

Morpeth District u3a - May 2026 Newsletter

May is well underway and although the weather is rather unpredictable, the sun when it shines is warm and invigorating. The trees are beautiful and life is abundant all around us. All in all, we are lucky to live in such a beautiful area and with warm and generous people around us.

Thinking of the beauty of our surroundings I am delighted that the inaugural trip of NBB is going ahead on Monday 18th May. At the time of writing that is in the future, although it may well have passed by the time you are reading this. Hopefully the weather will be kind and everyone will enjoy themselves and it will be the first of many.

Coffee Club had its first meeting on Thursday 14th May and I am reliably informed that I missed an excellent lemon cake and good company!

We are still 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 26th May when Ian Chisolm from St John's Ambulance will be giving us Part 2 of his First Aid course.

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/>

7 Morpeth and District members travelled down to Ushaw Historic House on Tuesday 12th May for the Regional Gathering. Car sharing worked well and we all arrived safely for a day full of activities. The work put in by the organising committee was fantastic and the venue was beautiful. The workshops were excellent, those presenting were well informed and passed on their knowledge with enthusiasm. Keep a look out for any future events, they will be worth joining.

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

There are some fascinating looking online learning events coming up over the early summer. It's well worth a look at them in the "What We Do" section on the National website, the Fusion tai chi gong particularly interests me. Please let me know if you get involved with any of them and what you think about this resource.

News from the Groups – May 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. This beautiful picture of a Bluebell Wood painted by one of our talented artists will remind us all that Spring is here! If you would like to join in, please email me in advance.

Art Appreciation Group: *Sally Keith*

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

Our May meeting is on Thursday 21st May when Simon Foley will be giving a presentation on William Morris. If you can't make this session, our last meeting of the season is on 18th June when Sue Dawson will be talking about Artists' Anniversaries.

New members are always welcome and 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.

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

Book Group 4: *Sue Davidson*

Our meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 2pm in members' homes. We read books from all genres but mainly fiction and we take turns to choose the books.

Book Group 5: *Barbara Bisset*

Book Group 5 meets every second Thursday of each month at 2pm at Café Des Amis. This month we discussed Abraham Verghese's "Covenant of Water", a beautifully written saga set in India beginning in the 20th century. This was a book we really enjoyed and could not put down till it was finished.

Book Group 6: *Jean Haworth*

We meet on the second Friday afternoon of the month in one another's homes and take it in turns to choose the book to be discussed. We read mostly modern fiction. This month's book was "The Homemade God" by Rachel Joyce. The book choice for June is "The Protest" by Rob Rinder.

We would welcome one or two more members to join our group. Friday afternoon does not seem to be a popular time for many members. It is only once a month, so do give it a try. Please get in touch with me, if you would like more information about the group.

Craft Group: *Jennifer Sinton*



The Craft Group continues to meet at 2pm on a Monday in the Sun Inn at Morpeth. As the 11th May was the start of restaurant week in Morpeth, we met at 12.30 on that day and had a very nice lunch before we started our knitting. One of our group is doing small sketches – see picture.

Foodies Lunch Club: *Pam Turner*

For our April lunch we went to The Sun Inn, Morpeth, which was the first time we had been there under its new management. It was most enjoyable with friendly, helpful staff and hot freshly cooked food. Well worth another visit.

On the 18th May we are booked to eat at the Black and Grey, Newgate Street, Morpeth. It has recently been refurbished under new ownership and has a different menu consisting of Tapas as well as some of the usual bar food dishes. As the food has been pre-ordered, please contact Janice Parks.

Our next meal is being organised by Andrew & Ann Clewes on Monday 15th June. We will be going to the Keel Row, Foremans Row, nr. Seaton Delaval NE25 0QG. If you would like to join us, please sign up at the lunch on 18th May or at the monthly meeting on 26th May or contact Andrew and Ann.

Our lunches usually take place on the 3rd Monday of each month (12.30 pm for a 1 pm start). Looking forward to seeing you.

Pam Turner - Foodies Lunch Group Co-ordinator.

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. **Unusually, our next meeting will take place on the third Wednesday of June** because of holidays, but you will be reminded of the meeting by email.

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 had great fun learning Mexican Train Dominoes this month. We have a wide selection of games on offer and free choice is back on the menu in June. 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 May meeting at Hepscoth was our plant swap and a practical event prepared and led by Ruth – pot-luck planting of begonia corms, which we are going to photograph and bring these or the actual plant back to share at our September meeting.

