

WEAR SIDE



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The University of the Third Age

14th January 1994

Dear

**MEETING - REDHILLS HOTEL, DURHAM
11.00am - Tuesday 25th January 1994**

Following our telephone conversations I would confirm that all six U.3.A's in the North plus Alan Willey will be represented. Coffee will be available before 11.00am and I suggest the following as the basis for an agenda :-

- (1) Introductions with a brief precis of the background of each group.
- (2) Thoughts on what we could do to help each other.
- (3) What do we expect from National and can we help them?
- (4) Should we accept any responsibility to start new U.3.A's?
- (5) Is there a case for a "North Group"? If so where and when do we meet?
- (6) Any other business.

There is scope for either a social or working lunch.

Yours sincerely

John Lloyd

cc	Marjorie Lewis	Ponteland Leisure Learning
	Mary Morrison	Tynedale Leisure Learning
	Shirley Mason	Durham U.3.A.
	Mrs W Sedgwick	Stockton U.3.A.
	Audrey Williams	Darlington U.3.A.
	Alan Willey	N.E.C.

Meeting of U.3.A's in the North - at Redhills Hotel, Durham

Tuesday 25.01.94 at 11.00am

Chairman was John Lloyd of Wearside U.3.A.

Members of U.3.A. attending - representing their area groups were as follows :-

Darlington

Audrey Williams
Marjorie Allen
Kathy Leroy

Durham

Shirley Mason
Derek Sowell
John Clarke

Ponteland

Marjorie Lewis
John Woollett

Stockton

Win Sedgwick
Gwen Milliner
Mary Cooper
Jack Mulgrew

Tynedale

Mary Morrison
Janet Elsworth
Betty Bamber
Alan Willey (also N.E.C.)

Wearside

John Lloyd
Audrey Reed
Betty Dyos

Each group was invited to give a precis of the activities of its individual U.3.A.

Wearside

The different and varied groups were described - the keynote being informality. Subs are £5 and there are 49 paid members. (with others attending). Wearside is a comparatively new U.3.A. - about 9 months old.

Durham

11 groups are now established. They also have a lectures programme reflecting the University City. Subs are £7 - again a new U.3.A.

Stockton

Started in 1986 with about 50 members and now has 129. There are 18 groups and the subs are up to £14.

Darlington

This U.3.A. is another fairly new one, being about 18 months old. Starting with 16 members there are now 45. Subs are £7 and meetings are mainly in members' homes but they do rent the Arts Centre for some meetings. They have a lunch once a month.

Tynedale

Tynedale began in 1983 and prefers the title Tynedale Leisure Learning as 'University' could put some people off. There are about 200 members and 70 is the average number attending monthly meetings! There are 26 special interest groups with a wide range of activities. Subs are £5,

Ponteland

Ponteland U.3.A. is a very new group. 75 turned up for their first public meeting and hopefully 30-40 will decide to be paid up members. They had also used 'Leisure Learning' rather than 'University' to avoid any possible 'turn off'.

49 ?
129
45
200
30

453 480

A very energetic, helpful and informative discussion followed, with different groups exchanging information and ideas and experiences.

The main topics were as follows ;-

1. Payment of speakers
Some U.3.A's pay speakers on occasions up to about £20. Others offer a donation to a specified charity and one group asked members to contribute when this was appropriate. Some ask their own members to speak; some relied on speakers who are free, eg Police, Social Services etc.
2. Contact between groups and L.E.A. or organisations like Age Concern
On the whole U.3.A. members felt there was no real interest or participation. Some organisations may feel we are in competition. L.E.A's are under pressure regarding funding, charges etc, and they run their own classes, groups etc, but the cuts are biting.
3. News Sheets / Communications
Some gave members information/sheets monthly, others once a year. Some U.3.A. group leaders or conveners talk about future activities at each monthly meeting, and have a plan or programme as far ahead as is possible, but this varies, as expected, with the differing and varied activities. One U.3.A had a social host or hostess at each meeting who looked after new members and introduced them to the group. All the established U.3.A's had "new" members at most meetings.
4. An important question came from a new U.3.A. - How do you set up a group?
John from Wearside described how he set about it. Others made contributions about how they started, and how they set about getting volunteers as leaders etc. Different talents and interests do come forward and can then be used, but all U.3.A's are diverse and will develop as such.
5. Can we help new U.3.A's?
One suggested a pack of information and hints, others already participate in visiting new U.3.A's and advising them. This kind of practical help is invaluable. Local help is the best way to support new groups.

6. Lack of organisation in Central Office was discussed. Experiences included a phone call to Central Office answered by a child and a cheque sent taking 5 months go through the bank. Members comments reflected a "headquarters down there and we are up here". Some asked "why pay our capitation fee"? The newspaper received criticism, but one member would definitely miss it.

Alan Willey, N.E.C. member clarified the situation in Central Office. It is situated upstairs in a chapel in Brixton; it is open 4 days and it's staff are all part-timers. Central Office is hardpressed and has no money BUT

- a study is being made concerning the running of Central Office at this moment. A business plan is being prepared for the September 1994 conference.

N.B. Alan emphasised that U.3.A's are growing rapidly and outstripping Central Office resources.

7. It was agreed that within the group mutual help should be considered. Initially names of speakers could be exchanged and each U.3.A. would suggest at least three. The possibility of joint activities would be considered. A possible name for the group was touched on as Tyne Tees and Wear but could be settled at the next meeting.

8. The meeting concluded with a unanimous acceptance that the Northern Groups of U.3.A., as represented today should meet again. It was suggested that each meeting should be organised and arranged by each area U.3.A. in turn. Darlington volunteered to organise the next meeting for

Tuesday May 10th 1994 at 10.30am.

It was agreed that **Redhills Hotel** was the most suitable venue. It was agreed that three representatives from each U.3.A. was an advantage and they need not be the same individuals provided there was some continuity.