

Morpeth & District u3a – April 2026 Newsletter

Welcome to April's newsletter. The longer days and brighter sunlight make for a more positive outlook on life and I hope that you are all feeling the joy of the season. I also hope that you are all excited about the new groups springing up around us. **T.U.G.S.** starts on Friday the 1st of May at 1pm, there are still a couple of spaces left, if anyone wishes to join. **Coffee Club** is going to start on Thursday 14th May from 10.30am until about 11.30am at St James Community Centre, Well Way, Morpeth. Everyone is welcome and you don't need to book. Final decision about cost is yet to be made, so bring a few pounds in your pocket. There will be coffee, cake or biscuits and plenty of opportunity to chat and get to know each other. **NBB** is still in the planning stage, so keep your eyes open for news about that. If you are interested in a **non-fiction/autobiography/current affairs group**, please contact Chris Tipple on before the end of April and if there is enough interest, he will arrange something.

We are looking for someone to support Lena Walsh in her work on the website, if you have experience of websites and a bit of time and enthusiasm to share please get in touch with either myself or Lena, via the website contacts.

Our next general meeting is on the 28th of April and our speaker is Graeme Young, who is going to speak about Bamburgh Castle. As always, please stay for a cup of coffee or tea and a biscuit after the meeting, bring your own cup if you would like to.

Lorraine Griffiths, Chair

Regional and National Information Regional <https://northumbria.u3asite.uk/>

This year's AGM will be held on Friday 24th April 2026

Time: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Venue: Bowburn Community Centre

Durham Road

Bowburn

DH6 5AT

Two resolutions will be put to the meeting as follows:

1. That the name be changed from Northumbria u3a to u3a North East Region.
2. That a new constitution be adopted.

If you are interested in reading the new constitution please email me and I will forward you a copy. For more information please see the Northumbria website.

National <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

There are some very interesting articles in the u3amatters magazine this month. For everyone who has expressed an interest in the NBB group, the article called "On Safari" about Stourbridge u3a's equivalent on page 13 is worth a read. There are also still some tickets to be had for the Summer Festival at York University on the 1st to 3rd July. Page 19 is the place to go for more information

News from the Groups – April 2026

Art Group: Cuthbert Regan



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. This beautiful picture of a lapwing was painted by one of our talented artists. If you would like to join in, please email me in advance –

Art Appreciation Group: Sally Keith

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

Our April meeting is on Thursday 23rd April when Marie Dooley will be giving a presentation entitled “Looking for Lowry”. I look forward to seeing you then.

*For more information, please contact me

Book Group 2: Jean Robinson

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.

*Please contact me for more information

Book Group 3: Judith Bell

We are a group of 8 friendly readers who meet every first Thursday afternoon of the month at The Joiners in Morpeth. We read both fiction and non-fiction and the forthcoming books are:

“The Long and Winding Road” by Lesley Pearse; ‘The Giver of Stars’ by Jojo Moyes; “Killers of the Flower Moon” by David Grann.

We would welcome new members. Why not come along and see if you would like to join us?

Book Group 4: Jennifer Cryer

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.

Book Group 5: Barbara Bisset

Book Group 5 meets on the second Thursday of each month at 2pm at Café des Amis. This month we read Kirsty Wark's "The House by the Loch". We enjoyed it and found plenty to discuss.

Craft Group: Jennifer Sinton



The Craft Group continues to meet at 2pm on a Monday in the Sun Inn at Morpeth. It was a short month for us this month as we didn't meet on Easter Monday. There is a lot of talking done at our meetings, which means we are often pulling out what we have done when we get home as we are obviously not clever enough to talk and do anything other than plain knitting! One of our group is an exceptionally good knitter which has made us choose more ambitious patterns, but this has involved her having to finish quite a few items. The picture is of a children's cardigan that she had to finish!

Foodies Lunch Club: Pam Turner

Our last lunch at Melton Constable, Seaton Sluice, was a new venue and was enjoyed by everyone.

