



Registered Charity number 1159091

NORTH WEST NEWS SEPTEMBER 2020

Message from the (retiring)Trustee

Dear members,

Yes, it's finally happened. I'm off!

I wish I could say I'm off to somewhere interesting but my back garden or a walk by the local shore might be as far as I get.

However, I feel that whilst the Covid 19 problem has provided an interesting challenge to my last few months, it won't last forever and it has made changes which I think will help to drive the movement forward in different ways. Digital technology has been a useful development. It will never replace our physical meetings but at least it has provided us with a means of communication and learning during the ongoing restrictions, providing opportunities for us to be involved in the wider movement.

The future of the U3A movement could be exciting and I hope that our members will accept and refine the challenge and use it as positive step into the years ahead, which I fully intend to be part of.

Meanwhile, stay safe, stay well, stay active.

Good luck to all.

Best wishes,

Gill

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

I do hope that you are well and have enjoyed the summer months as well as being able to meet up with family and friends.

Having delayed from June, the start of September was the time for our North West Region to hold its AGM. This is reported separately in the newsletter. I should like to thank all those members who took part by returning votes and by attending. I appreciated the words of support that I received about this, especially, since holding a large meeting by Zoom was a new experience for me. The national training that I attended with regard to holding this kind of meeting certainly helped. The National U3A website is an excellent source for finding new and useful training resources. For example, under the online events section, there are 'How to Guides' which some members may find helpful.

We try to include ideas and resources that our members can use in individual U3As on our Regional website. As a committee, we decided to introduce some 'Tuesday Talks' using some of the on line speakers or performers that have been recommended. For some U3As this style of delivery is new so we hope that attending one or all these talks will be both enjoyable and provide a useful experience. Any member can register an interest to attend these talks using the forms on our Events section. The first one is in October so please don't delay in signing up.

As you are aware, our Regional Trustee, Gill, steps down from her position at the National AGM on 29th September. I know that many of you would want to join with me in thanking her for all the guidance and support that she has provided over the years. We hope that she will continue to be actively involved in the U3A and wish her all the best in the future.

We are delighted that Neil Stevenson will be our new Regional Trustee. Many of you will know Neil through the variety of activities that he has led over a period of time – not least as our former Regional Chair and at the North West annual Summer School. We will look forward to supporting him in the future. Meanwhile I hope that you have an interesting and enjoyable time this Autumn whilst remaining safe.

All good wishes.

Mo

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NEW EVENTS FOR AUTUMN-WINTER 2020: SECOND TUESDAY TALKS

We are delighted to offer the opportunity to take part in a regular series of Zoom talks, starting at 10.30 am on the second Tuesday of each month. In particular you may wish to add the Winter Warmer on 8th December to your U3As own range of seasonal celebrations.

Please use the booking link on the NW website Events page to register for each session.

13th October	Memory and Identity	Tony Clarke of Lymm and Thelwall U3A will lead us through 'who we think we are'	free session
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10th Nov	Grandma flew spitfires	Tim Young of Newmarket U3A will explore the roles of the women who supported the air defence of Britain	free session
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8th Dec	Winter Warmer with Fool's Gold Acoustic Musicians	Join our winter celebration led by Carol and Steve Robson, with music and tales	free session
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The full programme for the Fool's Gold 'Winter Warmer' can be downloaded from the website.

www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west/events

NW SPEAKER LIST

We are creating a list of speakers who are willing to provide talks on Zoom or via uTube. Some U3As are already enjoying this as their members join virtual monthly meetings. You can find the list on the regional website. However, we would like more, so if you have enjoyed a virtual speaker in your U3A please let the regional team know so that we can increase our list.

You can send us your recommendations via the links on the contact page of the website.

NORTH WEST REGION OFU3As AGM report SEPT 2020

Forty-three members, representing 30 different U3As from across the region, attended the AGM which was held using Zoom on the 1st September. Votes from 24 U3As were received before the AGM took place and the results of these were announced during the event. All the reports were accepted and approved. Of these, 22 U3As approved the minutes and 24 U3As approved or accepted the other reports.

All the documents were emailed to the members that had registered and it was requested that any questions were sent prior to the meeting. There was, however, an opportunity to ask questions and make comments during the AGM using the 'chat' feature on Zoom. One of the members asked about the possibility of holding future AGMs using Zoom. The Charity Commission has

given permission for charities to hold their AGMs digitally as long as it is in the best interests of the members. This provision has only been agreed in response to the pandemic so that charities can fulfil their legal obligation during the current restrictions on meetings.

