Morpeth & District u3a - October 2026 Newsletter

Autumn colours are developing beautifully and this unseasonably warm weather is very welcome. I hope everyone has settled back into the routines of group meetings. We have had a few changes within the group leaders over the past few months and I want to thank those who have stepped down for the service they have given us over the years, including Judith Bell, Mary Christian, Jennifer Cryer and Lena Walsh. I am very grateful to Diane Sammons for stepping in to the role of group leader for the play reading group and to Bridgit Coxon, Ruth Marshall, Hilary Wheeler and Sue Davidson, for picking up roles in their groups. Please forgive me and let me know, if I have missed anyone.

I have finally finished the Membership Information Sheet and it will be attached along with this newsletter. There is still one blank line, no one has offered to take on the French Conversation group, which means that it will be closed, but I have left the title in the hope that someone will take pity on me and make the offer to keep the group open.

Alongside the joy of Autumn, I have sad news to share. Many of you will know Mike Christian, he has been a member of Morpeth and District since he and Mary moved to Morpeth six years ago. Mike unfortunately passed away at the weekend. Mary asked me to let you all know and I am sure that you will join me in sending Mary our love and our condolences at this sad time.

Our next General Meeting is on Tuesday 27th October and our speaker is Liz Finch, who will be speaking about Cragside.

We will still be collecting annual subscriptions at the end of the meeting, if you haven't managed to pay yet.

Lorraine Griffiths; Chair

Regional and National Information

Regional https://northumbria.u3asite.uk/

I have just received an email to say that there are some spaces left on the event at the Laing Art Gallery on the 20th October. The cost is £11 unless you are a F.L.A.G. member when it will be £6. If you are interested, please go onto the North East Website and book your place.

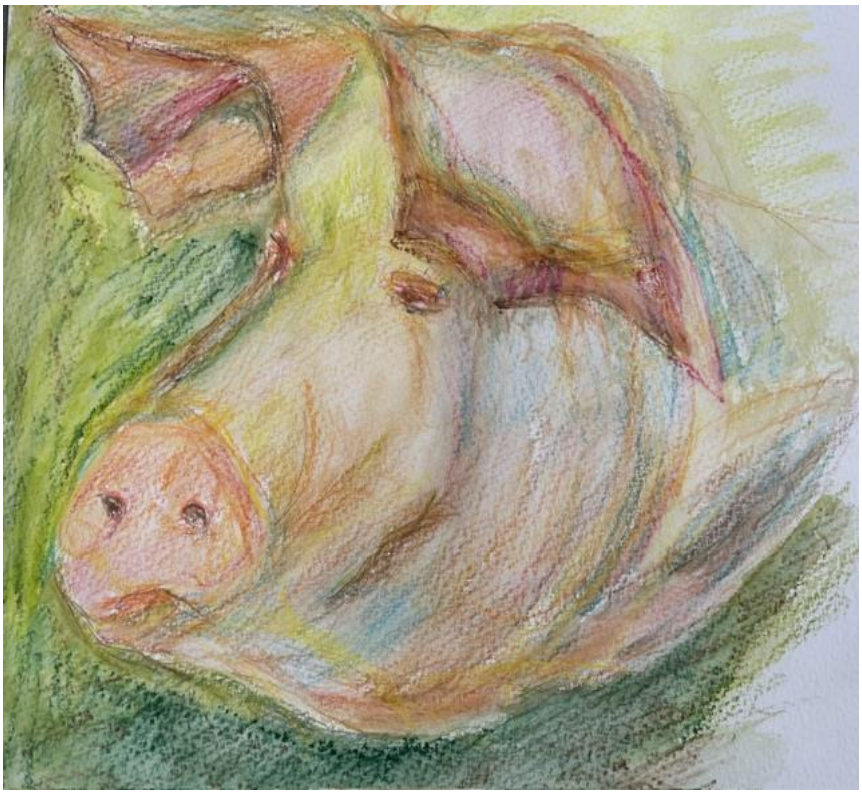
I have also been contacted by Nigel English, Chair of Mid-Northumberland u3a asking me to let you know about a concert that they are hosting on Thursday 26th November at Longhirst Village Hall with Jez Lowe. It costs £10 and asked that we contact him to book a ticket. I will attempt to attach the flier to this mail drop as well.

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

An interesting section on the National website is found at this address u3a - Subject networks you might well find something that you will enjoy and possibly even get inspiration for a new group for Morpeth and District.

News from the Groups – October 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. If you would like to join in, please email me Cuthbert Regan in advance.

