

# NW U3A NEWS

Issue No. 5 January 2010

## 1. Letter from the NW Trustee

Dear Colleague

I had expected to continue to represent the North West on the National Committee of the Third Age Trust until August 2010. However, in view of the burgeoning work load created by my appointment as Chairman of the U3A National Research Committee, I have resigned from the Third Age Trust. This will necessitate the Third Age Trust putting into motion an election for a new N.W. Trustee – meanwhile, I will act as an Adviser to the Trust.

The commitment as Chairman of the Research Committee, besides encouraging U3A members and groups to become involved in research activities (either self generated or as part of a collaboration with local Universities) involves representing the national U3A movement on the Dept. of Health's official N.G.O. bodies such as the Association of Education and Ageing, and of course, liaising with many Universities in the U.K. [I would be pleased to send more detailed information to interested members.]

During my time as N.W. Trustee I have enjoyed meeting members from all the U3A groups in all parts of the region, members of the six networks and speaking to many meetings. May I thank you all for your courtesy and hospitality.

I have benefited from the advice of Meg Shaw (my predecessor) and with her support, along with John Ellison and Kathleen Mercier we have been able to set up a N.W. Regional Committee. I hope you will continue to give them your support as they seek to enrich U3A activities in the North West. They have got off to a great start.

I hope our pathways will continue to cross, as I meet members and U3A groups with an interest in the research developments, and particularly in developing the "Wellbeing Programme" in which U3A activities have an essential role as we re-invent retirement.

I intend to carry out all my existing engagements to talk to various NW U3As over the next few months.

Best wishes, live long, live well, die quickly and keep out of the hands of social services!!

Regards, Alex. McMinn

## 2. News from NWREC

Most of the meeting on 19.01.10 was devoted to discussing items reported elsewhere in NW U3A News No 5. However we also

- a) Considered how to improve the quality of learning provision for NW U3As and the role of the region in facilitating this.
- b) Decided that except in very exceptional circumstances it will not be possible to refund deposits for Myerscough as these have already been handed over to the College.
- c) Concluded that our finances look manageable assuming we get the money promised by TAT in the relatively near future.

### 3. News on scheduled events

**NW REGIONAL CONFERENCE** at St Cuthberts, Preston 12<sup>th</sup> February 2010 10.00 – 16.00.

We have a viable attendance but more people are most welcome. It is a chance to hear the Third Age Trust Chairman, Ian Searle, talk about his vision for the future and the CEO and company secretary Lin Jonas talk about resources available to U3As. There will also be discussion sessions to enable interactions with Ian, Lin and the NW Region Committee. All members of all NW U3As are invited. (Registration essential. Forms already circulated and on the website). Absolute final date 7 days before the meeting so catering can be finalised. But **please** email me [j.ellison521@btinternet.com](mailto:j.ellison521@btinternet.com) a.s.a.p. with names of additional people. We will be in trouble if I get a late rush!

**THE CAPITAL OF CULTURE REVISITED LIVERPOOL** 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

Still places available. (Registration essential, forms already circulated or see our website.) Several options are well subscribed whilst one or two others are not meeting the minimum number required. The final decision will be taken after the post has arrived on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010, so if you want to come move very quickly. In emergency email [davidstarling@fastmail.fm](mailto:davidstarling@fastmail.fm). Those on the options which may have to be cancelled will be approached individually and offered alternative options or a full refund. The most expensive option has been the most popular! See our website after Friday 29<sup>th</sup> when the revised list should be posted.

**MYERSCOUGH RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL** 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> April 2010

Places still available on several courses (Geology and Golf both full).

Registration essential asap, forms already circulated or see website.

Email [kathleenmercier@talktalk.net](mailto:kathleenmercier@talktalk.net)

**AGM AND SPECIAL LECTURE BY DR JOHN PRAG** – 25<sup>th</sup> May 2010

We now have more details and an application form.

So here is the current flier.



**NORTH WEST REGION  
DISTINGUISHED LECTURE and AGM**

Friends' Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester M1

25th May 2010 Arrival from 13.30 with the Lecture starting at 13.45.

The speaker at this event will be **Dr John Prag** who is **Professor of Archaeology at the Manchester Museum** and who has, with Richard Neave, become world famous for reconstructing lifelike representations of ancient people from skeleton remains. He is well known for his TV appearances and one of the world leaders in his field. He has a great reputation as a lecturer and we hope that this talk will prove very popular.

It is a meeting open to all U3A Members. The lecture together with tea and biscuits afterwards will cost £5. Registration as soon as possible by returning the application form with payment. Queries to [t.cheetham2@btinternet.com](mailto:t.cheetham2@btinternet.com)  
Mr Trevor Cheetham, 40 Boat Lane Court, Brett Street, Northenden, Manchester, M22 4EZ.

Dr Prag's talk will be entitled

**"Eyes, Teeth & Arthritis ; Reconstructing Ancient Faces"**

There will be tea and biscuits at the end of the talk for everybody and the NW Region AGM will start at 15.15 or soon after. The AGM is, of course, free but limited to 2 **formal** delegates per NW U3A. However we will be happy for others who have attended the lecture to attend our AGM as **observers**.

