Morpeth & District u3a - September 2026 Newsletter

Welcome back to another year of Morpeth and District u3a. I'm looking forward to a range of interesting topics at the General Meetings and plenty of activity within the individual groups.

My suggestion of an activity day for the u3a week 2026 has come to nothing, I had quite a few responses interested in having a go at Willow Weaving but only a couple of offers to run taster sessions. However, having had the idea, I will think it through further and come back to you with any thoughts on what we can do in the future. I would be interested in knowing what hobbies we have within the group, so if you have time, please let me know what you do for pleasure.

Our first General Meeting is on Tuesday 29th September and our speaker is Mr Dennis Turner, Chair of Ashington Community Woodland, who will be speaking about Woods and Greenwood Working.

We will be collecting annual subscriptions at the end of the meeting, if you would like to pay by cheque or cash.

Lorraine Griffiths; Chair

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

Scroll down the home page to find Latest Notices, there are a couple of visits coming up, organised by the regional group, one to St Nicholas Cathedral and the other to the Laing Art Gallery.

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

The Learning Activities page is very thought provoking, lots of further links to various topics which might be of interest to you, including puzzles. Worth having a look at.

News from the Groups – September 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. Our weekly sessions resume Monday 14th September.

The Art Group continues to thrive, enriched by the contributions of new and not so new members. This charming picture of a redshank was created by one of our members. 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 and new members are always welcome. 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. During the summer we had a trip to Bowes Museum to see the notebooks and works of Norman Cornish and the designs of Fashion designer Vivienne Westwood. The 2026/27 programme starts on 17th September when Derek Johnston will be giving a talk on van Gogh. This is particularly timely as some of our members went to see the "Beyond van Gogh" immersive experience at the Utilita Arena in August.

If you would like more information about our speaker programme or would like to come along to our meetings, please let me know.

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.

Book Group 3: Mary Christian

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

In August we talked about "Helm" by Sarah Hall and 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 Amis where we are well looked after. For more information, please contact me.

Book Group 6: Jean Haworth

We are a small group looking for new members to join us. We read mostly modern fiction, meeting in each other's homes at 2pm on the second Friday afternoon of the month. We discussed just a short book this month, "The Dare" by John Boyne. Next month's choice is "The Eights" by Joanna Miller.

Please get in touch with me for more information about the group.

Coffee Club: Sandi Rickerby

There was plenty of conversation at the Coffee Club this month as we shared coffee and biscuits and caught up with each other after the summer break. The topic of our 10 minute talk was "Is History Boring?" Some of us, myself included, recalled that the way we had been taught history, focused on remembering dates and monarchs and we did indeed find it boring. However, today we looked at some very interesting facts about living conditions in the 1500s, which led to some of the sayings we use today. This generated a lively discussion and we all agreed that maybe history isn't so boring after all.

The Coffee Club is open to all members, the next meeting will be on 8th October and it would be lovely to see you there. We meet at St James Community hall on the 2nd Thursday at 10.30am.

Craft Group: Jennifer Sinton



The Craft Group meets at 2pm on a Monday in the Sun Inn at Morpeth and we continued to meet throughout the summer. In past years, we have finished our craft meetings when the schools broke up and resumed when the schools went back, but this year, as none of us were away during the main holiday period, we decided to keep meeting.

We have been mainly knitting mittens and socks using odd balls of wool given to us and they will go into the Xmas shoe boxes bound for Ukraine, but one of our group has knitted the character pictured which we thought would give you all a smile!

Foodies Lunch Club: Pam Turner

Our last lunch held in August at The Ridley Arms was enjoyed by everyone. Although we were looking forward to a new venue for our September lunch at The Coach Inn, Lesbury, disappointingly it proved not to be suitable and has been cancelled. Deborah, who is organising the lunch on 21st September, has booked the Morpeth Golf Club. Names of those members who wish to attend have been submitted but if you want to change your booking please contact Deborah as soon as possible.

Our next lunch will be held on Monday 19th October at Sambuca in Morpeth. You can sign up for this lunch when we get together in September at the Golf Club or at the monthly meeting. Grace Lever is organising this lunch so if you have any queries please contact her.

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 at our future lunches.

Notes for the Diary – There are only two more lunches before the New Year. These will be held on 16th November and 14th December. Further details to follow.

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. 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 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.