Art Appreciation Group: Sally Keith

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

The 2026/27 programme began with a fascinating talk by Derek Johnston about van Gogh in the context of his letters. Our next meeting is on Thursday 22nd October when we will be watching a DVD on Giotto – the roots of modern painting.

The Blyth u3a Arts Appreciation Group, led by Marie Dooley, has invited us to join them on their Christmas outing to Kirkharle on Thursday 10th December. The plan for the day is:

- *11am - Coffee and Xmas Browsing Arts And Crafts Shops - perfect for picking up an original or unusual Christmas gift!*
- *12 noon - Live music from the Da Vinci Quartet, performed inside the beautiful historic St Wilfrid's Church (Marie has been assured it will be comfortably heated for the occasion)*
- *1pm - Lunch at The Running Fox (paid for separately by the attendees)*
- *3pm - Depart*

The cost is £15 for the Da Vinci Quartet plus the cost of the bus which will depend on numbers

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

I look forward to seeing existing and new members on 22nd October, Sally Keith

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 Jean Robinson.

Book Group 3: Hilary Wheeler

We meet at 2,00pm on the first Thursday of the month at The Joiners Arms in the centre of Morpeth. Each member of the group takes it in turn to choose a book. In October we discussed "And Mother Mary Came To Me", a memoir by Arundhati Roy. November's choice is "The Nightingale" by Kristin Hannah, a fiction set in France in World War 2. In December we will talk about "When The Cranes Fly South" by Lisa Ridzen. Whatever the book, we find lots to say about it and many other things. Please contact me if you think you would like to join the group.

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

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.

Please get in touch with me, Jean Haworth, if you would like more information about the group.

Coffee Club: Sandi Rickerby

At the October meeting of the Coffee Club, we enjoyed coffee and a slice of jam and coconut cake while taking part in some interesting conversations. In our 10 minute interactive talk this month we looked at how a variety of cities, towns and villages got their names. This included many of our local place names of course. Why not come along and join us next month?

We meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 10.30am at St James Hall, Morpeth. The Group is open to all Morpeth u3a members, so no need to let us know in advance – just turn up, we'd love to see you.

Craft Group: Jennifer Sinton



The Craft Group continues to meet at 2pm on a Monday in the Sun Inn at Morpeth. The St George's Players put out a request for sunflowers they wanted to use in their November production of Calendar Girls, so one of our group has made some very realistic flowers – see picture. Others in the group have continued knitting the hats and scarves for the Xmas shoe boxes. I will go up to Edinburgh next week with the final delivery to the group who send the boxes to Ukraine.

Foodies Lunch Club: Pam Turner

At our September lunch, the staff at Morpeth Golf Club, as usual, looked after us well, particularly as they had another large party for lunch that day. We had a private room and enjoyed the choice of food which was freshly prepared.

Our next lunch will be held on Monday 19th October at Sambucca's in Morpeth. The contact for this lunch is Grace Lever and members have signed up for this lunch but if you need to make any changes please contact Grace.

Jenny Emerson and Andrew Smith have booked the November lunch to be held on Monday 16th November at Lollo Rosso, Morpeth. You can sign up for this lunch at Sambucca's or at the monthly meeting or contact Jenny and Andrew.

The final lunch of the year will be held on Monday 14th December at the Morpeth Golf Club which is the same venue as last year for our Christmas meal. It was a great success then and the food was most enjoyable. Harry Cone who is the organiser for this lunch will have further details soon. If members do not usually come to the Foodies Lunch Club you are most welcome to join us at this lunch for a festive meal.

We normally 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. Looking forward to seeing regular and new members at our future lunches.

Pam Turner, Foodies Lunch Group Co-ordinator

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, although this month we all played Mexican Train Dominoes. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 10th November and we will choose whatever games we fancy. There is plenty of room for more members and you will be made very welcome if you would like to join us.

For 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.

Our October meeting was a talk by Helen Walsh from Northumberland Wildlife Trust about their work at East and West Chevington and Hauxley during their biodiversity boost. The November meeting will be a joint one with Mid-Northumberland u3a garden group on Friday 13th November at 11am in Longhirst Village Hall. The speaker, Richard Barnes, is a local landscape architect and keen photographer – his talk is about Winter Gardens. **There will not be a meeting at Hepscott in November.** Our festive meeting will be on 9th December.

If you need further information, 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 meets at 2.00 pm on the last Thursday of the month at a member's home. Our next meeting will be on Thursday 30th October at 2.00pm at Thornlea, Hepscott. Michael will be giving a talk on lunatic asylums.

