent.

Then we were off, dividing into smaller groups for a guided tour. For an hour and a half, we were shown so many things that interested, amazed and delighted us. Our enthusiastic guide shared these with just the right amount of information for us mainly amateur gardeners. For instance, we were all delighted to see the 165 metre long Herbaceous Border planted in the merging colours of the rainbow and backed by a majestic beech hedge, one of the finest in Britain.



It was a heart-warming experience, because it is a reversal of the species depletion trend, to see specimens of *Wollemia pines* (*Wollemia nobilis*), previously known to botanists only from fossil evidence and believed to be extinct. It was discovered in 1994 in a deep ravine outside Sydney in Wollemia National Park and now it is thriving in Edinburgh and across the world. There were so many lessons to learn from that one encounter.

There are 1100 species of rhododendron worldwide and in its four sites Royal Botanic Gardens looks after 819, one of the leading collections in the world. Sadly they were not in bloom but there was some compensation for that by the striking foliage of *Rhododendron bureavii*. Everyone had their favourites in the 72

acres of these stunning but tranquil gardens.

The rest of the day was set aside for us to enjoy as we chose. Tempting food was on offer if lunch called and there was much more to explore: perhaps personal "must-sees" like the Chinese Hillside or the Rock Garden or the chance of a calming wander with a distant glimpse of Edinburgh Castle.



3.30pm saw us back in the safe hands of our driver for a restful journey to Hexham, maybe not so much chatting but a very satisfactory feeling that we were replete with so many different experiences and pleasures.

We emerged into a still grey but warmer Hexham, all of us grateful to the organizers of our trip to Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and to whom we say a big Thank You.

Bill Shaw



## Additional Autumn Talk

### The Energy Transition. What does the future look like for the oil, gas and energy sectors? Energy Transition.

Presenter: Ian Phillips

**2.00pm October 31<sup>st</sup>** Venue to be confirmed

We are organising an additional presentation this autumn and we would appreciate it if you could indicate if you are planning to attend either by emailing Wendy Dale [tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com](mailto:tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com) or registering at the monthly meeting in September or October.

### Visit to the Suez recycling facility at Sleekburn 26 July 2023

A group of eleven members from several different Tynedale U3A groups visited the Suez Treatment Facility for recyclable rubbish at Sleekburn at the end of July. Recycling bins in Northumberland come in several different colours according to where you live, but whatever the colour this is where everything put in the recycling bin comes to be sorted and disposed of. There are separate markets for clean empty tins, aluminium cans, plastic bottles and good quality paper, but not for rags, plastic bags, broken toys, polystyrene food containers, disposable nappies and anything else that has become rubbish. It is surprising to see so much non recyclable rubbish entering the plant.

It is housed in a large building at least 3 stories high and inside there is a maze of conveyor belts going in all directions and at different speeds. Some have mechanisms to sort the incoming material by size and by weight, others have sophisticated sensors working at breakneck speed that are able, for example, to sort aluminium cans from plastic bottles



or tin cans. However in spite of all the technology the final sorting has to be done by hand.

The so-called pickers stand side by side along a slow moving conveyor removing and redistributing items that have evaded all the mechanised sorting processes. The conveyor is relentless, the workers stand to work a three and a half hour shift continually watching and grabbing. It looks exhausting, certainly not a job for the faint-hearted.

Visitors can view the system from a series of metal walkways and several exposed staircases, all with strong handrails on both sides. There is a constant low-pitched machinery noise, so you have to raise your voice to be heard, and there is dust everywhere, but not particularly in the air. Visitors are well looked after. High viz waistcoats and helmets have to be worn and we had three staff with us to answer questions and keep us from getting lost!



Once the recyclable material is sorted it is compressed into square bales and then sold on to other companies

## Group News

### Wildlife Group

After early June visits to see orchids in a Hexhamshire hay meadow and our coastal walk near Warkworth we returned to the meadow in late June to learn about the management and explore the meadow to find many of the plants and insects benefiting from the traditional practice of excluding stock until after the hay cut. The weather wasn't looking promising, but as we arrived the rain stopped. Monica introduced us to Alistair & Maureen and we learned how changing from horse pasture to meadow management revealed a diversity of traditional meadow flowers over following years, before cutting for hay in late July or August to allow the summer plants to set seed. Hay from this field is the preferred feed of the stock in winter, over less flower rich cuts. After the heat of recent weeks the meadow, dotted with ox eye daisies, was now a dry yellow rather than the fresh green of our earlier visit. We set off carefully to reduce damage to the now wet crop. With the grasses now in full flower we could readily compare the varied flower structures. Country names include sweet vernal grass, crested dog's tail, Yorkshire fog, cock's foot, common bent, meadow foxtail and quaking grass.

