



Charity Registration No 1159091

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DEAR MEMBERS
I HOPE YOU ALL HAD A
PEACEFUL, HAPPY,
FESTIVE SEASON AND
WOULD LIKE TO WISH
YOU WELL IN EVERY-
THING YOU DO DURING
THE COMING YEAR,
GILL.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

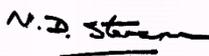


Happy New Year to all of you.

You may be aware that we recently celebrated the 1000th U3A in the UK. Almost 100 of these U3As are in the North West Region. We have approximately 40,000 members. So by both measures of U3As and members, our region represents 10% of the UK total. It would be nice to think that all 40,000 members in the North West had the opportunity to read this newsletter. Do you circulate this to other members of your U3A Committee, Group leaders and members?

I attended several events recently including "Different Approaches to Learning" held in Liverpool in October. All our U3As use interest groups as one way of learning and some run courses. But not many use MOOCS (Massive Open Online Courses) – a dreadful name for something that is really rather good. There are over 5000 online courses available covering all manner of subjects. They are free to use and allow you to take the course at your own pace to suit your style of learning. If you want to know more, please get in touch with me.

Your regional committee are finalising our programme of events for 2017. Information about some of these is in this newsletter. Details of further events will be appearing on our website in due course. I hope that there is something in the programme to interest you. But if not, please let me know what you would like to see. There may still be time to include further events in our programme.



Best wishes

Neil Stevenson

Regional Committee Positions

Our Regional Treasurer, Peter Monaghan, having completed his term of office, will retire at our AGM on 7th June this year. The regional committee (NWREC) will need to appoint a new Treasurer at the AGM and nomination papers will be sent out in due course. However, it would be helpful if a potential candidate was available to familiarise themselves with the financial management from the beginning of the new financial year in April.

A new Regional Chair also needs to be elected this year. Neil Stevenson, is the current Acting Chair and may not continue as Chair. Nomination for this position is open from any member.

The Committee will also be seeking to appoint a Vice Chair and at least one other Committee member.

NWREC provides support for the Regional Trustee and the U3As in the Region by helping to plan and implement training opportunities, seminars and workshops. Without the three officers, the Regional Committee cannot continue.

If you are interested in any of these positions and would like more information, or would like to visit the committee to discuss, please contact Neil, Peter or Gill via the links on the Regional website as soon as possible.

Working with the Regional Committee is very rewarding, especially if you enjoy broadening your experience of U3A. Please consider getting involved.

Gill Russell, North West Regional Trustee

Trustee News

Since taking on my new role in August I have had a pretty busy but varied experience. I have visited some open days; been to present anniversary cards to several U3As who have reached a landmark and attended a Pensioners' Fair. I have also been invited to network meetings and have dealt with some interesting problems. In addition I have run two workshops, supported by other members of the Region who give up their valuable time to help with management and presentation. All of this is happening in the North West Region. Of course I have also attended the Regional Committee meetings and have been to London for the NEC meetings and the celebration of 1000 U3As.

My sincere thanks go to those U3As and networks who have invited me to visit and share their enthusiasm for our wonderful organisation. Special thanks go to everyone who has helped, supported and encouraged me during this transition phase.

Gill Russell

NW Regional Trustee



Trustee Topics

DO YOU NEED HELP?

If you have an illness do you wait till your condition is serious before contacting a doctor? Or do you go as soon as you can to try and get medication or advice which will help your recovery?

Why not consider U3A problems in the same way?

Quite often, by the time National Office or Trustees hear of a problem in a U3A it is already quite advanced. Some of the biggest issues revolve around Committees, AGMs and Constitutions. Waiting for the problem to resolve by itself is not a good idea. Trying to solve a problem by listening to another U3A doesn't always help either. Every U3A is different and the advice they offer might not work for you.

The Committee Reference File is an excellent source of advice but sometimes there's no easy answer and the problem gets bigger, making it more difficult to resolve. The sooner it is addressed, the simpler the action which may be needed.

If you think a difficult situation is arising, contact me quickly away. If I can't advise you, I can try to find someone who can.

Information updates

By the way, don't forget to keep me updated on changes to your committee members, especially the Chair and Secretary. It makes it so much easier when contact is needed, for example when we try to send AGM letters round. Last year people complained that they hadn't received information in time. But we then discovered that they we had the wrong contact names and the information had been sent but not always passed on.

NATIONAL EVENT



Celebration of 1000 U3As was held in London on November 22nd. Approximately 500 people attended. We heard a speech from Baroness de Souza about the House of Lords before Eric Midwinter, one of the Founders of the U3A Movement in the UK, spoke about the history of the U3A and looked ahead to the future.

WORKSHOPS' REPORTS



October 13th – Different Approaches to Learning

The workshop was held in Liverpool and was intended to get members to 'think outside the box'. It was prompted partly by a meeting I went to some years ago where a group member said their U3A couldn't have a Music Appreciation group because they didn't have a music specialist. Another person explained how they organised such a group without a specialist and other people began to realise they could follow their example by not being tied to a specific model.

We began the day with a humorous look at the Psychology of learning with our guest speaker Sean Orford. He talked about the way life-long learning can help to develop new neural pathways. He also took us through the concept of 'Mindfulness', which I know is becoming popular in some U3As. After lunch we split into groups. Facilitators moved to each location to discuss different types of interest groups, Research and Shared Learning Projects, and a chance to look at how we learn through kinaesthetic, audio-visual, logic and other techniques. Many participants said they had enjoyed sharing information and experience with other people and that the workshops had opened them up to new ideas and approaches. So I think we achieved our goal.