We planned a joint trip with Mid-Northumberland u3a to the Himalayan Gardens near Ripon on 8th May which we all enjoyed and had good weather. 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 – £26.00. 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 April meeting we had a talk on the medieval Templars. We then held a surprise special birthday for our host Merle (see picture).

The next meeting will be on Thursday 28th May at 2.00pm at 112 Abbey Meadows. We will learn about Thomas Coram, a Georgian whose influence is still felt today.

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. We play recordings of music of a different subject or genre every month, each person bringing their choice. This year we are taking the initials of composers and in April it was G, H and I. This included Holst, Gounod, Handel and Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess".

Our May meeting will be a video of a performance of "The Planet Suite" by Holst, with commentary by Prof. Brian Cox, which was broadcast a few years ago.

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

NBB (Northumberland by Bus) *Linda Cox*

The first trip for our new group has been arranged and it's happening on Monday 18th May. We visit Warkworth by public transport, aiming to cross the river by rowboat ferry to visit the Hermitage. The visit to the Hermitage is not compulsory, the castle itself is well worth a visit and Warkworth is a pretty village with pleasant shops and cafes plus beautiful riverside walks. The Castle and Hermitage are run by English Heritage and they are offering a 20% discount for those not arriving by car, so keep your bus ticket handy. There is no need to book, just turn up at the bus station at 10.30am, bus pass in hand. The bus should leave at 10.47 but don't cut it too fine! If you are there, look out for faces you recognise and join them. Enjoy the day and come home when you are ready. A meeting time will be suggested for the return journey but you won't be counted in and out.

If you have any queries or suggestions for future trips (and any suggestions would be very welcome) 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. Our next play has not been decided on yet **and the meeting, unusually, will take place on the third Tuesday of June because of holidays.** However you will be reminded of the date by email. 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*

April's topic was "Animals" which gave us a wide selection of poetry, prose and some quotations to discuss. **May's meeting has been cancelled** as quite a few of us will be going to the afternoon tea for Committee members and group leaders.

So "travel/travelling" will now be our topic for June and in July it's "our own initials", which sounds like an interesting challenge. Then in August, it's "Nonsense and Comic Poetry" and in September, the topic is "Food".

We meet at 2 pm on the 3rd 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 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.

We are hoping to enjoy our May quiz which will be on Thursday 14th. As always our quiz-master, David, will be pushing our grey matter to the limit testing out new sources of questions! Chris will be providing the "Guess Who". Our afternoon tea break delights will be provided by Michael this month.

We are always happy to welcome new faces for a fun and friendly gathering. There are always plenty of spaces, so do come along and try it out. Let me know if you wish to be involved or for more information, Becky Atkinson.

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 underway with a new 12 week block which started 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.

Contact me for more information.

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 theatre trip is to see **Guys and Dolls** at the **Theatre Royal Newcastle** on **Friday 24th July at 2.00pm**. The total cost will be £42 to include driver's tip and coach. Can you please bring your money or cheque made payable to Morpeth & District u3a to the next monthly meeting in a named envelope. We will be leaving as usual from Morpeth bus station at 1.15pm and will be back in Morpeth for about 5.00pm. Hopefully an enjoyable afternoon will be had by all!

For information about the Group - Cynthia or Marion

"TUGS Group" *Michael James*

We meet every Friday at "The Unit Gym", North Seaton between 1-2.00pm. Last week was our first session with five members attending. We started with a chat before our warm up exercises. In the main part of the session we used rubber bands, rings, kettle weights and the sledge, rotating in pairs with each. These exercises are all designed by Georgia, our personal trainer, to help with core leg and arm strength. We still have a few spaces left for these sessions. Please see separate attachment with photos.

For more information please contact me.

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 more 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 walk on 7th May we met as usual at Morpeth Rugby Club at 10.00 am and started the walk 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 walked down to Seaton Sluice itself along the coastal path, and doubled back round to the main road, passing a number of historic pubs. We then enjoyed a drink & carvery at the Astley Arms. Our walk for June is another visit to the Giant Spoon in Cramlington, parking at The Bay Horse, where we will return for lunch. Thinking ahead for July, we hope to walk in Rothbury. Members will be notified of details by email.

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 June and of course any newcomers. For more information, please contact me.