

u3a members take over Hadrian's Wall



The majesty

and heritage of Hadrian's Wall was brought to life for hundreds of u3a members in a festival of creativity.

One thousand nine hundred years of history was celebrated when members from across the UK descended on the World Heritage Site for Off The Wall, a day packed full of activity.

The u3a movement brings together older adults who are no longer in full time work to develop new skills, make friends and have fun.

The Festival of Learning, which was based around The Sill, Northumberland, included guided walks, cycle rides and tours of the spectacular remains of the Vindolanda Roman fort.

There were fascinating talks by academics Dr Rob Collins and Dr Tony Wilmott, who have spent their entire careers studying Hadrian's Wall and the area surrounding it and were delighted to pass on their knowledge to enthused u3a members.

The Wall's cultural impact was at the forefront of the event, with opportunities to learn about Roman food, art, circle dancing, creative writing workshops and even hear the Northumbrian small pipes.

Closer studies were made of artefacts usually found in the Discovery Museum, Newcastle, which were brought to The Sill specially for the event.

Ann Keating, from Edinburgh u3a, helped organise Off the Wall. She says: "Hadrian's Wall resonates with people because, through the ages, it has inspired them to write plays, stories, poetry and make art.

"The history and the archaeology are fascinating. People realise the strength of the Roman Empire, what the Romans did and the power they had. The Roman influence on our culture was quite dramatic.

"Last year marked the 1,900th anniversary of the wall being built, and that sparked the idea for Off The Wall and led to a fantastic festival of creativity.

"It was a wonderful event."

The wall extends from coast to coast across Northumberland and Cumbria - from Wallsend on the River Tyne in the east to Bowness-on-Solway in the west, and once marked the northwestern border of the Roman Empire.

Off the Wall is just one of the many exciting events in the u3a calendar. Members can join for an average of less than £20 per year and have access to hundreds of interest groups – from Yoga to Egyptology. [Join u3a.](#)