The venue is quite large and is just off Albert Square in the centre of Manchester virtually on the Metro system (St Peter's Square stop – then walk round either side of the circular Central Library and the Meeting House is across the road in front of you). It is only a few minutes walk from Oxford Road rail station via St Peter's Square.

-----  
**APPLICATION FORM**

for NW Region Lecture and AGM on 25th May 2010  
Friends' Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS

NAME ..... U3A .....

Address .....

..... Post Code .....

Email ..... Phone .....

Return this form with your payment (if you are attending the Lecture) as soon as possible as the lecture may be very popular. Cheques payable to NW Region of U2As. Sent to Mr Trevor Cheetham, 40 Boat Lane Court, Brett Street, Northenden, Manchester, M22 4EZ. I enclose a cheque made payable to NW Region of U3As for £5 per person.

I expect to attend                      the lecture only                          both, but as observer at AGM      
(tick one)                      formal delegate AGM only                          both, formal delegate at AGM

## 4. U3A Shared Learning Projects

What are they? That is for us to define ourselves! In many parts of the country, projects have taken place between either individual U3As or several U3As working with a body like an art gallery or museum to carry out a specific piece of research or produce a visitor leaflet. That work probably would not have got done without the U3A 'labour and expertise'. Has your U3A been involved in any such scheme? If so, please tell me about it. I am your North West Coordinator for such projects and shall be meeting with other contacts in London this March and I do want to 'sing of' our successes.

This is however not the only format that shared learning can and does take. Arguably most of what we do in our U3As is shared learning where the expertise comes from various members helping each other, say, in a language group. That is of course very valuable. On a different scale, I attended superb shared learning at a History Day in Penrith led by a series of in house 'experts'.

What perhaps distinguishes more formal Shared Learning Projects (SLPs) is a more permanent 'product' like display boards, visitor leaflets, a published piece of research and/or a presentation (perhaps recorded?) Does this need an external 'partner'? With an external 'partner', it is very apparent that the project has been completed and is then out in the 'community'- giving wider benefits and perhaps providing publicity to U3As. We may be able to publicise/share our projects with other U3As without an external 'partner'. Has your U3A done anything of that nature?

From the schemes done elsewhere, some factors seem to be necessary- group working (say 6-12 members) and a focused approach for a limited time span- usually 3 months max. There can be very great stimulation in this form of working which the participants remember as very rewarding for long after.

In the North West, we have networks, the Regional Committee and newsletters. We do have means of tapping into a vast pool of enthusiasm and expertise. So, let's see what we can do!! If you have ideas, please contact me- e mail is best for me (or by letter/phone), then we can have a chat. The Third Age Trust does offer to assist with some costs, like publication too.

Mary-Ann Renton. Clitheroe U3A ([maryann.renton2@btinternet.com](mailto:maryann.renton2@btinternet.com) or 01200 422062)

## 5. A New Learning Adventure: exploring partnership between U3As and higher education. 24 March 2010

The Dept of Continuing Education, Lancaster University has been a lead partner in a project funded by the government's "Learning Revolution Transformation Fund". Together with its partner, Lancaster and Morecambe U3A it has been developing ways to open doors to older learners and exploring the benefits to be gained.

A conference will be held in the University of Lancaster Conference Centre on 23 March (Opening Dinner) and 24 March at a fee of £20.

As well as hearing about the project from project staff and partners there will be a range of presentations and discussions to include:

"Older People Learning" – Refining 'Old Age' for 21<sup>st</sup> Century – issues of policy and practice.  
Prof. Chris Phillips – Keele University

"Working with Older People" – Ageing Research

Prof. Christine Milligan, School of Health Sciences, Lancaster University.

"The U3A Perspective"

Dr. Alex. McMinn – Chairman of National Research Committee, U3A

"Key Findings of the Project Evaluation"

Prof. Keith Percy, Lancaster University.

Further details:

Janet Bunting

Dept. of Continuing Education

Lancaster University

Lancaster LA1 4YT

01524 592716

## 6. Website News

Our website, <http://NWU3A.web.officelive.com>, has been restructured to make it easier to navigate and more natural when making updates for our activities. In future items about specific activities will have their own web pages. The material from the email version of the Newsletters referring to these will be removed from the web version of the Newsletter and put on the appropriate page.

Note that our website is under the Microsoft officelive hosting arrangements and is not country specific. So for example Google will find it quite easily but NOT if you restrict to UK sites. Up to now, we find, somewhat reluctantly, that the officelive web system is very easy to set up and use. Its also free. Please save our web address in your Favourites then the geographic peculiarity is irrelevant! Suggestions for additional contents are still welcome. We plan very soon to add links to individual NW U3A websites, so if any of you have a website not listed in the National list on the Third Age trust website please let us know.

The Lancashire Link has a website which may also be interesting to you. It is <http://U3ALANCSLINK.web.officelive.com>. It is not yet well known to google et al so best to use the above as a hyperlink or put in the full address directly and not use a search engine.

## 7. Future NW U3A Events

We are planning a further trip to Jodrell Bank in the spring and a Study Day on Energy Resources with several expert speakers for the early Summer. We would still be very glad to hear suggestions from any member of a N.W. U3A. Please let any member of NWREC know by email, phone, or personally about your idea or use the 'contact us' form on our website!

John Ellison

NWREC Secretary & Newsletter Editor

24.01.2010