



# Northern Ireland Region Newsletter

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Welcome to the second Northern Ireland Region Newsletter.

In this issue I shall say something about the Northern Ireland Trustee and the Educational and Development Contacts or EDCs.

## The Northern Ireland Trustee

The Trustee is nominated by our U3As and appointed by the Third Age Trust. The Trustee has many responsibilities, the main ones being:

- To give a voice to the Region and ensure that their views are known to the National Executive Committee (NEC);
- Represent the Trust and its views to the Regional Committee and all U3A members;
- Report on the Region's activities to the NEC;
- Provide the Trust's treasurer with an annual budget and monitor expenditure; and
- Help with both forming new U3As and helping struggling U3As.

Our current Trustee is Mavis Turner and many of you will have met her as I



know she has visited a number of U3As. The Regional Trustee is an ex-officio member of the Northern Ireland Regional Executive Committee (NIREC). Mavis has made the following comments.

"I am now coming towards the end of my second year representing Northern Ireland on the NEC. NEC meetings are usually held bimonthly, over two days, which gives time to focus on development issues and regional matters.

At each meeting there is usually a financial report by the Treasurer whenever he gives a detailed account of the year to date and answers questions from Trustees. With a very limited knowledge of financial matters there has been much for me to learn, and I continue to do so as part of the Finance and General Purpose Committee, one of the sub-committees chaired by the Treasurer.

I have had responsibility of submitting an annual budget for our Region which allows us to manage some of our activities at a local level.

I have enjoyed being a member of the Development sub-committee, chaired by Barbara Lewis. Being a member of this sub-committee has made me aware of the challenge of raising awareness of the movement in our community, and what U3A has to offer people.

Being a Trustee gives me an opportunity to benefit from the experiences of other Trustees, as well as being able to contribute to Trust decisions and policy making and how that would affect our Region. It also provides a mechanism to be heard

about any concerns our U3As may have.

I find being a Trustee a rewarding experience, and feel privileged to represent all our 19 U3As. It is also wonderful to meet so many retired, but not retiring people, whose lives are being enriched by U3A."

### **Education and Development Contacts (EDCs)**

The main purpose of our EDCs is to assist with the start-up of new U3As and to help existing U3As as required. They have close working relationships with the Trustee, the NIREC and the Trust.

The main tasks for the EDCs are to:

- Follow up initial requests about starting up new U3As in discussion with the NIREC;
- Maintain regular contact with the steering committee of a new U3A to ensure that they have all the information and help that they need to become a recognised U3A;
- Ensure that neighbouring U3As are kept up to date, and enlist their help as and when appropriate;

A small development team has been put in place to help with setting up new U3As and consists of the Trustee, the EDCs, Sandra Foster and Ann Hayes.

Our two EDCs are Lila Jackson and Jacqui McNarry.

Lila became an EDC in April 2010. This is what Lila has to say.

"Since becoming an EDC I have been directly involved in the setting up of new U3As in Lisburn, Newcastle

(Shimna) and Armagh. Comber and Omagh have been targeted as other areas in which to establish U3As.

Other U3As visited were East Antrim (who were in the process of acquiring full membership), Crossmaglen (beautiful in the snow but difficult for locals to negotiate the icebound lanes), South Tyrone, Sperrin, and Upper Bann.

Having met with a group from Monaghan U3A they asked for information about how we run our U3As in Northern Ireland and I have given it help and advice. So cross border communication is on-going.

I have taken part in local radio broadcasts, and talked to a men's Probus club.

It is interesting and educational to travel through the province meeting members, seeing the activities and interest groups, enjoying the hospitality, admiring the scenery, and making many new friends.

It is good to see that U3As in adjoining



geographical areas are intermingling, at present for social functions, but with the opportunity to exchange of ideas. I hope that there will be many and varied future events throughout the Northern Ireland Region. I look forward to them all."

Jacqui was appointed at our Autumn Meeting on 27 October 2010. Here is what she has to say about being an EDC.

“My first outing was in December to observe the initial meeting in Lisburn, when the decision to start a U3A was taken and a steering committee formed. I was thrown in at the deep end when Lila took ill and I was asked to chair the steering committee meeting.



This was the beginning of a voyage of discovery as I soon found out that I was required to give talks and take meetings. Rather than take panic attacks, I decided that Lila and I should try to be prepared for all occasions!

In January, after we spent several days gathering information and discussing formats, I prepared agenda, Powerpoint presentations and scripts that could be used by any of us. The NIREC agreed to the purchase of the necessary equipment and Lila and I have used it over the last six months. I have been involved with Armagh in setting up their U3A, and will no doubt be at Comber and Omagh in the Autumn when we hope to set up further new U3As.

I am now looking forward to continuing to spread the word that the: 'The U3A is here. We are a choice. We are worthwhile.'”

I plan to produce another Regional Newsletter towards the end of the year. It might be nice to hear from some of the U3As about what you have been doing. Or, if anyone has any ideas about issues that they would like to see in the Newsletter, then please get in touch.

This Newsletter will be posted on our new Regional Website <http://u3ani.info/> so please do encourage your members to look for it there.

In the meantime I hope you all enjoy whatever you are doing during the summer.

Sandra Foster  
Secretary to the NI Region  
July 2011