The Sun Inn, Morpeth, is our next venue on Monday 20th April. If you haven't signed up for it yet and would like to join us, please contact Sally Ennis. As usual we are meeting at 12.30 pm for 1.00 pm. Looking forward to seeing you there.

In May we are meeting at the Black and Grey, Morpeth, which has recently been refurbished and has a new menu, so it should be worth trying it and it is local. You will be able to sign up for this lunch either at our April lunch or at the general meeting on the 28th April. Janice Parks is kindly arranging this lunch and can be contacted.

Please remember that if you pre-order food and fail to cancel in advance, the venue may still charge you as they will have ordered the food and possibly part cooked it, so will be unable to re-use it.

Many thanks to everyone for your support and co-operation. We are a friendly group and welcome new members as well as our regulars. Our lunches usually take place on the 3rd Monday of each month (12.30 pm for a 1 pm start). Hope you all enjoyed the Easter sunshine and the occasional wintry showers!

French Conversation: Lena Walsh

Parlez-vous français? 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. We are pretty full at the moment but please get in touch if you are interested and I will put you on a waiting list.

Board Games Group: Lorraine Griffiths

This Group meets at Bedlington Christian Fellowship Chapel, Vulcan Place, Bedlington NE22 5DF from 2pm until 4pm on the second Monday of each month. We have a wide selection of games on offer and free choice is back on the menu this month. There is plenty of room for more members and you will be made very welcome if you would like to join us.

*If you want any more information, please contact me.

Garden Group: Sally Ennis

Our meetings take place at 2pm in Hepscoth Parish Hall on the second Wednesday of each month apart from 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. The April meeting was an entertaining demonstration about planting up Summer pots at



Heighley Gate Garden Centre led by Diane. She was very artistic and inspiring with lots of tips and ideas about recycling – she created many fabulous floral pots, tubs & crates effortlessly but also instilling confidence for us to go forth and replicate (fingers crossed!) The Heighley Gate team are keen to make community links so we will discuss ideas for future meetings. I am delighted with this herb basket she gave me for organising the event.

The following meeting will be on the **6th May** at Hepscoth – **note change of date.**

This is our plant swap and a practical event led by Ruth.

We have planned a joint trip with Mid-Northumberland to the Himalayan Gardens near Ripon on 8th May – this is now fully booked.

We are also planning trips on 10th June to Bide-A-Wee quarry garden (£9.50) and Stanton Hall Gardens and Nursery (£2) (both between Longhorsley and Netherwitton) with car sharing; and on the 15th July to Raby Castle with coach travel involving a guided tour of the walled garden – £30.00. These will be open to all Morpeth u3a members and we are now collecting money. If you need further information or would like to pay for our Summer trips by bank transfer, please contact me.

German Conversation: Erika Fox

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.

Our group is now full but anyone interested in joining us will be placed on a waiting list. For more information, please contact me.

History Group: Irene Foggett

The History Group continues to meet at 2.00 pm on the last Thursday of the month at a member's home. At our last meeting in March we heard a talk about Henry VIII's famous ship The Mary Rose.

Our group is currently full, but we operate a waiting list for those who wish to join. We also have room for occasional visitors. For more information, please contact me.

Music for Pleasure: Anne Van Der Willik

The group meets in a member's home on the 3rd Monday of the month at 2pm, choosing a different subject or genre of music to play and share with everyone.

Last month we listened to the music of composers with names beginning with D, E and F such as Elgar, Dvorak and Delius. This month we will hear music of composers with names beginning with G, H and I.

If you would like to join us or would like more information, please contact me.

Play Reading Group: Lena Walsh

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 started reading "Round and Round the Garden" by Alan Ayckbourn

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.