We spent a while learning about yellow rattle & eyebright, two delicate but important plants, both are semi-parasitic on grasses, and so help make the soil nutrients more available to a wide variety of other plants which are not tolerant of heavily fertilized soil, making for greater biodiversity among insects, birds, mammals and other wildlife. We briefly flushed a variety of unidentified night flying moths and a number of gatekeeper and meadow brown butterflies along with burnet moths seemed to be waiting for the grass to dry and air to warm to take flight.



Since the earlier visit many plants more typical of northern hay meadows were in flower. We refound some of the frog and twaeblade orchids, and noted a tiny adders tongue fern. Blue-mauve self heal plants were spotted and later compared with the pinker betony, which appeared almost orchid like but with bluntly serrated leaves from the stem. We also found common and greater knapweed, yarrow and the seedheads of birds-foot trefoil clearly demonstrating the name. Thanks to Monica and our hosts Alistair & Maureen for another very interesting session.

After the flurry of wildlife visits in June members enjoyed our Summer Celebration at The Beacon, an amazing garden in Stocksfield, for an entertaining guided tour and cream teas provided by owners Patricia and Derek. As well as enjoying the masses of plants we also found and identified some of the wildlife using the garden including an iridescent Lavender Leaf Beetle and a Nursery Web Spider along with a nest web full of spiderlings.

With full membership we are now looking forward to meeting for a couple of autumn fieldtrips before our indoor winter programme begins.



## Group News

### World to Right Group - Health and Wealth

Doing some research for the Putting the World Right group, I got these statistics from the County Council on life expectancy, LE, and income in the county.

The average annual working wage in the north east is £30k but Northumberland is generally better off. However, average figures can be misleading and there are many seriously well off who can distort the averages:

Croft is not only the most deprived area in the county but the life expectancy of its residents also reflects its industrial heritage.

Better off people tend to have better diets and do more exercise as illustrated by the much greater life expectancy across Ponteland.

Mike Foster

Ward Name	Male LE at Birth	Female LE at Birth	Mean Income
Croft (Blythe Valley)	70.5	76.8	£27,104
Hexham Central with Acomb	79.3	88.2	£38,120
Hexham East	80.6	83.3	£40,972
Hexham West	84.0	84.4	£57,936
Ponteland East & Stannington	84.6	89.9	£53,665
Ponteland North	81.6	84.5	£51,225
Ponteland S with Heddon	87.7	94.2	£58,596
Ponteland West	84.9	88.7	£60,023

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## History Group



In July the u3a History Group completed our latest series of presentations on The Cromwell Era.

Thank you to all of our in house presenters on the research and compilation time spent on your contributions.

Our new Series of "Historical Turning Points" starts September 4th 2.30 pm at The County Hotel (back dining room). We already have some enthusiastic volunteers to present on a wide variety of interesting topics within that theme so come and join us, new members welcome.

Contact Convenors Carole Soulsby (carolesoul@gmail.com) and or Pauline Hadaway (prhadaway@btinternet.com) for further information.



## Group News

### Garden Visit Group

#### Visit to Whalton Manor



## Group News

### Northern Rocks Group

Haltwhistle Burn In July, John and Geoff led the group through Haltwhistle Burn, a fantastic place to see the Carboniferous rocks that make up most of Northumberland. We got a real insight into our industrial heritage, seeing evidence of coal, sandstones, limestones and shales all having been mined or quarried here. The rocks date back from between 320 and 330 million years ago and the gorge was largely cut when the last ice age finished

