

North West Region of U3As Newsletter for September and October 2013

From the Chair - Sue Watkinson

When I was first involved with U3A in 2003 I was anxious to read up the history and philosophy of the movement. I was loaned a copy of "500 Beacons" by the U3A Founder, Eric Midwinter, a book well worth reading but, I think, in short supply. Now I have my own copy of the Francis Beckett book "A short history of the U3A movement" which brought the story up to date in 2009. It has proved invaluable as my U3A life has moved on and new members have joined with their own ideas. I suppose it has kept me on the straight and narrow pathway. One quotation from the original book always impresses me and no more so than at the recent North West Summer School, where members from all over the country came together to learn new subjects, led by other U3A members. It is this. "Each U3A meeting is a statement about the ability of older people to manage their own affairs. It reverses the administrative relationship in which, conventionally, others, normally second age professionals, did unto older people." This statement is a vital one to remember – in U3A we can look after ourselves and we must make it all fun.

This is a newsletter full of information with advertisements for courses, seminars and workshops. The North West region is large and we are trying hard to move our events around. Inevitably travel times may be long for some of you but we will keep trying to satisfy the majority. I hope many of you will book onto these events and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Science Day in Heswall

Part of the Heswall Arts Festival

Thursday 10 October

Four lectures on the theme of "What makes us human" with four expert speakers

This is a joint event with Heswall Rotary Club, each lecture is just £1: advance booking is not required.

Full details and a poster are on the NW website

Study Day in Clitheroe

On Wednesday 27th November

In the United Reform Church

From 11.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

**"Writing for Publication" with Tony Thornton,
Editor of Sources magazine**

This event was requested at the Chester AGM in May

Booking form is attached to this newsletter
and on the website

Event funded by the North West Region

North West Regional Committee

Monday 11 November

The Salvation Army Hall Macclesfield

11.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

"A Webmasters Forum"

For webmasters, budding webmasters, those interested/involved in creating content for websites of U3As

using U3A website builder

Coffee/tea will be provided, bring your own lunch

Event is FREE to NW U3A members

Further details and Application form

www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west

Other Dates for your diary 2014

29 March at the Castle Street Centre, Kendal

A Family History Day with speakers on "Starting Family History", "Wills and Family History", "Police Ancestors" and "WWI Ancestors"

Booking details available soon

AGM and Guest speakers – 10th June

At the Ashton Hall Lancaster

**The North West Region's Residential Summer School
at Newton Rigg College near Penrith**

Tuesday 26 – Friday 29 August

Courses, prices and other details available soon

Report from Trustee – Jenny Carley

Firstly, I must thank those of you who have sent me the start date of their U3A. As expected there were some differences between National Office records and your own. If you have not already done so please return the date as soon as possible. If you have no records then I have a record of the date you were affiliated to the Trust for your information – you may be older than you think! The reason for the request is that the Third Age Trust will be acknowledging the achievement and success of your U3A in a small way.

I have started this month a new item in the News Sheet 'Trustee Topics' I intend to use this to highlight some of the issues that I have had to deal with when visiting U3As, Networks, seminars and in general conversations with members. The issues are from several U3As and are not targeted at any individual member or U3A. I hope you will find them useful.

Finally, I attended the National AGM and conference last week where I was elected as your Trustee. Thank you to all those U3As who voted for me. The theme of the conference was 'Learn, Laugh and Live' which we did in abundance. I have written a report which is now on the North West website, www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west when you read it I'm sure that you will be making a date in your diary for next year's AGM at Cirencester September 9 and 10th

A new Shared Learning Project for Kirkby U3A

Kirkby U3A, which is quite small and very new, is undertaking a Shared Learning Project with their local Library. Kirkby lies just south of the Lancashire boundary, within the Merseyside area: the original settlement, mentioned in the Domesday Book, became completely inundated with the housing and industrial development as huge areas of Liverpool were cleared and the residents moved out to pastures new. The scope of their project is to seek out older residents who remember Kirkby when it was a small farming village and before it became a New Town in the early 1950s. The team is led by Anne Levey of Kirkby U3A, and they are collecting written or photographic material to help in their search for people who can call on old memories of Kirkby in their childhood days and how it has changed. One member of the team has lived there all her life. Can any neighbouring U3A members recall the "old" Kirkby or do you know any former residents who have moved away to nearby areas? Do let me know and I'll pass on the information.

