

Cestria U3A at Chester- le-Street

Website – <https://cestria.u3asite.uk>

June 2026 Newsletter

Monthly Meetings

1st Wednesday
Cornerstones
Methodist Chapel
9.30 – 10.00 Pre
Meeting Coffee &
Chat –Prompt 10.00 -
Noon Main Meeting

Speakers

3rd June.....
Elvis – who was the
real Elvis.....
Stephanie Yearnshire

1st July.....
The Japanese
experience – culture &
lifestyle with a display
of artifacts.....
Denise Howe

5th Aug..... Trekking
to the Top of the
World- Everest &
Annapurna base
camp.....
Malcolm Johnson

2nd September.....
History of Forensic
Science linked to DNA
.....John Yearnshire

Chairman's Corner

As I write this, the sun is shining again after raining all day yesterday. Bank Holiday weather!

However, summer should be on its way and we can look forward to longer days and better weather. Talking of looking forward, there is our u3a's 20th Anniversary coming up on the 10th June. Food, music and a beetle drive are all lined up for the celebration.

A lot of people have been involved one way or another in setting up the celebration which does not mean that the responsibility and effort has fallen on just one, but shared around a bit. We do still look for others to step up in various roles if possible. Could you can help with the computer and sound system at Cornerstones for the monthly meetings? Could you help the Speaker Secretary organise the monthly talks? The more that come forward, the less each person would have to do, and it would be useful support for us.

Lastly, I encourage you all to keep an eye on our website and the emails that are sent out.

Have a good summer,

Mike.

From the Editor.....



Thank goodness we've reached the Summer issue of our magazine — now we can all look forward to some halcyon days in the sunshine. And what a season we have ahead of us:

Celebrating Twenty Years of Our u3a

On June 10th, we'll be marking two decades of our u3a with a joyful afternoon of tea, music, and games. It's a milestone worth savouring. Over the last twenty years we've built a remarkably strong and spirited group, where friendships have flourished and countless shared moments have shaped who we are. Long may we continue to grow, learn, and prosper together.

Regional Events to Enjoy

Our regional u3a is also keeping us busy, hosting a series of outdoor events across May, June, and July. These are always popular, and well worth a look. Details can be found at: northumbria.u3asite.uk

Sharing Events and Discoveries

One of the joys of our u3a is how we share experiences with each other. Recently, Robert Berry passed on news of an event at Chester-le-Street Library featuring one of our favourite speakers, Gary Bankhead — the local lad turned archaeological diver, honoured by Durham University. He appeared on the *Digging for Britain* series, where they featured Roman finds from the River Wear near Sunderland.

A number of our members were able to attend, and it's exactly the sort of occasion many of us might have missed without someone spreading the word. So if you spot something that might interest our u3a, **please get in touch — and we'll share the news!**

.....Christine Logan

Cote Brasserie.....Lunch Group.....March



My wife and I book for any lunch which we see Anne Lanigan has organised, because her choices and organisation are always so good.

We reached the outside of the restaurant, calling itself Cote, in a taxi (it was raining) and I telephoned to check that Cote was indeed Cote Brasserie. The gent who answered had never heard of Cote Brasserie and suggested I look elsewhere! In view of the weather and, indeed, the chances of there

being both a Cote and a Cote Brasserie close together we went inside and were met by a more managerial lady arrived and showed us through to the room Anne had booked. Then everything ran smoothly.



The meal itself was excellent for both of us - different dishes each - and the service very good; the wines were spot on and we very much enjoyed the company of Mike and Joy whom we had met at a previous lunch.

All in all, it was an excellent experience - exactly what we expected and which will prompt us to keep on coming. **Well done Anne!!**