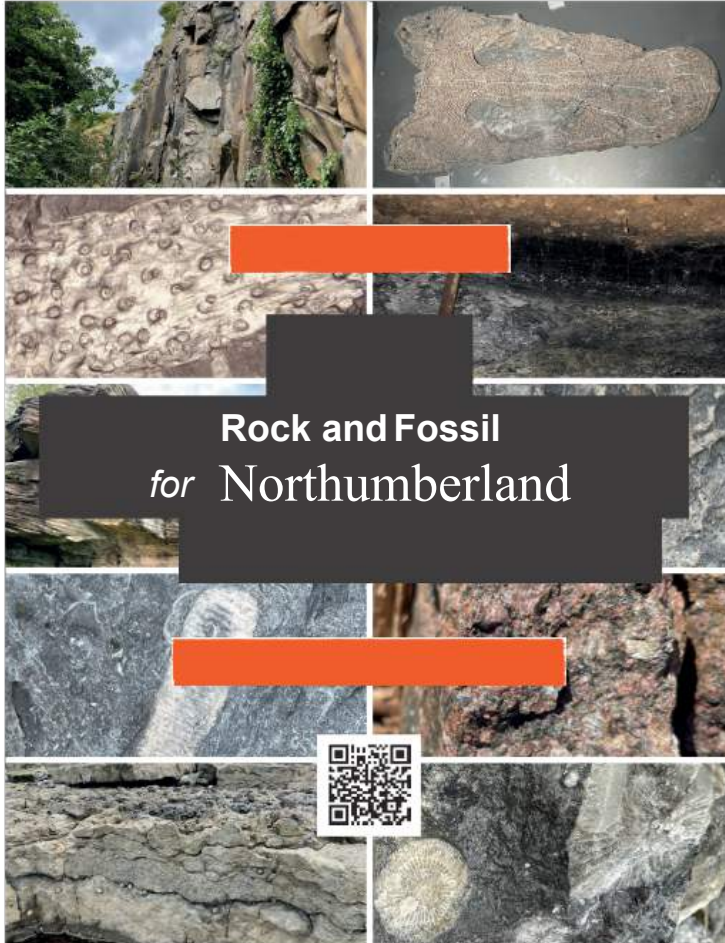
High Force and Bowlees In August, Alistair led the group south onto the North Pennines, introducing many of us to this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Britain's first European and Global Geopark, just on our doorstep! Alistair explained to us that the rock types that make up the North Pennines are formed in different ways and at different times in Earth history, a perfect place for amateur geologists to explore the local landscape and understand more about northern rocks. From Bowlees Visitor Centre, Alistair led us along a popular geotrail from Low Force to High Force, taking in the key geological features, but also learning about the area's rich history and enjoying the wildlife en route. It was a fantastic 5 mile walk, with many incredible sights to discuss and enjoy ... and the drink in the High Force Hotel very much needed at the end.



## Your chance to pick Northumberland's County Rock and Fossil



VISIT  
**Northumberland**



Northumberland has a County flag and a County flower but to date has not chosen a County rock and a County fossil. In what is probably a UK first polling has opened to select a rock and a fossil emblematic of Northumberland. You can vote here and a leaflet about this is attached.

<https://www.nwt.org.uk/rockandfossil>

Please pass on to anyone interested!

Steve Rosario

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### Committee Vacancy: Assistant Treasurer

Our Treasurer Barbara Redhead is having to step down from the role at the end of September as she is taking on new responsibilities as a justice of the peace with the Family court.

We are fortunate to have an Assistant Treasurer, Susan Turnbull who is happy to take on the role. We do however need to replace Susan. We have found it beneficial to have the 2 roles and it certainly makes the committee stronger. I am hoping we will be able to find a volunteer for the role as the last few months have been lovely operating with a full committee.

Susan would like to hear from anyone willing to consider the role. She will be able to explain what is involved and how the 2 roles work together. I am hoping she will be overwhelmed with interest.

## Group News

### The Page Turners

This new book group is called The Page Turners and we will be reading books from a wide range of authors and genres, but the main criteria is that the book must have a great, compulsively readable plot. Books where we, the readers, can't wait to 'turn the page'!

Our first meeting is planned for Monday afternoon on October 2nd.

If you are interested in this new group please contact Ally (07793072171) or Gerry (07805781410)

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### 'GROUP FIXER' Comments

I would like to say thank you to all the convenors who responded so promptly to my annual request for an update to group membership, meeting venue etc. Some of you may wonder whether our record keeping has overtones of 'Big brother' but I can assure you that in my case it is more akin to 'Incompetent Second Cousin'. It has thrown up one or two anomalies regarding u3a membership, but hopefully these can be resolved in September when the annual u3a membership subscription becomes due.

You will be aware by now that Ailsa is planning to sell the Garden Coffee House. We do not know what the outcome will be but she will recommend to the new owners that they continue to host our groups. I know some of you are already looking around for an alternative venue but free accommodation for small groups is at a premium. It would be prudent for me to update my venue listing so if you have good suggestions for free / cheap venues that could host small groups do let me know please.

When the u3a web site went down some months ago we lost some of the information posted there, this included all our policy documents. These are legal documents we need to have in place for our charity. Convenors need to be aware of some of the policies. You can access them on the web site but they are somewhat technical and soporific. I will be circulating a short summary of the key policies that convenors need to be aware of in due course.

I am aware that a number of groups are discussing the idea of bringing in a speaker for a special event open to all u3a members. Please do go ahead with that but keep the committee informed of your plans so the events can be advertised and scheduled to ensure reasonable spacing through the year.

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### Time for a Space Filling Laugh....

A truck loaded with thousands of copies of Roget's Thesaurus crashed yesterday shedding its entire load.

