

Morpeth & District u3a - July 2026 Newsletter

I hear that the AGM went well, I was thinking about you all as I enjoyed the experience of the Royal Garden Party at the Palace of Holyrood House. I am very grateful for Steve Morris and Margaret Selfridge stepping in to make sure that it ran smoothly.

It means that we only have one General Meeting left before the summer break and starting our new membership year in September. Hopefully we will have a good turn out for the Strawberry Tea on the 21st July, when we will be enjoying entertainment from the Blyth Sea Shanty Singers.

July has been interesting for me as I started the month enjoying the u3a Festival at York University. It was an experience that I would recommend to everyone when it happens again. Getting together with members of u3as from all around the country was fascinating, an opportunity to share experiences and ideas.

I hope that everyone enjoys the summer and looks forward to getting together again in September. We will be in touch during August about renewing membership. Lorraine Griffiths, Chair

Regional and National Information:

Regional <https://northumbria/u3asite.uk>

Short Story/Poetry Competition: You don't have to be a member of a creative writing group to enter. All u3a members of the u3a North East Region are welcome to submit a short story, of no more than 1,500 words and/or a poem of no more than 16 lines, **on the theme of 'Happiness'** Your entry must be received by 12 noon on Friday 11th September 2026. The competition is free to enter. Rules and regulations can be found by clicking this link: [Happiness](#) or by contacting [Cecilia Coulson](#), lead of the Northumbria Creative Writers

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

u3a Getaways – a new initiative from the national u3a, offering bespoke holidays for u3a members. Well worth a quick look, just in case something appeals to you.

News from the Groups – July 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 vibrant picture painted by one of our talented artists captures the joys of summer. 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 last meeting of the season was on 18th June when Sue Dawson gave a fascinating talk about Artists' Anniversaries to conclude our programme of events. The 2026/27 programme starts on 17th September when Derek Johnston will be giving a talk on van Gogh. Members may wish to see the "Beyond van Gogh" Immersive experience at the Utilita Arena in Newcastle from 12 -19 August before this presentation.

Trip to Bowes Museum

The Art Appreciation Group is proposing to join with the Mid Northumberland Arts Appreciation Group for a trip to Bowes Museum on Thursday 20th August. There are two exhibitions to see – The notebooks of Norman Cornish and Vivienne Westwood's designs. The cost of the exhibition entry is £15 plus the cost of the bus which will be determined by how many people want to come. The bus will be leaving Morpeth Bus Station at 9am and then leaving Bowes Museum at 3.30pm arriving back at Morpeth around 5pm.

If you would like more information about our speaker programme or would like to come on the trip to Bowes Museum, let me know.

Have a wonderful summer and I look forward to seeing existing and new members on 17th September.

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: Mary Christian

At our July meeting, we discussed "Coming up for Air" by Sarah Leipziger, which we found an interesting read. In part, it re-told the story of the origins of Resusci Annie, which is still used to train people in resuscitation techniques over 150 years later.

In August we will be talking about “Helm” by Sarah Hall. September’s book is “Seascraper” by Benjamin Wood.

We meet at 2,00pm on the first Thursday of the month at The Joiners Arms in the centre of Morpeth. Members take turns to choose a book and then introduce it to get the discussion going. The group is currently full, but if you are interested, please get in touch with me to find out more and to put your name on the waiting list.

Book Group 4: Jennifer Cryer

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 Ami where we are well looked after. For more information, please contact me.

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.

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.

Coffee Club: Sandi Rickerby

The July meeting of the Coffee Club was just a bit different – there was no coffee! The electricity at St. James’ Hall was off and the cause unknown, as none of the fuses had been tripped. This meant, of course, that no kettles could be boiled, so no coffee could be made. However we all enjoyed good conversation and a glass of refreshing cold water!

The Coffee Club will not meet in August. The next meeting will be on Thursday 10th September at 10.30 at St. James’ Hall. It’s open to all members, so just turn up. Hope to see you there.

Craft Group: Jennifer Sinton



The Craft Group continues to meet at 2pm on a Monday in the Sun Inn at Morpeth. We will probably break up in two weeks’ time finishing with a lunch at the Sun Inn. We will start up again at the beginning of September when the schools go back. We have again just been knitting for our grandchildren, although they definitely won’t want cardigans and hats in this weather! One of our group was quite ambitious with the hat and cardigan in the picture but fortunately a knitting “expert” was able to finish it for her!

Foodies Lunch Club: Pam Turner

We had an enjoyable lunch in June at The Keel Row, near Seaton Delaval. Although numbers were slightly lower than usual, it was easier to chat to everyone so we had a most sociable occasion.

Our next lunch will be on Monday 20th July at The Cook and Barker, Newton-on-the-Moor NE65 9JY. This is a popular lunch venue and is being organised as usual by Linda Robson. If you would like to join the group, please contact Linda if you haven't already signed up for this event.

In August we are going more local again to The Ridley Arms, Stannington NE61 6EL. This lunch is being organised by Carole Flack. If you would like to join us, please sign up at the July lunch or contact Carole as the next monthly meeting is not until September.

There won't be another newsletter until September, so you may like details for that month's lunch. Deborah Burton is organising this one at a new venue which sounds lovely. It will be held on Monday 21st September at The Coach Inn, Lesbury, Alnwick NE66 3PP. This pub isn't normally open on a Monday so it will be open specially for us and it would be great if we could have a good turnout. You could sign up at the Ridley Arms in August or contact Deborah. As for all our lunches, we meet at 12.30 pm for a 1 pm start. Pre-ordered meals must be cancelled well in advance otherwise the venue may still request payment.