.....David Venn

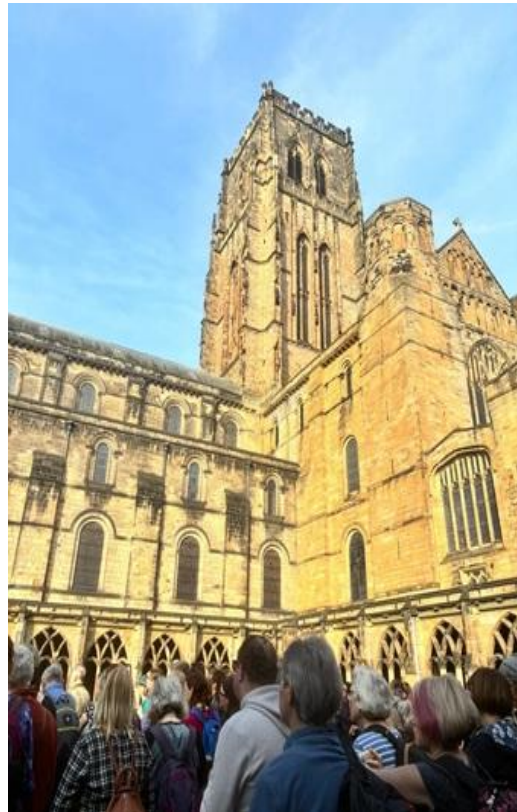
Cuddy's Corse Chester-le-Street to Durham Cathedral March 2026.....



Six members of our Friday Walking Group decided to take part in this yearly pilgrimage in March. Ten miles later and with sore feet they decided it was a wonderful experience and well worth the effort.



Cuddy's Corse (Cuthbert's Coffin) is a one day pilgrimage route in County Durham, following the final journey of St. Cuthbert's body from Chester-le-Street to Durham Cathedral. The path follows the River Wear, via Finchale Priory to mark the saint's resting place before his final burial.



.....Marilyn Fox

The u3a Regional Quiz.....

Once again held at the excellent Sunnyside Club on 4th March, this proved to be another lively and memorable afternoon. When the date was first announced, I thought, "Plenty of time for a bit of swotting." But—as so often happens—time slipped away, and my grand plans for revision amounted to very little!



Despite that, the event was wonderfully attended, with teams travelling from across the region, including from as far away as Berwick-upon-Tweed. The quiz itself covered an impressive range of subjects: General Knowledge, British Food, Name the Flower, and of course the ever-popular Music Round.

The winning team, brilliantly named 'Terminally Bewildered' (though clearly anything but!), came from Prudhoe and achieved a remarkable score of 93. Our own team, the 'Roman Campers' (Jennifer, Judith, Steve and Christine), put in a strong performance with 79 points.

A special mention must go to 'Sir' Steve Willen—a title well earned. He enrolled our team, provided transport, and even baked a deliciously healthy cake, which is a prerequisite for taking part in the quiz. A true knight in shining armour for the day.

Warm thanks are also due to Cecilia Coulson and Bob Pullen from our regional u3a, whose organisation ensured everything ran smoothly. The helpers who served refreshments and presented each team's home-baked cakes so beautifully also deserve our appreciation.

A splendid afternoon all round, full of good humour, friendly competition, and the spirit that makes our u3a such a pleasure to be part of.....**Christine Logan**

The Summer of 1959.....

Who remembers the hot summer of 1959? It was the best summer, to that date, of the C20th. I was a teenager at the time; enjoying the long, warm summer days without a care in the world.

Cliff Richard, a firm favourite of mine, released his single 'Living Doll' which was excellent to sing along to and even to dance around the room; much to the consternation of other family members who thought this new-fangled music was a diabolical influence on the young. Elvis Presley was a big hit in the U.S.A., but he was a serving soldier in 1959; he had been inducted into the American Army the previous year and I remember several girls being distraught at the thought that he might lose his life in service to his country.

The Mini-Minor came on stream, cost being £496 19s 2d (including purchase tax) in the summer of that year. A family car for under £500 made the Mini a very popular purchase. It was many years later that I bought my first second hand Mini and I loved it despite the poor heater and sliding windows. No 'sat nav' or seat belts in those days!

Seaside holidays were a real treat, and I went to a caravan park at Cayton Bay near Scarborough for a week. It was an upmarket experience as camping was the norm for my family. The caravan was well appointed and the entertainment, including a knobbly knees for men contest, was in a class of its own. I particularly remember the ballroom which seemed huge; the anticipation of being asked to dance and the disappointment when I had to dance with my two young cousins seemed earth shattering at the time. The Barbie doll was launched in 1959 which was a massive success and still is to this day. Of course, I was uninterested in dolls as I considered myself to be far too sophisticated. Such confidence at age sixteen going on seventeen!

'A Summer Place' was the go-to film of that year, considered to be sexually extreme, but of its time. The music was haunting, suited the film and still popular today. However, some may have preferred the film 'Ben Hur' which was an action movie. Buddy Holly, along with his colleagues was killed in a plane crash in 1959. A school friend of mine was a big fan of Buddy Holly, and she wept over his photograph for ages, refusing to be consoled. 'The Day the Music Died' written and sung by Don McLean came out in 1971 which was in memory of Buddy Holly and his colleagues.