November 4th Inclusiveness Awareness Day

This event took place in Warrington and was aimed at thinking of ways we can help people with disabilities to be involved in U3A activities. We are not a welfare organisation, but the benefits of belonging to a U3A are well documented. Under the auspices of the Equalities Act we are encouraged to make reasonable provision wherever we can. Our discussions included clarifying the meaning of 'reasonable' provision.

In the morning we had a presentation by Arthur Maltby and John Bews from Heswall U3A who introduced us to aspects of their Memory Workshop. Our afternoon groups focused on the difficulties of people suffering from hearing or sight impairment and mobility problems. Even slight disability can have a profound effect on our ability to continue participating in the things we enjoy.

The groups discussing hearing impairment found the day particularly helpful and some excellent feedback has been produced by Sue Watkinson which I hope to share with you in more detail in the not-too-distant future. Meanwhile there are some useful advice sheets in the [Committee Reference File](#).

As a result of this meeting, several U3As have formed a small working party or appointed a committee member to look at ways their own groups can create a policy of inclusion.

More workshops are being prepared for next year. Keep an eye on the website and future newsletters for details.

CONFERENCE AND AGM 2017



Next year's AGM and Conference will be held at the Quaker Meeting House in Manchester on June 7th.

The guest speaker, Neil Smith, is a musician and raconteur. He is a classical guitarist and his talk, entitled 'Have Guitar Will Travel', is based on his exploits as a professional musician interspersed with musical performance. His talk has been enthusiastically recommended by some of our members.

Details of the event and registration will be available on the Regional website early in the New Year.

N.W. REGIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL 2017

**Residential Summer School
29th August - 1st September
2017**

**At Newton Rigg College,
Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 0AH**

***An opportunity to learn in the inspiring setting
of the Lake District***

This year we are offering ten courses including those which have proved

popular in previous years and a number of new courses. Course available are:-

Architecture
The ABC of Cities
Digital Digging for Armchair Archaeologists
Geology of Lakeland Landscapes
Painting with Stitches
Medicine in the 21st Century
Recorder Playing
Russian and Soviet Culture
Science is for Everyone
Ukulele for Beginners

Newton Rigg College is located close to J40 of the M6 and less than five minutes' drive from Penrith Railway Station.

Fees are £275 for residential delegates and £155 for non-residential. A £35 discount is available for bookings made and deposits received by 31st May 2017. Full details and booking forms are available on the North West Region website.



THE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF U3A

The organisation is getting very big and it has been suggested that we may need to consider restructuring. With this in mind, a working party has been formed to offer consultation meetings to give members a chance to give opinions and discuss options. Several of these are being organised in the Region and will be held as follows:

February 8th – Crewe Arms – 10 – 12.

Consultation meeting only.

February 13th – Lancaster Quaker meeting

House – 12 – 4. A short version of the Different Approaches to Learning workshop will precede the Consultation Meeting.

February 14th – Manchester, Cross Street Chapel – 2 – 4

Registration links are available on the Event page of the regional website – www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west

A paper copy can also be downloaded on the website.

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS



Understanding Tomorrow's World is a more detailed version of the very successful breakout group from this year's Conference. It will explore ways in which science and technology can change our lives. The study day will take place in 2017 on **Wednesday 18th January in Warrington from 1.00pm – 4.00pm and on Wednesday 8th March in Lancaster from 1.00pm – 4.00pm.** Details and booking arrangements are on the website. A paper copy of the registration form can be provided. Contact Neil for more information. ndstevenson@hotmail.com

HEALTH AND WELLBEING CONFERENCE

Gill Baynes, from Lancaster and Morecambe U3A, is organising a one-day Conference on Health and Wellbeing on October 26th 2017. This will be open to all Regional members.

Keep an eye on the Website and future Newsletters for more information.

NETWORK EVENTS. (open to Regional members)



Cumbria Network is organising another Energy Conference on March 31st which will be looking at the changing face of energy and changing attitudes to energy through a series of talks planned on how the UK will meet its low carbon future in the light of last year's Paris agreement; glacier melting and the effects of rising sea levels; planning the electricity grid to meet the changing pattern of energy generation; the position and impact of fracking; community energy projects and the changing ways we will use energy in the future. Expert speakers have been assembled.

Further details and registration form are available on the Regional website.

Greater Manchester Network is planning a study around Literature on Monday 27th March from 10:30 – 4:00 at Cross Street Chapel. The programme will be ready early in the New Year, so keep an eye on the Regional website.

Cruise News.

Thanks to a member from Halton and Warrington U3As who is a guest speaker on Fred Olsen cruises, I have been able to negotiate with the company for a discount for members of North West U3As only. If you are a first time traveller with Fred Olsen you can obtain a 10% discount. If you have travelled with them you are already eligible to 5% through their loyalty scheme so the special agreement would offer another 5%. To obtain the discount you will have to contact a dedicated booking site and be able to prove you are a current member of a North West U3A. If this pilot scheme is successful it may be offered to the wider U3A.

I have flyers available. Please send me an s.a.e. if you would like one (or several). Flyers will also be available at Regional events or by email. The offer is available until September 2017.

s.a.e. to G. Russell, 71 Barn Hey Crescent, Meols, Wirral, CH47 9RW

**BEST WISHES FOR 2017 FROM NW
REGIONAL EXECUTIVE U3A**