During the AGM, Arnie Laing stepped down from the committee and was thanked for his contributions in the past. The following committee was elected to serve for the following year:

Chair: Mo Eccles, Upholland & District U3A

Vice Chair: Hannah Chellaswamy, Lymm and Thelwall U3A

Vice Chair: Jacqueline Owen, Wyre U3A

Treasurer: Alan Hough, Upholland & District U3A

Secretary: Angela Bond, Beconsall U3A

Member: Bill Woods, Heswall U3A

Member: Maggy Simms, Bolton & West Pennine Villages U3As

Member: Mary Waters, Lancaster and Morecambe U3A

In addition to the Officers, our constitution states there must be at least three and not more than five U3A members appointed to the Executive Committee. It was pointed out that anyone interested in serving on the committee should get in touch with the Chair or secretary.

Gill Russell, our Regional Trustee, announced that, after she steps down at the National AGM, Neil Stevenson will be the new Trustee from the end of September. Gill was thanked for all the guidance and support she has given and that all her hard work and dedication was appreciated.

Mo Eccles

7th September 2020

ANDREW WILDE CONCERT

On July 21st the North West Region hosted a virtual concert with Andrew Wilde, an international concert pianist who studied at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester and graduated with distinction from the Royal Northern college of Music.

Andrew has been a popular visitor to U3As around the region so we invited him to join us via Zoom and were treated to a concert in his living room. We were able to watch him perform a selection of music on his Steinway grand piano, playing a selection of pieces by Beethoven and Chopin, introducing the pieces and their composers and supplying some amusing musical anecdotes. In a break from the performance, Andrew answered questions about his work, showing his love of music and his enthusiasm for communicating this to

others.

Through his work Andrew supports the North West Music Trust, a charity dedicated to bringing music to the wider community.

In spite of some technical difficulties which affected sound quality, attendees felt that we had been part of an interactive recital and master class. We enjoyed a relaxing afternoon in the company of our U3A friends as we watched Andrew's hands dance across the keyboard.

ZOOM COMMITTEE FORUM

Unfortunately we had to cancel this as only three people signed up. Hopefully it will be reinstated at a later date.

CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION

The results of a national Creative writing competition were recently announced at a 'Star Awards' evening on Zoom. Over 300 people took part. There was a winner in each region and three overall winners whose pieces were read out at the event.

The theme was 'Time' and the contributions were varied and interesting. Our Regional winner was Sue Temperley from Littleborough U3A who describes her work in the following way:

'The inspiration for my story 'Reflections of a mirror' came to me as I was browsing in a charity shop and I came across a small wooden mirror lying at the back of a shelf. I started wondering about its 'life' and how it had ended up in the shop....

The story follows the life the mirror and its owner share, from them seeing one another for the first time as it was presented to her as a 21st birthday present, to the day their eyes finally closed together.'

Congratulations to Sue on her wonderful achievement.

The event was so successful that our national team hope to repeat it next year.

All the stories are now on the national website on the Creative Writing Learning page(<https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/creative-writing-2020>)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

LAST WORD (almost)

When I joined U3A in 2008 I said I would never be on a committee. Famous last words! Since then I think I have only been off one for 2 months. It's been a challenge at times but a great experience, full of wonderful people.

I intend to stay active around the wider movement and would love to keep in touch.

You can email me on gillruss71@gmail.com.

So thank you for your support, encouragement and friendship. My special thanks go to the Regional Committee who have encouraged and supported all my efforts during the past four years.

All that remains is for me to say goodbye – for now, and welcome to Neil. Here's his introduction and I hope it won't be too long before you are able to meet him in person.

MESSAGE FROM NEIL

It is a great privilege to be the next regional trustee for the North West. Gill is a hard act to follow. She has worked tirelessly for the past four years as trustee and before that, as chair of the region. So it's a huge thank you from me to Gill for all that she has achieved for our U3As.

The role of trustee is challenging at any time. Fortunately, we have an outstanding regional committee who can be relied on to share the workload. This involves running workshops, provide support to U3As, when requested and opening new U3As when the opportunity arises.

The current pandemic makes life more complex for all of us. When this is finally over there will inevitably be a period of rebuilding for our U3As. As yet, we do not know how this may change the way we operate and what the "new normal" will be like. There is a huge amount of work being done by volunteer U3A members to plan for every eventuality.

You may have seen some of the information that has been sent to committee members. This includes plans for a membership recruitment campaign and a "Planning for the U3A movement Post Lockdown" from our national chair, Ian McCannah. If you have any ideas, comments or questions, please do let me know. My email address is ndstevenson@hotmail.com

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