

## Morpeth & District u3a – January 2026 Newsletter

Happy New Year to you all, welcome to the first newsletter of 2026.

Thank you for accepting me as Chair, I am looking forward to the challenge of working with the committee and continuing to support the work of all of the groups and hopefully see further growth and development within our u3a.

The most important thing that I have to say is to thank Steve for all of the work that he has done over the past 5 years as Chair. I am sure that you will all join me in this and wish him all the best for the future. I am very grateful that Steve has offered to stay on as vice-chairman for the next few months at least.

As Chair, I decided to make the effort and look at the Northumbria Region and National u3a websites. It was very interesting and I would recommend anyone with a bit of spare time having a look. I have picked out a few highlights from each to share with you, to try to whet your appetites, see below.

The next general meeting is on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January at St James's, when we will hear about The Families of Wallington Hall from Liz Finch. Note the change in date from the handbook.

Just as a point of interest for anyone with hearing aids that can link to a Loop system; I enquired about whether there is such a thing at St James's and the answer was "No". However, there are 5 individual sets, that do work and will link with your hearing aids and amplify the microphone. If you are interested in giving them a go, please ask me at the beginning of the meeting and I will give you one. It will definitely be on a "first come, first served" basis.

Please remember to bring a cup if you are staying for refreshments at General Meetings.

Lorraine Griffith, Chair

### **Regional and National Information /**

Regional      [northumbria.u3asite.uk](http://northumbria.u3asite.uk)

A Special Day at Ushaw Historic House – 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026. A summer school type experience open to all u3a members. Click on the **Events** button and you will find the information about this day. The information about tickets will be on the website before the end of January.

Skydiving, any would-be daredevils out there – go into **News** and have a look

Any golfers who might be interested in a Regional Golf Event at High Gosforth Park Golf club in July 2026, go into the **Events** and scroll down under the article about the Ushaw House day and the link is on the right-hand side

National      [u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk)

From the Home page, click on **What We Do** and then **Learn** and you get into a fascinating section with links to 6 separate sections which could easily catch your interest. One that particularly interested me was the Internet Groups Online (IGO). There is an IGO Fair in February and the booking started early in January, so again possibly short notice but might be worth a look.

## News from the Groups – January 2026

### **Art Group**



We meet at Pegswood Community Hub, Longhirst Road, Pegswood NE61 1XF most Monday afternoons during the year between 1.30-3.30 pm. During the summer break we usually work outdoors at various local venues. There is some car parking on the site and facilities to make tea/coffee etc.

The Art Group continues to thrive, enriched by the contributions of new and not so new members, one of whom painted this lovely picture of an owl.

If you would like to join in, please email me Cuthbert Regan in advance –

### **Art Appreciation Group**

The Art Appreciation Group normally meets on the penultimate Thursday of the month at 2.00pm at Morpeth Methodist Church. After the presentations, we stay for tea and biscuits and discussion.

Our January meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> will be a film entitled “Masters of Art – Rafael”. In February we meet on the 19<sup>th</sup> when we will have a presentation on Edward Burne-Jones.

If you would like more information, please contact the group leader Sally Keith. I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

### **Book Group 2**

Book Group 2 meets on the second Tuesday of the month at each other’s homes

The person who is hosting the meeting generally chooses the book for that month. We usually read fiction both modern and classical with the occasional biography. We have a membership of 6 but would welcome a new person as often someone is on holiday or has another commitment. Tea and biscuits are enjoyed following our discussion.

Jean Robinson

### **Book Group 3**

We are a friendly group meeting on the first Thursday afternoon of every month at The Joiners in Morpeth. I should say we mostly drink tea or coffee! This month we read “The Long and Winding Road” by Lesley Pearse. New members would be very welcome. Why not come along and see if you would like to join us.

### **Book Group 4**

Our meetings are still held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 2pm in members' homes. We read an eclectic mixture of fiction and occasionally non-fiction and try to ring the changes to "challenge" ourselves. We missed December's meeting because so many members had other (Christmas) commitments, but are looking into the New Year and getting back into a routine with our usual Thursday afternoon meetings. Happy New Year to all.