Sue Watkinson (Shared Learning Co-ordinator)

CONGRATULATIONS!

North West Success with the National Calendar "What makes Britain Great"

Congratulations to [Sheila Davies from Preston](#) (September) and [Stewart Drummond from Ashton in Makerfield](#) (March). Their lovely images are included in the 2014 calendar, available from National Office. Your Business Secretary has the details.

Disability issues

There have been recent questions about how to deal with members with various disabilities. National Office has produced an Advice Sheet covering these issues, which is available as a down-load from the Third Age Trust website. If it doesn't deal with your particular problem then please let us know.

Can YOU help us please?

Speakers – Many U3As, particular those in their early years, ask for information about suitable speakers for monthly meeting. Can your U3A recommend half a dozen of your **best** speakers, with brief details of their talk, fees (where appropriate) and a contact telephone number, with area code. Please indicate if the speaker is a U3A member because, as you know, U3A members cannot charge a fee to another U3A. Expenses may be paid however. Replies to Gill Russell – see page 4 for email address

Time to spare after a busy period in an officer post?

We need some more members for the Regional Committee – our ideal candidate is someone who is retiring from an officer position, who understands how U3As work, is good at planning events and willing to get involved. Do think about volunteering to join us – look on it as a promotion, or a perhaps a side-ways career move.

Get touch with Jenny or Sue to speak about this.

CHANNEL 4 HISTORY SERIES

Are you a retired Teacher, Doctor, Police Officer or Office Worker? How did your job change over time? Exciting new Channel 4 history series would love to hear from you. For more information see attached flyer, email lucie.duxbury@silverriver.tv or call 0207 907 3474.

Third Age Trust and some southern U3As have already co-operated with this request but we need people from the North West to give the series a balanced view.

See the flyer on the website for more details.

Trustee Topics – a new feature for our North West Newsletter

1. Trusteeship

Some of you are not aware of the fact that if you are an elected or co-opted committee member then you are by default a Trustee. You cannot opt out of being a Trustee. Trustees are responsible for the proper handling of all your U3A monies including group money and social events money.

Members of U3A committees are covered as an individual trustee or as a board against genuine mistake or error provided that they have acted responsibly. All committees are covered by 'Charity Trustees Management Liability Insurance' provided by the Third Age Trust. A copy of this insurance should be held by the business secretary of your U3A. If you have not followed proper practice or chosen to ignore irregularities within your U3A you may not be covered by the insurance. I would also like to remind you that all new committee members need to sign the declaration form CSD-1382, which should be retained by the chairman or business secretary and be given the 'Code of Conduct for U3A Trustees' as part of their induction. Reference to the Charity Commission website???

2. Groups

When a new U3A is started, Groups are initiated and all members are new. The information booklet 'Interest Groups' gives guidance as to how to start a group, setting goals, deciding the range and nature of your subject, how you are going to learn, where you will meet, how you will communicate and the logistics if you are going to use transport. Older U3As may never have defined goals for their groups. Maybe they have been overlooked or they have developed bad practice. This can lead to friction and disputes within the group. Life's too short for this and in the U3A we learn for fun. There are many ways of dealing with disputes - refer to advice note No 6, 'Sorting out Problems/Grievances' if you are unsure. All groups, because of their nature, plan their activities in different ways. It's rare for a group to plan its progression as it ages. A topic to discuss with your group co-ordinators/leaders maybe? The paper 'Interest Groups' can be downloaded from the National website (Document downloads- Information booklets) and is an excellent starting point for such a discussion.

Grant Aid for U3As—where can you find help?

Many U3As have gained sums of money from the bodies that offer grant aid for specific items or projects. A good first contact point is your local Council for Voluntary Service or Community Council (there are both in Lancashire) so go ahead and do a Google search to see where your local office is based. Some Local Authorities (Parish, Borough and County) have grant schemes and some individual Councillors have a small allocation, which they can give to worthy causes. Some Lottery funds target older people's activities with a particular interest in providing IT training and equipment.