The September meeting at Hepscott was a talk by Isobel Shaw titled “East Coast Gardens of the USA” focusing on Thomas Jefferson’s garden at Monticello. We also shared begonia successes following our pot-luck planting in May.

Our next meeting will be 14th October at Hepscott with Helen Walsh from Northumberland Wildlife Trust about Rewilding of East and West Chevington.

The following meeting will be a joint meeting with Mid-Northumberland u3a garden group on Friday 13th November 11am at Longhirst Village Hall. The speaker is Richard Barnes on Winter Gardens. Richard is a local landscape architect and keen photographer. There will **not** be a meeting at Hepscott in November. Our festive meeting will be on 9th December.

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 meets at 2.00 pm on the last Thursday of the month at a member's home and continued to meet during the summer months. In July we heard about the different types of Elizabethan clothes of men and women. In August we heard about John Rees who was a very interesting character. He fought at the battle of Alamo, was involved in the Welsh Chartist uprising of 1839 and went back to America to dig for gold.

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday 24th September at a member's house. We will have a sideways look at the Crimean War starting with a croissant! It sounds a very interesting talk.

We have room for one or two new members. Anyone interested in joining the group please contact me.

Music for Pleasure: Anne Van Der Willik

We meet in a member's home on the 3rd Monday of the month at 2pm. A different subject or genre of music is chosen, and we each bring music to fit that subject. As you may imagine, a great variety of music comes up! We have continued through the summer, using the initials of composers – we are at S, T and U for the September meeting..

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

NBB (Northumberland by Bus): Linda Cox



Nine members took the bus from Morpeth bus station to Wallington Hall on Saturday 8th August. We were then joined by three others who made their own way there. We started the day at Wallington cafe where some of us had coffee and tasty scones. The group then dispersed to do "their own thing".

We were extremely lucky with the weather and some of us took a lovely walk from the main house along the riverside, up into the walled garden and back to the main house again before gathering together to catch the bus back to Morpeth. If anyone has any ideas for future trips, 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 finished reading "A Severed Head" by Iris Murdoch & J B Priestley in July. 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: Bridgit Coxon

Our July meeting was on the subject of humorous verse, which proved very entertaining. The next meeting is on the topic of Food and Drink.

Please note that, unless advised otherwise, future meetings will be in Hepscott - still at 2pm on the 3rd Thursday of each month.

If you are interested and would like to know more or to join us, please contact Bridgit Coxon (our new group leader). Anyone wishing to try us out would be very welcome.

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.

A huge "thank you" to Lorraine for leading the quiz this month. I am still away on holiday exploring the Llyn Peninsular and visiting friends at Criccieth. I am sure that Quiz master David was amazing, teasing everyone with tantalising questions. Tempting treats will have been served at half time whilst Chris will have set a most interesting "Guess Who".

There will be an Area Quiz at Sunniside on the 7th October.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 8th October at St Christopher's – hope you can make it. Let me know if you wish to be involved or for more information.

Scrabble Group (Monday) Kathy Smith

The Monday morning scrabble group meets fortnightly every alternate Monday at 9.45 am in a member's home and has continued throughout the summer holiday with some very competitive sessions.

We are a friendly group and if anyone would like to join us and challenge the old grey matter, please contact me.

Scrabble Group (Tuesday) Lorraine Griffiths

The Group met throughout the summer and continues to meet at St Christopher's Court, Kirkhill, Morpeth on Tuesday afternoons from 2pm until 4.30pm. 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 have started a new 12 week block after our summer break. 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

Our last theatre visit was to see Guys and Dolls at the Theatre Royal Newcastle on Friday 24th July. Further visits have not yet been arranged.

For information about the Group contact me.

"TUGS Group" - Michael James

On Friday 11th September we had our first session after the summer break with five of eight members attending. We meet every Friday at "The Unit Gym", North Seaton between 1-2.00pm. The cost is £20 for 5 sessions. The exercises we do are all designed by Georgia, our personal trainer, to help with core, leg and arm strength.. We still have a couple of spaces left. If you would like to come along and join us or 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.

Amblers: Jackie Jones

In September, the group met at Bolam Lake country park for a walk around the lake and adjoining tracks. The October walk will be on Thursday 1st October. We will meet as usual at 10.00 at Morpeth Rugby Club to share cars to **Plessey Woods**, though if the weather is bad we may swap it for Stakeford, which is the November 5th walk.

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