Jennifer Cryer

### **Book Group 5**

Book Group 5 meets on the second Thursday of each month at 2pm at Café des Amis where we are well looked after. This month we read Ali Smith's "Autumn". It was not a popular book because of its language and story value.

Barbara Bisset

### **Craft – Jennifer Sinton**



The Craft Group meets on a Monday in the Sun Inn at Morpeth at 2pm. As the Sun Inn has been very busy over Christmas, we have met once in a member's house and then had to cancel because of the snow & ice, so the 12<sup>th</sup> January meeting was our first back to normal. One of our group has been busy knitting cardigans over the holiday for her twin grandchildren, a girl and boy born in 2025, see photos of the two cardigans.



### **Foodies Lunch Club**

Our lunches usually take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month (12.30 pm for a 1 pm start). Our next lunch will be at the Savoy by Le Raaj, Wellway, Morpeth on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January.

The Lunch Club is open to any of our u3a members so I look forward to seeing regular and new members.

Pam Turner

### **French Conversation**

Bonne Annee a tous. If you understand this and would like to keep up your French, why not join us? All levels of French are acceptable as our aim is to help each other to improve and expand our vocabulary and confidence.

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 10.30 am at my house. We do some reading, translating, writing, working on vocabulary, chatting and play word or number games with the conversation in French of course. I could take another member, so please get in touch if you are interested. Our next meeting will take place on the first Wednesday of February and you will be reminded of the meeting by email.

Lena Walsh

### **Games Group**

This Group meets at Bedlington Christian Fellowship Chapel, Vulcan Place, Bedlington NE22 5DF from 2pm until 4pm on the second Monday of each month. It is an opportunity to have fun, laugh a lot and enjoy good

company, while challenging yourself with a wide range of games. If you have a game you particularly want to play, bring it with you and we will have a go.

If it helps, the Number 2 bus from Morpeth passes the Chapel, just ask to get off at Beech Grove, Bedlington.

If you want any more information, please contact [Lorraine Griffiths](#)

### **Garden Group**

Our meetings take place at 2pm in Hepscott Parish Hall on the second Wednesday of each month apart from of June and July when we plan some garden visits and August when there is no meeting. We usually have a speaker followed by refreshments, so we request £3 per person to cover hall hire, speaker fee and refreshments.



Our Christmas Social was lovely, making wreaths or table decorations, with a quiz, refreshments and festive treats. The January meeting was a talk by Gordon Beakes titled “Mushrooms and toadstools – the deadly and delightful” and the next one will be on 11<sup>th</sup> February with Geoff Hughes talk on Jesmond Dene.

We are planning a joint trip with Mid-Northumberland to the Himalayan Gardens near Ripon on 8<sup>th</sup> May – we estimate £26 for entry and coach – please sign up and pay at a Garden Group or general monthly meeting.

We are also planning trips in June and July – a local one with car-sharing and one further afield with coach travel – details to follow shortly.

If you need further information, please contact [Sally Ennis](#)

### **German Conversation**

Our group meets once a month at my house. We use a mixture of material available on the internet to improve vocabulary and understanding and finish with either general conversation or a member talking about a topic. It is not a class, it is light-hearted and a fun way of improving language skills.

Two new members joined the group recently and our group is now full. Anyone interested in joining us will be placed on a waiting list. For more information, please contact, [Erika Fox](#)

### **History Group**

The History Group continues to meet at 2.00 pm on the last Thursday of the month at a member’s home. We didn’t meet in December and our next meeting is on 29<sup>th</sup> January when we will hold our Christmas party. We have a buffet and one of our members sets a quiz.

Our group is currently full, but we operate a waiting list for those who wish to join. For more information, please contact [Irene Foggett](#)

## **Music for Pleasure**

The group meets in a member's home on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 2pm. A different subject or genre of music is chosen every month and members bring a CD or tape with a piece they think fits that subject. As you can imagine, we have a great variety of music and this leads to lots of discussion.

If you would like to join us, please contact me for more information. [Anne Van Der Willik](#).

## **Play Reading Group**

This group meets to read plays. It is much more fun to read plays out loud in a group than to read them on your own. We do try to read a wide range of plays and meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 2 pm at my house.