We are still looking for new members, 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 is chosen, and each member plays music that fits in with the subject, so we have a great variety!

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

NBB (Northumberland by Bus): Linda Cox

I am sorry I have not been able to arrange a trip by bus recently. I have looked into visiting Cragside, they have a Christmas theme from Saturday 28th November to Sunday 3rd January. You can choose to do a five mile walk among the decorated trees or simply enjoy the Christmas decorations in the house. National Trust offer a 25% discount if you travel by bus so the entrance fee for this event will be £13.50 unless you are a National Trust member, when it is free.

The X14 leaves hourly on the hour from Morpeth bus station Monday to Saturday returning every hour at 5 minutes past the hour. The X14 leaves Morpeth bus station every two hours at 15 minutes past the hour on a Sunday returning 15 minutes past the hour every two hours.

Please let me know if you would be interested in this trip stating which date would be preferable. It would probably be best to avoid weekends as they will probably be busier.

If anyone has ideas for future trips, please let me know.

Play Reading Group: Dianne Sammons

After leading the play reading group for about 8 years, Lena has finally decided to give it up. Both the members of the group and the Morpeth u3a Committee are incredibly grateful and appreciative of all Lena has done in leading two of our groups and continues to do as our website/beacon co-ordinator. Fortunately Dianne Sammons has very kindly volunteered to take over the group leadership and will be getting in touch with group members regarding future meetings.

Poetry and Prose: **Bridgit Coxon**

Our last meeting was on the subject of Food and Drink. There was more prose than usual, as members had found interesting old recipes and descriptions of feasts. One of those was of a Southern American feast of about ten courses with a different wine for every course. Some of the old recipes were not very appealing to modern taste, e.g. boiled sheep's head! We proceeded via Winnie the Pooh and Mole and Ratty to the efficacy of cocoa as an aphrodisiac. That was quite a surprise!

Our next meeting at Thornlea, Hepscott is on October 15th at 2pm, and the topic is "Trees".

Please contact me if you would like to find out more about the group.

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.

David, our quizmaster, was in chipper spirits and tormented our brains with some fiendishly difficult questions which we all thoroughly enjoyed. Chris did an excellent "Guess Who", which turned out to be about Admiral Lord Collingwood, a local naval hero.

Lorraine had made some delicious peanut cookies to accompany our half time tea; both firsts and seconds were devoured greedily!

Oh, and there is just one more thing! We participated in the u3a Area Quiz at Sunniside on the 7th October and I am pleased to report that we came a respectable seventh out of fifteen teams. Many thanks to Michael, Linda and Lorraine who also provided us with a wonderful picnic lunch.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 12th November at St Christopher's where we hope to meet Sheryl, a potential new member. If you wish to be like Sheryl, do come along and join us at 2pm. – 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 continues to meet fortnightly every alternate Monday in each other's homes. We are a small friendly group and would welcome some new faces. Our next meeting is on Monday 19th October at 10am.

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 every week of the month apart from the last when we attend the general meeting. 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 part way through a 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. 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 cab 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

The next proposed theatre trip is to see **"Silver Bells Christmas Show" on Saturday 14th November at the Phoenix Theatre Blyth –** to start the festive season, a glittering show of song and dance.

The cost per ticket will be £23.50 plus the cost of the coach. We will meet at **Morpeth Bus Station at 6.30pm** and leave to return to Morpeth at approx 9.45/10.00pm. There will be a bar for anyone wanting a drink.

I will be taking names at the next general meeting and collecting the money at the November meeting when I know the amount due, depending on numbers going.

For information about the Group – call me.

"TUGS Group": Michael James



We meet every Friday at "The Unit Gym", North Seaton between 1-2.00pm. The cost is £20 for 5 sessions. We do strength training exercises specifically designed for older adults by Georgia, our personal trainer. The sessions focus on building strength, improving mobility, enhancing balance and boosting confidence within a relaxed, no pressure environment. We only have a couple of spaces left but I do operate a waiting list. For more information, please contact me at



Walking Groups:

5 Mile Walking Group **- Eileen Harber**

We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Morpeth Rugby Club car park ready to walk at 9.30am. **We are a friendly group and would welcome some new members**. We share cars and bring a small snack for a short stop. Our walk in October is local and in November it is a circular walk at Capheaton. Come and join us and have a lovely morning!

Contact me for more information.

Amblers - **Jackie Jones**

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. Our next walk is on the November 5th when we go to Stakeford, meeting as usual at Morpeth Rugby Club. Looking forward to seeing everyone in November and of course any newcomers.

For more information, please contact me.