Does anyone remember the T.V. programmes 'Rawhide' and 'Bonanza'? I preferred 'Juke Box Jury', because I liked to keep abreast of the hit parade, along with my peer group. Tyne Tees television was new that year, introducing popular programmes such as 'The One O'Clock' show featuring local personalities such as Bobby Thompson who then went on to have his own show. However, in 1959 England did very well in the cricket – winning all 5 test matches against India.

My teenage world was one of sunbathing (no factor 30, 40, or 50 in those days), chatting to friends about boys, dancing, fashion etc. I was making the most of that summer because in the Autumn I would be starting work.

Hope you enjoyed going down memory lane and have a fabulous summer of 2026 everyone..... **Best Wishes Hettie Aston**

A Spring-Bright Visit to Lumley Castle.....



Thanks to Margaret Bozic, our u3a enjoyed a wonderful guided tour of Lumley Castle. The morning was bright but decidedly cold, yet our guide — the ever-engaging Phil Reilly, both tour guide and business manager — kept the chill at bay. His enthusiastic and humorous anecdotes brought the castle's 600 years of history vividly to life, from its noble residents to its more spiritual occupants.

We were treated to a fascinating wander through the castle, including a few sneaky previews of rooms not normally open to the public, which added a lovely sense of privilege to the experience.

The perfect finale came in the warmth of the Castle Library Bar, where we relaxed over complimentary coffees, teas, and sweet treats — a cosy contrast to the crisp morning air outside.

It was an excellent trip, full of character and charm. If you haven't tried it yet, it's well worth adding to your list.

Thank you, Margaret, for such a great idea.....

Groups Matter.....Photography for fun



This is a new group meeting in the Eardulph Room at the Parish Centre, last Monday of the month.

We are focused on enjoying photography using our phones and learning different techniques. We follow a list of topics changing every month and members post their photos on WhatsApp and we look at them on screen together.

Members have posted some beautiful and interesting photos and it really is fun!!

.....Elisabeth Came

CAMEO meeting 20th April.....



Members old and new, friends, relatives, not to forget the tea ladies gathered together for a very convivial afternoon.....**Watch out for the next one!!**



The Birtley BelgiansElisabethville



In 1915 to overcome the shortage of artillery shells, munitions factories were built across the country known as National Projectile Factories (NPF). Armstrong-Whitworth were commissioned to build two factories in Birtley, one to produce shells and the other cartridge cases.

An extraordinary agreement was made between the British and Belgian Governments; Belgian officials would manage the NPF and recruit a Belgian workforce of experienced men withdrawn from the front, civilian refugees, wounded and disabled soldiers. To house the Belgian workers and their families, a unique settlement was built called Elisabethville. The Birtley Heritage Group came along to our monthly meeting in April to tell us the story.....

Val Greaves was to do the presentation, but woke up that morning with no voice. Luckily a fellow member of the group, Jean Atkinson, was able to save the day. Jean was such an empathetic speaker, we were engrossed, you could hear a pin drop, as she told the tale of Elisabethville, the bravery, the happiness and the sadness, the camaraderie and the acceptance by local people. Things that make us so proud to have had Elisabethville right on our doorstep.



.....**Pictures and info courtesy of Birtley Heritage Group**

Committee 2026

- **Chair:** Mike Parker
- **Treasurer:** Tony Morrell
- **Secretary:** Angela Hamilton
- **Groups:** Anne Lanigan
- **Membership:** Pat Rule
- **Newsletter:** Christine Logan
- **Speakers:** Margaret Chilver
- **Website:** Steve Willan
- Kathleen Atkinson
- Rachael Burton
- Lorna Thompson

Contacts for the above from our White Cards or website.

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Cestria u3a at Chester-Le-Street is a Registered Charity no1163334

Cestria u3a (University of the Third Age) is an autonomous, self-help organisation run by the voluntary efforts of its members. It is a member of the Third Age Trust (a Registered Charity) which is its national support and advisory body. The word "university" is used in its original sense of people coming together to share and pursue learning in all its formt aims to encourage and enable older people no longer in full-time paid employment to help each other to share their knowledge educational, cultural, recreational, physical and social.

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