Our source of plays is the library in Newcastle and we read a full length play over two sessions. A resume of the first half is given before embarking on the second half so that we are all reminded of what has already taken place.

We have just finished reading "How the other half loves" by Alan Ayckbourn and thoroughly enjoyed it, and will be starting on a new play in February. The group is fairly strong in numbers at the moment but, if you are interested, please get in touch with me and I will put you on a waiting list. [Lena Walsh](#)

## **Poetry and Prose**

Unfortunately, our November meeting was cancelled at the last minute due to a power cut at our meeting venue. But we met in December to share our readings and thoughts about "Christmas and the New Year". As always, a wide selection of poems – and seasonal mince pies to go with them. We also agreed our topics for our meetings in 2026.

In January we will be talking about "Weather and the Elements"; in February it's "Colours"; in March it's "Animals" and in April it's "Easter".

We meet at 2 pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at a member's home. The group is full, but if you are interested and would like to know more or to put your name on the waiting list, please contact [Mary Christian](#)

## **Quiz Group**

My name is Becky Atkinson and I have now taken over as Group Leader from Moira Quinn.

Our group meets every month on the second Thursday of the month at 2pm at St. Christopher's Morpeth, NE61 2BE. We are always happy to welcome new faces for a fun and friendly gathering. There is always plenty of space so do come along and try it out.

There will also be another North Northumbria regional quiz at Sunnyside Social Club, NE16 5NA, on Wednesday the 4<sup>th</sup> March at 1pm.

For more information, please contact [Becky Atkinson](#)

## **Scrabble Group (Monday)**

Meetings are fortnightly (every alternate Monday at 9.45 am), usually in a member's home and we would welcome any new people. Please contact [Kathy Smith](#) if interested

## **Scrabble Group (Tuesday)**

The Group meets at the Anchor Housing Complex in Kirkhill, Morpeth on Tuesday afternoons at 2pm (except when the U3A has its monthly meetings). We are an enthusiastic group, and would welcome new members to come and share our enjoyment of this fascinating word game.

Please note that for the foreseeable future the contact for this group will be Lorraine Griffiths

### **Tai Chi Group**

We are just starting a new block of 12 sessions which begin on January 14<sup>th</sup>. We do a mixture of Tai Chi and Qigong focusing on health and relaxation. We also look at some aspects of Chinese culture and tradition that underpin Tai Chi. Sessions are fun, sociable and very relaxing. There is an expectation that members can attend all or most of the sessions in a block. The group for the first block in 2026 is currently full but we do operate a waiting list - please contact me if you would like to be added. We'll make every effort to accommodate you. We meet every Wednesday at 10.30 am at St Christopher's at Kirkhill.

Contact Steve Morris

### **Theatre Group**

The next Theatre visit is to see “**Burlesque Cabaret**”, an evening of glitz, glamour and dance! at the **Tyne Theatre Newcastle on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February at 7.30 pm**. The total cost will be £48 including coach travel. Those going, can you please let me have the correct amount either cash or cheque payable to Morpeth u3a in a named envelope and bring to the January monthly meeting. We will be meeting as usual on the night at **Morpeth Bus Station at 6.30 pm**. For information about the Group - Cynthia or Marion

### **Walking Groups**

#### 5 Mile Walking Group

The 5 Mile Group, which meets at Morpeth Rugby Club car park for a 9.30am start on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, will be commencing this year's programme on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in February. We share cars, bring a small snack and tend to wear boots in case of mud! It's a small and friendly group, so why don't you come and walk with us? Everyone is welcome. Contact Eileen Harber

#### Amblers

We meet on the first Thursday of each month at 10am at Morpeth Rugby Club and usually share cars to go to the start of the walk. We walk about 3 miles at a leisurely pace and usually go for refreshments or lunch afterwards at somewhere nearby.

The weather kept most of us in on 8<sup>th</sup> January, when we had a short walk along the river at Bedlington, so we hope the weather will be much improved on our next walk on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February. We are parking on the coast just north of the country park entrance and walking along the beach to the nature reserve at Druridge Bay, stopping for coffee at the café before returning to the cars. Lunch will be at the Widdrington Inn.

Looking forward to seeing everyone and of course any newcomers. For more information, please contact Jackie Jones.