Poetry and Prose: Mary Christian

The topic for the March meeting of the Group was "colours". We shared a wide selection of readings and talked about why we had chosen them. "Red" seemed to be the most popular colour, and several of us had chosen the same items to read, which left one member saying "I was going to read that" more than once! It didn't spoil our enjoyment. We meet at 2 pm on the 3rd Thursday of each month at a member's home. Topics for the next few meetings are: **-16th April - Animals; 21st May - Travelling; 18th June - Our own initials**. The group is currently full, but if you are interested and would like to know more or to put your name on the waiting list, please contact me.

Quiz Group: Becky Atkinson

Our group meets every month on the second Thursday of the month at 2pm at St. Christopher's, Morpeth NE61 2BE. There was no fooling the teams at this month's meeting. We welcomed new u3a members Bulbul and Keith to the group and marched bravely on with our new quiz book. David, our amazing quiz-master, teased our brains with some tricky questions ensuring that a fun time was had by all. We were certainly ready for a reviving cup of tea, made by Anne, and sustenance in the form of delicious cookies sent by Lorraine, despite not being present. Chris delivered a most interesting "who's who" which made us use our grey matter. We had a much calmer end to this session as last month there was a fire drill complete with both fire engines and crew!

We are always happy to welcome new faces for a fun and friendly gathering. There are always plenty of spaces, so do come and join us at our next meeting in St Christopher's at 2pm on Thursday 14th May.

Let me know if you wish to be involved or for more information.

Scrabble Group (Monday) Kathy Smith

This is a very friendly group meeting fortnightly (every alternate Monday at 9.45 am), usually in a member's home. The group continues to flourish and we have recently been joined by a new member.

*Please contact me if interested.

Scrabble Group (Tuesday) Lorraine Griffiths

The Group continues to meet at St Christopher's Court, Kirkhill, Morpeth on Tuesday afternoons from 2pm until 4.30pm, apart from when the General meeting is taking place. We would welcome new members of any ability and experience to come and join us for a pleasant, gently competitive afternoon of play.

*Please contact me for more information.

Tai Chi Group 1: Steve Morris

We are about to start a new 12 week block in early April. 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. No prior experience is needed. There is an expectation that members can attend all or most of the sessions in a block. We do operate a waiting list if the group is full - 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.

Tai Chi Group 2: Lorraine Griffiths

We meet every Thursday from 7pm until 8pm in Bedlington Christian Fellowship Chapel, Vulcan Place, Bedlington NE22 5DF. We practise a mixture of Tai Chi and Qigong exercises and are learning the movements and becoming more confident every week. Designed to improve balance, co-ordination and mental wellbeing, these exercises can be accessed by anyone and can be adapted for seated participation. All you need are comfortable clothes and flat shoes.

*If you would like any more information, please contact me.

Theatre Group: Cynthia Campbell & Marion Spinks

The next proposed theatre visit is to see **Guys and Dolls** at the **Theatre Royal Newcastle** on **Friday 24th July at 2.00pm**. The cost is £28 to include £1 tip for the driver. This is an amateur production hence the cost but said to be very good. The cost of the coach will depend on numbers going. We will take names at the next monthly meeting.

*For information about the Group - [Cynthia](#) or [Marion](#)

Walking Groups:

5 Mile Walking Group: **Eileen Harber**

The 5 Mile Group meets at Morpeth Rugby Club car park for a 9.30am start on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. 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 me for ore information.

Amblers: **Jackie Jones**



We had a lovely day for the April walk at Queen Elizabeth II country park with the sun shining on the lake, followed by lunch in the Premier Inn.

For our next walk on 7th May we will meet as usual at Morpeth Rugby Club by 10.00 am. The walk will be from the Astley Arms at Seaton Sluice. The pub has its own car park which is free as long as you put your car registration into the computer inside the pub. We will walk down to Seaton Sluice itself along the coastal path, after which we can walk on as far as we want then

come back on the other side of the main road past a number of historical pubs. We can then have refreshments or lunch at the Astley Arms, where they have a lunch menu including a carvery.

We normally 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. Looking forward to seeing everyone in May and of course any newcomers. For more information, please contact me.