Everyone is welcome to join us so I look forward to seeing regular and new members. Enjoy your summer. Best wishes, Pam.

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. Our next meeting will take place on the first Wednesday of August, 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 have a wide selection of games on offer. There is plenty of room for more members and you will be made very welcome if you would like to join us.

Garden Group: Sally Ennis

Our meetings take place at 2pm in Hepscott 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.

We had an interesting day on the 10th June discovering 2 stunning gardens and nurseries. We started at Bide-A-Wee hearing from Mark Robson about how he and his parents had created their beautiful quarry garden. Then we moved down the road to Stanton Hall Gardens and Nursery where Laura told us about how her family had inherited the house and gardens both of which needed renovations -the gardens are stunning and their nurseries extensive – what a variety and range of beautiful plants. We were lucky to be able to shelter and explore their polytunnels when the rain finally came!

Our next trip is to Raby Castle on 15th July with a garden tour.

The first meeting at Hepscott Parish hall will be on 9th September with a talk by Isobel Shaw about East Coast Gardens of the USA. The focus will be on Thomas Jefferson's garden at Monticello.

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 June meeting we had a talk about the novels of Jane Austen, focusing on the clergymen and the social activities of the time.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 30th July at 2.00 pm at 8 Thornlea, Hepscott. We will have a talk about the types of Elizabethan dress and their meanings. A friend of the group gave us some money which we used to buy a microphone and screen which will help during the talks. We will continue to meet in August.

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. A different subject or genre of music is chosen, and members bring their musical interpretation of it. This year we have been using the initials of composers and have now reached M, N and O, so it will be good to hear all the choices.

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

NBB (Northumberland by Bus) – Linda Cox

Seven members of the NBB group travelled to Corbridge on 7th June. Four ladies took an earlier bus to take advantage of a walk in the beautiful countryside before lunch. The other ladies strolled around the picturesque streets before partaking lunch at an amazing patisserie. After visiting St Andrew's Church, we called into the Heritage Centre where a very knowledgeable gentleman shared some very interesting facts about Corbridge and its past residents.

The next proposed trip is to Wallington Hall on Saturday 8th August. Buses only run on a Saturday to Wallington Hall. The 419 leaves Morpeth at 10.05 and arrives at Wallington at 10.46. The 419 leaves Wallington at 15.58 arriving back at Morpeth at 16.39. If anyone has any ideas for future trips, I would be very grateful to hear from you,

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 finished reading "A Severed Head" by Iris Murdoch & J B Priestley. The next play has yet to be decided. The meeting usually takes place on the first Tuesday of the month, but 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

The topic for the June meeting of the group was "Travel", which led to a wide selection of readings – poems and prose – and some interesting discussions about the writers' travel experiences as well as our own. In July, it's "our own initials" which could be more of a challenge and promises to cover a range of interpretations.

Topics for the next few months are - "nonsense/comic poetry" (August), "food" (September) and "trees"(October"

We meet at 2 pm on the 3rd Thursday of each month at a member's home. If you are interested and would like to know more or to join us, 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 battled bravely through the heat at our July meeting and had an enjoyable afternoon quizzing. We welcomed Bill, another new member, to our u3a quiz group.

David, our amazing quiz-master, tested our recall with an eclectic mix of questions ranging from art, box office flops, classical music and wines – which we all thoroughly enjoyed. Michael provided us with a delicious almond cake at the tea break and Chris kept us guessing with a clever "who am I".

Be like Bill and come along to join us at our next meeting on Thursday 13th August at St Christopher's dining room at 2pm. Let me know if you wish to be involved or for more information, contact me.

Scrabble Group (Monday) - Kathy Smith

The Monday morning scrabble group continue to meet fortnightly (every alternate Monday at 9.45 am), in a member's home. These are very enjoyable get-togethers, and if anyone would like to join us and challenge the old grey matter, please contact me.

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 throughout the summer. We would welcome new members of any ability and experience to come and join us for a pleasant, gently competitive afternoon of play. For more information contact me.

Tai Chi Group 1: Steve Morris



We have just finished our current 12 week block with a group Tai Chi trip to Belsay. After a short summer break we start a new 12 week block in September. 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

A reminder for those going to see **Guys and Dolls** at the **Theatre Royal Newcastle** on **Friday 24th July at 2.00pm.**

Please meet at Morpeth Bus Station at 1pm to leave at 1.15pm. We will be returning to Morpeth at about 5pm.

Theatre tickets will be handed out on the coach. Enjoy everyone!! Contact me for information about the Group.

“TUGS Group” - Michael James



Our last session of the “TUGS” group took place on the 10th July. We have now completed ten sessions with a core group of six people. After only a short period of time, members are finding not only a difference to their bodies, such as leg and arm strength, but to a sense of achievement too. Both Georgia and myself are proud of the progress the group has made!

After the summer break, we meet for our next set of five sessions on Friday 11th September at “The Unit Gym”, North Seaton between 1-2.00pm. The cost is £20 for 5 sessions. If you would like to come along and join us, 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.

Ambles: - Jackie Jones



Only 5 of us managed to get to the walk at Rothbury at the beginning of July, but we had good weather, a pleasant wander along the river and lunch in the town.

Our walk at the beginning of August is likely to be at Warkworth.

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