There are many other charities with specific interests, such as health, access to art or theatre, sport and technology. Applications are often detailed; grants may come with strings attached and always there will be a feed-back process, but it's worth making an effort. You could be rewarded with a new projector and screen, computers or sound systems. The words "older people" are often the key that opens the door to grant aid.

Do let us know what you have achieved and how you did it so we can pass on the advice to other U3As.

Applying for funding – a story from Hoylake U3A

After several occasions when we had to borrow a digital projector and computer for visiting speakers, we decided to try and purchase our own. We didn't have enough funding to do this so we applied to the 'Awards for All' scheme through the Big Lottery Fund. We visited their website biglotteryfund.org.uk and followed the prompts to 'Awards for All'. This gave us very clear guidelines. If you are looking for funding it is well worth a visit.

The application form can be completed online. In addition applicants need to explain their reason for making the application. They will be asked to identify costs and to say what difference the project will make to their group. Once the application form has been received by 'Awards for All' the group will get a reply and will probably be asked to supply a range of documents. For us, these included a copy of the latest approved annual accounts, copies of three bank statements and a copy of our Constitution. Eventually we received confirmation that our grant was approved and how much we could spend. We were then able to purchase the equipment we required provided it was within the costs awarded. We were given the Lottery logo to display.

The whole process was steady and efficient and the results well worth waiting for.

Gill Russell – Hoylake U3A and NWREC

Summer School 2013 at Newton Rigg, Penrith

A personal view

The site chosen this year was Newton Rigg College in Cumbria, set in open countryside just outside Penrith, so near to the beautiful north Lakes, and the course I selected from the seven on offer was "Art" or more properly "The Importance of Line". The tutor was the bubbly and talented Jacqueline Cartwright who led her disparate group of 16 through a whirlwind tour of thinking, talking, drawing and painting. At the end of the three days we invited all the other students to come up to our studio to view the results. Most were impressed.

The other courses on offer seemed to us quite dull by comparison, but there were advantages. The Geology group explored the rock formation of the North Lakes and went on a day's field trip to get some hands-on experience;

the Romantics Movement students read and analysed some of the Lake District poets and went out to visit Dove Cottage; the Archeology group went off to explore Castlerigg and two henges. Those who remained in their classrooms were quite envious of the outings in lovely late summer sunshine. Creative Writing, the History of British Cinema and the Science of Energy didn't lend themselves to events outside the classroom but everyone gained knowledge from their experiences.

Summer Schools are also about meeting new people, sharing stories, finding out that we still love to learn.

Why have I left it so long? It was such fun and we all know that if it isn't fun, it's not U3A. Watch out for details of the 2014 Summer School – 26-20 August again at Newton Rigg.

Sue Watkinson (Aughton & Ormskirk U3A) NWREC

Upholland U3A is organising a **Film Festival**, which is open to members and all local residents. During the week **28 October – 1 November**, five older favourite films will be shown at the regular meeting place, St Theresa's Social Club in Upholland. Starting with 'Odd Man Out' from the 1940s, with the 'Lavender Hill Mob', 'Kes', 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' and 'My Left Foot', each film represents a decade of film history. See the Upholland U3A website for times (some afternoon, some evening) all at very reasonable prices.

The Committee of the North West Regional Executive for 2013/14

Sue Watkinson (Aughton & Ormskirk U3A), Chair	01695 422 423 billandsuew@googlemail.com
Peter Monaghan (Carlisle U3A), Hon. Treasurer	petermonaghan20@btinternet.com
Beverley Jones (Clitheroe U3A), Hon. Secretary	bev.jones@talk21.com
Lesley Bates (Parbold & Newburgh U3A)	lesleybates45@yahoo.co.uk
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David Joseph (Macclesfield U3A) (Co-opted for one year)	davidbjoseph@btopenworld.com
Bill Fowler (Sandbach U3A)	bill.fowler42@btinternet.com
Malcolm McGregor (Warrington) – website support	mwmacgregor@gmail.com

Trustee for the North West Region is	01244 680 460
Jenny Carley (Chester U3A)	carleyjenny@gmail.com

STOP PRESS

A Report on the National Conference and AGM by our Regional Trustee will shortly be posted onto the North West website. www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west

Just booked – the North West AGM with guest speakers. Make a note of 10th June 2014 in the Ashton Hall within Lancaster City Hall, 10.00 – 4.00 a.m. Further details will follow