Witnesses were stunned, startled, aghast, taken aback, stupefied, confused, shocked, rattled, paralysed, dazed, bewildered, mixed up, surprised, awed, dumbfounded, nonplussed, flabbergasted, confounded, astonished, overwhelmed, horrified, numbed, flummoxed, speechless, perplexed and gobsmacked

Meanwhile, those waiting for the shipment were at a loss for words

*Note from Newsletter Editor:*

*For English language purists, please remember it's a joke!!....*



## For Your Diary

### Levens Hall and Kendal

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September £34.50

A beautiful privately owned house and gardens situated on the outskirts of the lake district. Home to the worlds oldest tapestry gardens and centre of a thriving 9,500-acre agricultural estate. The Gardens largely unchanged since the 17th century retain many original features including the world's oldest topiary gardens, with an ever-changing array of over 30,000 bedding plants, as well as the first recorded ha-ha in Britain. Beautiful wall borders, vegetable, herb, fountain and rose gardens, fine lawns, wildflower meadows and willow labyrinth. Free time will be provided at Levens Hall along with time in Kendal.

### Great Tapestry of Scotland & Jedburgh

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October £32.50

The Great Tapestry of Scotland is one of the world's largest community arts projects, hand stitched by 1,000 people, women and men, from across Scotland. The tapestry tells the story of Scotland's history, heritage and culture – from the country's land formation millions of years BC right to 2013 when the last panel was complete. It is made up of 160 linen panels and 300 miles of wool – enough to stretch the entire length of Scotland.

### Christmas at Castle Howard

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November £38.50

A Peter Pan-themed event for a Christmas experience. Follow the boy that never grew up into a fantastical festive world that will re-ignite your belief in fairies and leave your heart full. Beautiful theatrical installations, stunning projections and immersive soundscapes bringing JM Barrie's much-loved story and characters to life. You might like to try Mrs Darling's Afternoon Tea and toasted marshmallows in the twinkly Courtyard. Castle Howard are collaborating with Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, their charity partner for Christmas 2023.

To book contact Margaret Earl [tu3aevents@yahoo.com](mailto:tu3aevents@yahoo.com) or telephone 01434689123

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### Vivien Hubbock's Garden - a green fingered Tynedale u3a member!



## Tynedale u3a Membership Renewal

It's that time of year again, and membership renewal is due on **September 1st**. There will be a series of reminders over the weeks and months to come

**The easiest way to do this is through the membership page on the website -**  
<https://u3asites.org.uk/tynedale/page/56340>

There is an online form, which when completed and you push 'submit' automatically comes over. If there have been no changes to your contact details, such as address and phone number, you can simply fill in the basic information

**The basic renewal subscription is £14 per person.**

If you wish to receive copies of the National U3A magazine, 'Third Age Matters', please add £3.60 (which just pays for the postage), to make it £17.60

### **For Bank Transfer -**

Pay to Tynedale u3a:  
Sort code: 20-40-09:  
Account: 60601209:

For renewals, the reference is your membership number and surname. (The 'reference' makes it much easier for us to process your renewal.)

If sending a paper form and a cheque, please don't forget to make it out to "Tynedale u3a"

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### **What do we receive for £14 a year?**

Well, we have the 'Learn, Laugh and Live' Tynedale u3a mission realised through the monthly meetings, the groups, the commitment and imagination of convenors, the arrangement of outings, the work of the committee, the web site, the facebook page and the newsletter.

These activities certainly meet the 'Learn' criterion. They also provide much laughter, banter and very good company. Through involvement in Tynedale u3a it is easier to 'Live' and be positively distracted from the challenges faced in our daily living.

If only £1.16 a month could provide such value elsewhere.....



## Your committee

### Chair

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[tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com](mailto:tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com)

### Business Secretary

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## Membership

509 Members

10 Associates

Follow us on Facebook



## A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Caroline Lynch  
Brian Fenny  
Margaret Elliot  
Ann Attwood  
Paula Gilroy  
David Iley  
Lynn Bridgett  
Lynn Sayers  
Geoff Rudd

Colin Hoe  
Adrian Dalton  
Allyjo Forster  
Susan Dinning  
Ray Bather  
Catherine Stephenson  
Marge Reed  
Bruce Reed  
Isobel Sandilands

## 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**

**Email address: [tyneu3anleditor@gmail.com](mailto:tyneu3anleditor@gmail.com)**

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

### DEADLINE for NEXT NEWSLETTER

The deadline for the October one is **September 21st**

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.

### Just a Reminder!!

The Committee would welcome a volunteer for the soon to be vacant post of Assistant Treasurer. Don't be shy.....

